

You are cordially invited to
the Opening and Private View of a new exhibition

Champion of the Child

Janusz Korczak

The man who lived for children and their rights

Tuesday, 5 December 2006

The exhibition will be opened by

Esther Rantzen OBE

Chair and Founder of ChildLine

6.30 pm: Reception and Official Opening at ORT House, 126 Albert Street
(opposite the Jewish Museum)
followed by an opportunity to view the exhibition at the Museum

THE JEWISH MUSEUM

Raymond Burton House

129-131 Albert Street
Camden Town, London NW1 7NB

The Exhibition continues until 8 April 2007

RSVP Tel: 020 7284 1997 E-mail: admin@jewishmuseum.org.uk

The Jewish Museum

London's Museum of Jewish Life

Press Release

**Esther Rantzen OBE, Chair and Founder of ChildLine
to open inspiring exhibition on *Janusz Korczak***

**Major new exhibition exploring one man's fight to
promote the rights of the child**

Champion of the Child: Janusz Korczak

Press opening: 5 December 2006, 5: 30pm. Exhibition runs until
8 April 2007

The Jewish Museum, Camden Town

Champion of the Child: Janusz Korczak tells the heart wrenching yet inspiring story of Janusz Korczak (1879-1942), who devoted his life to establishing the rights of the child, regardless of nationality or religion. His work was eventually posthumously adopted by the United Nations 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 Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. In recognition 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* or *Alice in Wonderland*.

The exhibition also explores how life in Poland became increasingly difficult for Korczak after the Nazi occupation. In 1940, his Jewish orphanage was moved inside the Warsaw Ghetto and on August 6 1942 he was forced to gather together the 200 orphans in his care for deportation. Refusing all offers for his own rescue, Korczak accompanied 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 the exhibition, which highlights the issue of children's rights today. The exhibition will feature original paintings and drawings of Korczak by Yitzhak Belfer, an Israeli artist who was born in Poland in 1923 and raised in Korczak's Warsaw Jewish orphanage.

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

Venue: The Jewish Museum, 129-131 Albert Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7NB

Tel. 020 7284 1997 www.jewishmuseum.org.uk

Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday 10am-4pm, Sunday 10am-5pm

Admission: Adults £3.50, Senior Citizens £2.50, Children/Students/Disabled £1.50,

Family ticket £8. Group Visits and Educational Programmes welcome by prior arrangement

For further information please contact:

Dina Wosner: Tel. 020 7284 1997, marketing@jewishmuseum.org.uk

Notes to Editor

WE ARE HAPPY TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS with various people who have worked with us on the exhibition or who are experts on Janusz Korczak these include:

- Jennifer Marin, Museum Curator, Jewish Museum
- Rickie Burman, Director, Jewish Museum

ASSOCIATED EVENTS INCLUDE:

• ***Empowering the Child – Janusz Korczak’s educational philosophy***

Tuesday 23 January, 7pm

“If you want to reform the world – you must reform education.” Janusz Korczak, from the novel *Street Children*. A workshop for teachers and educators exploring Korczak’s innovative approach to education led by educator **Avi Tzur**. Free admission for teachers.

• ***Living in the Warsaw Ghetto: Reflections of Survivors 60 Years On***

Wednesday 24 January, 7pm

A special talk by Warsaw Ghetto Survivor, **Janina Bauman**, author of *Beyond These Walls*, on the time she spent in the Warsaw Ghetto. **Itzhak Belfer** will speak on his personal experiences in Korczak’s orphanage. The event will be chaired by **Professor Zygmund Bauman**, emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of Leeds.

AT THE TWO ABOVE EVENTS for Holocaust Memorial Day, there will be a unique opportunity to meet Israeli artist Yitzhak Belfer, who was raised in Korczak’s Warsaw orphanage and whose artwork appears in the exhibition.

• ***Who Was Janusz Korczak?***

Thursday 15 February, 7pm

Jonathan Salt, teacher and founder of the St Ives Youth Theatre, will appear in character as Janusz Korczak and bring to life this world-renowned figure who is still relatively unrecognised in the UK. Introduced by psychotherapist and Korczak expert **Sandra Joseph**.

• ***Who Will Speak For Me? Children’s Rights Today Around the World***

Tuesday 13 March, 7pm

Professor Michael Freeman, Professor of English Law at University College London and **Professor Carolyn Hamilton**, Professor of Law and Director of the Children’s Legal Centre, University of Essex, will examine Janusz Korczak’s legacy in the field of children’s rights today. This event will be chaired by **Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green** Children’s Commissioner for England.

Admission to each of the above events is £5 (Museum Friends and students £4) including admission to the *Champion of the Child: Janusz Korczak* exhibition and Museum galleries one hour before the event.

For more information on any of these events or for a full programme please contact Dina Wosner on: Tel. 020 7284 1997, marketing@jewishmuseum.org.uk