



THE JEWISH MUSEUM

## Champion of the child: Janusz Korczak

5 December 2006 – 8 April 2007

The Jewish Museum, Camden Town

Champion of the child: Janusz Korczak tells the heart wrenching yet inspiring story of Janusz Korczak (1878-1942), who devoted his life to establishing and defining the rights of the child, regardless of nationality or religion. His work was eventually posthumously adopted by the United Nations as the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the exhibition at the Jewish Museum, Camden Town, shows how his teachings on the treatment of children continue to resonate around the world today.

Korczak, a Polish-Jewish doctor, educator and children's author, wrote passionately about the subject of children's rights and his ideas were adopted by the UN in the Children's Human Rights Declaration of 1959. In honour of his contributions, Pope John Paul II declared, "For the world today, Janusz Korczak is a symbol of true religion and true morality," and UNESCO proclaimed 1979 "The Year of Janusz Korczak" to coincide with the International Year of the Child and the centenary of his birth.

This exhibition reveals how Korczak came to represent the rights of street children and orphans in Warsaw in the early 20th century, introducing the first progressive orphanages for Jewish and Catholic children. He hosted a children's radio programme, founded the first children's newspaper and testified on behalf of children in juvenile courts. He is considered to be a Polish national hero and King Matt the First, his story of a child king, is regarded in Poland today with the reverence the British accord Peter Pan.

The exhibition also explores how life in Poland became increasingly difficult for Korczak after German occupation, and how his Jewish orphanage was moved inside the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940. On August 6 1942 he was forced to gather together the 200 orphans in his care to report for deportation. Refusing all offers for his own rescue, Korczak joined the children on the train that would take them to the Treblinka extermination camp, preferring to die with the children under his protection rather than abandon them.

The universalism of Korczak's message and the effect of his teachings on modern thinking are examined in case studies highlighting the treatment of children today.

The exhibition will feature original paintings and drawings of Korczak by Israeli artist Itzhak Belfer, who was born in Poland in 1923 and raised in the Jewish Warsaw orphanage.

The exhibition is in association with the Polish Cultural Institute and is accompanied by a wide-ranging programme of talks and discussions, and creative workshops for children.

<http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/index.asp>  
<http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/whatson/exhibitions/temporary.asp?article=112>

Source : **Mrs Helena Abram from the Galatea Trust in London to the Janusz Korczak Newsletter N° 20**  
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"The Hermitage Programme as a therapeutic holding environment"

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An information propelled on: <http://korczak.info>