



Janusz Korczak International Newsletter

No 19 (June 2006)

Amsterdam, 5th of July 2006

To our Korczak friends, North, East, South and West,

We like to present you the Korczak Newsletter with news from:

- The Netherlands (p. 1)
- Poland and France (p. 3)

At the end of the Newsletter, we put some information about international conferences and seminars concerning the Rights of Children (p. 8).

The NETHERLANDS

We asked students of the School for Social Work in Haarlem to evaluate the 'Nash Dom' summercamps for disabled and non-disabled children from Russia and The Netherlands. As everybody knows we have a long tradition and now it is high time to look back. The students, (it was their graduate-work) made a theoretical and practical research. The results were a clear mirror for us and a strong support for our work in the coming years.

See here the summary of their research.

In this investigative report an attempt has been made to answer the following question: *"How does integration occur in the 'Nash Dom' summer camps, and are the experiences of the participants of 'Nash Dom' in agreement with the pedagogical theories of Janusz Korczak?"*

This research is based on the summer camp "Nash Dom" which has been going on annually since 1993 in Russia. This summer camp operates on the basis of the pedagogical theories of Janusz Korczak (Polish Jewish pedagogue, doctor and author, 1878-1942), and its main focus is integration. People from Russia and the Netherlands, children and adults, people with different ethical backgrounds, visually impaired and sighted people, children with "normal" backgrounds and from low socio-economic backgrounds, meet in "Nash Dom". The sponsors of this research (the Dutch Janusz Korczak Association in Amsterdam and the "Nash Dom Youth Centre" in Moscow) wondered if they are on the right track in the "Nash Dom" camps and where improvements need to be made. This research was two-fold: one based upon the literature and another based upon investigations with subjects.

Literature-based research

Research was done to examine and analyze the meaning of integration and how integration is related to the pedagogical theories of Korczak. During the course of this investigation recurring themes were identified for integration to take place, and the concept of respect forms the basis for all. An explanation for these themes can be found in paragraph 3.2.

- Acceptance

- Equality
- Responsibility
- Independence
- Information
- Trust
- Communication
- Mutual understanding

Furthermore, an attempt is made to relate the concept of integration to the pedagogical theories of Korczak. In his publications Korczak does not mention integration, but upon further study, his opinions and ideas are useful in studying how integration takes place. His pedagogical theories can form the basis for the recurring themes of integration. In his published works he describes the prerequisites of how adults should relate to children and what rights children are entitled to. At the same time he attempts to give the adults insight into the world of children, which results in integration between the world of children and adults.

Research with subjects

For the research with subjects, an overall theme for the Dutch interviews was agreed upon and a questionnaire for the Russian interviews was created on the basis of the literature studied, an interview with the sponsor and documentation about the camp.

This research helped to identify what types of experiences and events the children have at “Nash Dom”. From those experiences and events proved that the camp is operating within the pedagogical theories of Korczak. The recurring themes were also identified at the camp. The chaperones, consciously or unconsciously, have adopted the theories of Korczak; rudimentary knowledge is present.

An atmosphere of acceptance, equality and trust, living with families and doing things together make integration possible. There is social integration, cultural integration and integration between the visually impaired and seeing participants. The social integration and integration between the visually impaired and seeing participants is successful. The amount of integration between Russians and Dutch participants varies from year to year; language forms a formidable obstacle for integration to take place.

The camp allows the participants to experience fun and enjoyment when living with children, according to the theories of Korczak, because the children are treated as equals.

The children learn to interact with different cultures, habits and languages. Participants learn to accept themselves and others as people with strong points, but also with limitations.

During their stay at the camp the children are expected to demonstrate independency, organisational and creative skills, responsibility, show trust towards participants and act respectfully to trust which is given to them.

Chaperones support and encourage the children; they give them space to blossom, age appropriate and dependent upon their limitations. From the perspective of Korczaks theories, children will, sometimes after some initial problems, become aware that they are capable of more than is expected. This can be a big step in their personal development, a sound foundation, so later as an adult they can find and create a place in society. The chaperones can get together with the administration and each other with problems and questions about their pedagogical approach, although more supervision at the camp is needed. There is confusion among the chaperones about the goals and methods, due to the lack of a written policy.

On the basis of the experiences and events of the participants an analysis was made of the strength and weaknesses of “Nash Dom” Weaknesses exposed here led to the following main recommendations:

- To develop a dialogue with the Russian and Dutch organizations to create a written policy manual.

- To conduct a similar investigation in Russia.
- To implement the theories of Korczak more fully at the camp.
- To reduce the language barriers.
- To improve cooperation between the chaperones.

Janneke Valkering, Renate van Berkom and Maartje Bos.

POLAND/FRANCE

We received from Bernard Lathuillère, co-president of the French Janusz Korczak Association, a report about the inauguration of the Korczak Statue in Warsaw, on the 1st of June. At the same time our Polish friends and colleagues sent the texts of the speeches presented during that ceremony.

First the French contribution.

June 1, 2006: Inauguration of the Janusz Korczak monument in Warsaw Under the Patronage of Polish President Lech Kaczynski

A new monument for Janusz Korczak was superbly erected in the hearth of the Polish capital, in the principal alley of the large park located at the foot of the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, close to its last orphanage in the historical Ghetto. The work represents the Old doctor protecting the children. Thus from now on, more than sixty years after his death, the town of Warsaw returns to the great teacher and to the universal values he incarnates the proud and beautiful homage awaited so a long time. The monument was inaugurated on June 1, 2006 by the President of the Polish Republic, the Acting President of the City of Warsaw, the Minister for the Culture and the National heritage, and many authorities of the civil society in front of an enormous crowd.

Description

The monument is located in a pretty corner of greenery of the large park of the Palace of Culture, in front of a large water part. It represents a sculpture of Janusz Korczak surrounded by children, at the foot of a tree, on a small paved hill evoking the old streets of Warsaw.

The tree evokes the well-know tree staying in the court of the House of the Orphans, as on the famous photopicture of 1934. Made in granite, its trunk is in fact that of two large dead trees joined together in only one. These two trees symbolize the two traditions Jewish and Polish. Their seven small branches evoke the traditional Jewish candlestick. An isolated branch, pushing right towards the sky, symbolizes the Hope.

The bronze sculpture shows a big size Janusz Korczak, gathering under its wing a group of six children of various ages; leaning against him. At the back of the monument, one discovers a source of water running in a small basin. On the other side, on the hillside, one can see a low brick wall where the names of all the givers are engraved.

This monument designed by Z. Wilma and B. Chmielewski, causes a positive general impression and alleviating. It seems to be integrated perfectly into the place, as well in the nature of the park very attended by the families and the children, that with the surrounding buildings of this vast concrete district built on the ruins of the ghetto.

An aspect however attracts our attention. When we look at the sculpture more closely, one notices that the children of Korczak have features and expressions of adults, as on the tables of the Middle Ages. Beyond the children, it is thus all the humanity which the Old doctor protects. But one will be able to see also the homage paid to assassinated childhood, in this precise place, of the children of the ghetto.

Here indeed, in this peaceful place, the street Sliska passed, with the number 9, the building sheltering the House of the Orphans after its second removal in the ghetto. On August 6, 1942, it is from here that Doctor Janusz Korczak, his team and his two hundred children were taken along to foot towards Umschlagplatz to be transported and assassinated in the camp of Treblinka.

A very successful inauguration

The monument was inaugurated on a beautiful, symbolic day, the day of the national Feastday of the Children, by the President of the Polish Republic Lech Kaczynski, the Acting President of the City of Warsaw Mirosław Kochalski, the President of the Polish Korczak Association Jadwiga Binczycka, the President of the Shalom Foundation Golda Tencer, the Minister for the Culture and the National heritage and others personalities. Crowd was dense and included many Children's delegations come from all orphanages and schools named after Janusz Korczak in Poland.

The speech of President Kaczynski, very awaited, was appreciated. It will be retained that he said from the start how much it was justified that Janusz Korczak, the large teacher hero of the children, has his statue here, in the middle of his city and country. *"Janusz Korczak proclaimed the Good, Forgiveness, Tolerance, Social dialogue and Respect for the child. If we really manage to integrate these values in the life social, at this time it will be possible to say that the Korczak's monument will mean something"*, declared in particular Jadwiga Binczycka, the President of the Polish Janusz Korczak Association. *"I hope that this place will become magic, that it will encourage the parents there to come with their children, and the children to return there with their own children"*, added Golda Tencer, the Director of the Shalom Foundation.

After the revealing of the statue, a very nice show, inspired by the works of Janusz Korczak, took possession of the scene. Its title was: **"When a child smiles, the whole world smiles"**.

The Korczak movement International

The day of the inauguration, the international Korczak movement was represented by the Korczak Associations from Poland, Israel and France. The president of Polish association, Jadwiga Binczycka, particularly with the Honor, was cordially applauded by crowd before even pronouncing her speech, sign of its notoriety. Marta Ciesielska, director of Korczakianum, the Centre of the files international of Janusz Korczak, expressed itself with the platform, just as the Israeli representing, Beata Gilad, which had come alone. The French delegation was made up of the co-president of the AFJK, Bernard Lathuillère, and ten members of the association. Our presence was greeted publicly by Ms Binczycka, at the same time as that of our guest from the Democratic Republic of Congo: Christine Musaidizi, the cofondatrice of the ONG Children's Voice de Goma (in study trip with the AFJK and the UNICEF).

The international Janusz Korczak movement may see in this historical event the beginning of a quite late but happy official recognition of the great teacher by his city and its country which he liked so much.

AFJK, 20 juin 2006

(by Bernard Lathuillere with the assistance
of Lidia Zywolek Farrayan for the Polish language
and Theo Cappon for the English translation of this article).

If you are interested to read more about the inauguration

and to have a look on some pictures, serve to the French website

http://korczak.fr/m3monde/pologne/statue_waw/momument-korczak-varsovie.html

More

The polish reports are available below on Internet websites:

- A splendid polish slides show by a Pole anonymity which made a broad place with the spectacles and the joy of the children and whose photographs of the statue are of a high artistic quality, by day as by night: <http://fotismos.fotosik.pl/albumy/22231.html>;
- The speech of the Polish President on his official site, with a gallery of photographs: http://www.prezydent.pl/x_node?id=1011848&eventId=5027088;
- Shalom Foundation (polish or english): <http://www.shalom.org.pl>;
- Polish Janusz Korczak Association (in polish), with the full report of the celebration, photographs, speech and interviews: <http://www.pskorczak.org.pl/strony/aktualnosci.htm>;
- French Janusz Korczak Association (AFJK, in french), where you will find, in its International chapter, this report on line enriched by its bonds, notes and illustrations: <http://afjk.org>.

Other documents available (at this date):

- Paperboard of inauguration of the organizers, in polish and in english (5 pages with photographs);
- The memorandum of the history of the monument, by the Shalom Foundation, translated from English;
- The speech of Batia Gilad, translated from English (the only one available in this language);
- Polish Press review: a selection of articles having been able to be translated into French.

The contribution from Poland. (Thanks to Mr Jacek Krogel)

On 1 June 2006 President of the Polish Republic took part in the ceremony of unveiling of the monument of Janusz Korczak in the park near the Parade Square in Warsaw.

Addressing the audience President said:

Ladies and Gentleman, Dear Children,

First of all, I would like to express my great satisfaction, because here, three years ago, I took part in the setting of the cornerstone of the monument. I was then President of the Capital City of Warsaw. We were doing our best to make the monument real, to make it come true. Many a time I was to talk in Warsaw about something we should have commemorated, but we did it too late and in this case it is alike. Obviously, this monument should have been built many, many years ago, but it did not happen and we have it here only today. We already have a monument of a man who was a classical example of the authenticity of the country where you can be a Jew and a Pole or a Pole and a Jew at the same time. Janusz Korczak was the example of a man of incredible personal courage. He was an example of a hero, an example of a man who, on his own accord, decided to die, because he did not want to leave his pupils. At the same time, he was a man of considerable theoretical and scientific achievements as far as the pedagogy is concerned. What King Macius I talked about a moment ago, seemed to be really innovative in those times. And one more thing, as a former President of Warsaw, the first Polish President in history who comes from Warsaw, I thought I should take part in the ceremony. It is not only my personal effort to gather funds, but it is also the fact that Janusz Korczak was a resident of Warsaw by birth and the way of thinking. And his activity, which apart from a short period in Palestine, is closely connected with Warsaw, our capital city.

I think that this day, although a little late, is momentous and great. I am very happy that in a moment, we will have the ceremony of the setting of the monument of this great man. I would like to say once again that I am very happy to be able to take part in this ceremony.

Dear Children,

Today is your day, the Children's Day, so I wish you all the best at school and at home. You are also, as Janusz Korczak said, the people of today. Part of your life, childhood is just passing by. I wish you the happiest childhood and I wish you happiness also when you are not children anymore and finally in this part of your life in which you are adult people. I wish all the best.

Batia Gilad, Israeli Korczak's Association:

Honourable Mister Mirosław Kochalski, Mayor of Warszawa Town,
Honourable Mrs. Golda Tencer, Director of the Shalom Foundation,
Honourable Professor Jadwiga Binczycka, Chairwoman of the Polish Janusz Korczak's Association,
Honourable meeting Participants,

The Korczak's Association in Israel congratulates designers and manufacturers of the Janusz Korczak Monument in Warszawa!

Janusz Korczak – Henryk Goldszmit, Jew-Pole, is a symbol of a man representing universal human values:

- looking for the truth and justice,
- sensitivity towards human needs, in particular those of a child,
- modesty and simplicity,
- and at the same time he is a symbol of the implementation of these ideas in a day-to-day life: in the Jewish Orphanage at the Krochmalna Street and Polish Orphanage at Bielany.

Korczak's personality – a doctor and educator, writer and researcher, dreamer and social activist – is a unique and exceptional example.

He remained loyal to himself and to his principles even under extreme circumstances.

Even though he could save his own life, he did not step away from his path, the path he was always following. He has chosen the death together with his pupils.

Devoted counsellor and tutor. Until his last breath.

Korczak is also a bridge connecting two nations – Polish and Jewish.

I am delighted to see so many young people gathered here, for explicitly the young people whose consciousness is not burdened by the past are able to build friendship between our nations. Friendship based on openness and bilateral understanding.

I would like to close my speech with the quotation by Korczak:

“New generation is growing, new wave is reaching up. They go with their flaws and their values; create circumstances for them to growth up better [...] children – princes of feelings, poets and thinkers.” **(Child's right for respect).**

Jadwiga Binczycka Chairwoman of the Polish Janusz Korczak's Association

The Memory of Korczak

“The eternity of the dead lasts as long as we remember about them”
Wisława Szymborska

What is our memory of Korczak?

What has it been expressed by?

The expression of this memory is the monument which has been unveiled today – the monument of Janusz Korczak, The Great Friend of Children.

Is this memory like a rock, closing “the search” stage, endeavours, efforts, many different contacts, worries? No, it is the memory which opens the stage of new wonders, questions, new discoveries and instructions. Our dreams are coming true, that mothers going to “The Lalka Theatre” with their children, will be telling them who Korczak was and what he did to deserve the monument.

And in this way the memory about The Old Doctor will be alive.

Another way of expressing our memory is the presence of all the people who gathered under the unveiled monument. Among those people are the representatives of all generations (from a small child that goes to a kindergarten in Lodz Area, to Hawka from far-away Israel, who remembers Korczak when he was alive), representatives of our country's highest authorities, of different social groups, institutions; the culture and science people. People, from different countries, admiring Korczak are also present – they came to us from France, Germany, Israel, Slovakia or even from distant Congo.

Korczak's Poland – hundreds of children with guardians, with their tutors – has come.

I also think about those who passed away and are watching us now “from above” taking part in our happiness. I think about Father Jan Twardowski, who expressed his admiration for Korczak using the poetic language.

Father Jan Twardowski refers to him with these words:

“You were so good, that among life's difficulties
You did not perform a miracle only because of your modesty
You were a Jew, did not carry your crucifix
But I come close to you in my submission
I look, touched, at your photo
And I am not able to live and die like you”

With these words Father Twardowski pointed out that Korczak is a symbol of a person who knew how to live and die beautifully. Father Twardowski wanted us to take as much as possible from that Korczak's model.

Korczak was, and still is, the symbol of such values as active goodness, friendliness towards people, respect for a child as a human being, an ability to talk with a child and with an adult, but also such as the act of forgiveness and understanding.

We should follow this symbol, these values by shaping and using them in everyday life. It should become our programme not only for holidays, but also for today, tomorrow and for every other day. It cannot be only the declared and professed programme, but it should influence our lives. Korczak

realized well that this kind of programme would be hard to fulfil. Once he wrote: *“to die for an idea is the easiest way. Such a nice film: one falls with one’s chest shot, the stream of blood on the sand and the grave full of flowers. To live for an idea day by day, year by year is the hardest.”*

Only when Korczak’s ideas and thoughts will be put into our lives, when we warm them with our hearts and actions, the memory of Korczak will be alive and the monument will become something more than just dead, stone creation.

I would like to thank all who contributed to this monument being put up; I thank all who gathered here today.

And I wish all the children, who have their festival today, all the best and I hope that all their dreams will come true. I want you to remember Korczak’s words: *“Children! Have proud plans, high dreams and aim at fame – for certain one of these things will happen.”*

And remember the words: ‘life without dreams and hope would be impossible.

Text by Mr Schudrich

Janusz Korczak taught us the meaning of being both Polish and Jewish. But he also taught us how special our children are and how we need to treasure them.

It is by no coincidence that tonight we will begin to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Shavuot, the anniversary of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. There is a Midrash that says that God said to the Jewish people the following:

I am giving my most precious treasure. For me to give you this treasure I want to know what if the Jews knew how to appreciate treasure and asked them what they thought was their most precious treasure. The Jewish people said “Our forefathers, Avraham, Izaak and Yaakov”. God said that was not enough. So the Jews said “Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah”. And God said that was not enough. And the Jews continued and said “All our great Rabbis and scholars”. And God said that they too were not the most precious treasure that the Jews have. Finally the Jewish people said “Our children”. And God responded: “Yes, now that you have appreciated your most precious treasure, I can now give my most most precious treasure”. And only then did the Jews receive the Torah.

As we celebrate the anniversary of the giving of the Torah, the life of Janusz Korczak reminds us again of the lesson of our Midrash that our children are the most precious treasure we will ever have.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1) Switzerland:

“Master of Advanced Studies in Children’s Rights”

Period: February 2007 till November 2008. 8 modules in 8 different weeks

Place: Institut Universitaire Kurt Busch. PO Box 4176. Ch. 1950 SION 4

Objectives: The *Master of Advanced Studies in Children's Rights* is a part-time two-years postgraduate programme that combines residential teaching and distance learning

For details of the Objectives, the Programme and the Assessment of the students see: www.iukb.ch/mcr.

2) The Netherlands:

“Janusz Korczak International Youth Meeting”

Period: 22-28 September 2007

Place: Bergen aan Zee

Theme: “When I was little again” (based on the title of Korczak's book)

Our mission for this conference is

- How to understand children and how to communicate with them;
- What can we learn from children;
- Mobilizing the competencies of children.

Interested: Mail to info@korczak.nl

3) Germany

Period: 16-18 October

Place: Stuttgart

Conference Topics

Ultimately the conference will seek to identify guiding principles and practices for the realisation of **childfriendly cities**. The conference will focus on mobility from 5 viewpoints:

- urban planning integrating children's view on mobility
- the design of children's space to enable them to move in their environment
- public transport
- children's participation and mobility
- children's mobility and health

Contact: Child in the City Foundation. Loes Waterreus. lwaterreus@europoint-bv.com

Dear friends.

We feel sorry, because it was a lot of information, due to the important issue of the inauguration of the Janusz Korczak Monument in Warsaw.

We wait your News items for the next Newsletter no 20

Please send it to: info@korczak.nl

Greetings from the editors of the Janusz Korczak International Newsletter on-line.