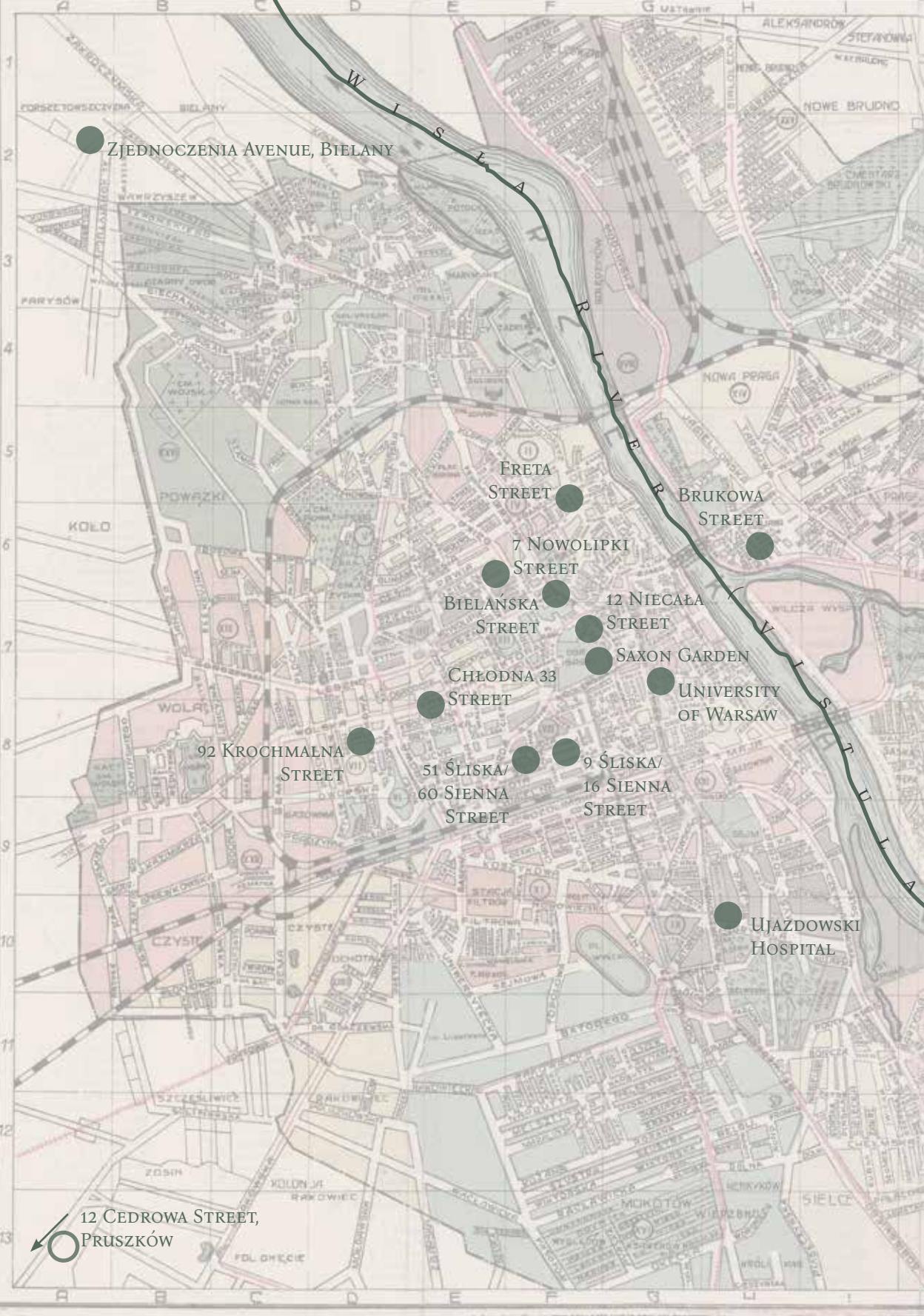
Our Home: Janusz Korczak's Experiments in Democracy


Zjednoczenia Avenue, Bielany
Freta Street
Brukowa Street
7 Nowolipki Street
Bielańska Street
12 Niecała Street
Saxon Garden
Chłodna 33 Street
University of Warsaw
92 Krochmalna Street
51 Śliska/ 60 Sienna Street
9 Śliska/ 16 Sienna Street
Ujazdowski Hospital
12 Cedrowa Street, Pruszków
WISŁA
RIVER
VISTULA

Janusz Korczak in Warsaw

Bielańska Street – childhood home

Freta Street – primary school

Brukowa Street – high school

Saxon Garden – nearby play space

12 Niecała Street – editorial office of *'Kolce'* ('Spikes')

University of Warsaw – medical studies

51 Śliska (60 Sienna) Street – Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital

Ujazdowski Hospital – military hospital

92 Krochmalna Street – *Orphan's Home* (*Dom Sierot*)

12 Cedrowa Street, Pruszków – first location of *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*); 1919-1928

34 Zjednoczenia Avenue, Bielany – *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*) from 1928

7 Nowolipki Street – editorial office of *'Mały Przegląd'* ('Little Review')

Czaplowizna – *Różyczka* (*Little Rose*) Kindergarten and Camp

33 Chłodna Street – relocation of *Orphan's Home* within the Warsaw Ghetto; November, 1940-October 1941

9 Śliska (16 Sienna) Street – Final orphanage location of Janusz Korczak, staff and the children before transportation to the death camp at Treblinka, August 1942

Our Home: Janusz Korczak's Experiments in Democracy

Basia Vucic
Zuzanna Sękowska

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Scientific reviewer:
Prof. Dr Anna Odrowąż-Coates

Text authors:
Basia Vucic pp. 7-90, 94-104, 110-125;
Zuzanna Sękowska pp. 91-93, 105-109
All translations from original Polish by 1st author B. Vucic.

Editors
Basia Vucic, Zuzanna Sękowska (graphic editor)

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We pose the question – what do you really know about Janusz Korczak and his home?

Walking in Korczak's footsteps, you will meet some of his mentors, friends and even enemies. Listen to the old legends and absent voices. Bring your light closer and cast out the shadows. We will sow the seeds under the snow, which in the spring blossom into new ways of thinking and doing. When you come across a fragment of truth, close the page and spin your thoughts.

Know thyself. Maybe together we can create a new myth which foretells of a better world. Considerable research went into this book, although we did not write it as an academic text. We give you no ready-made answers and only fill in some gaps in Korczak's life and literature so that you may take your own road.

Inspired by his writing style, we meander through the side streets of his philosophy. Part tour guide, part archaeological dig, prepare to go on a unique journey. We will give you the map of this lost territory and leave clues – but you must dig for the treasure yourself.

You cannot step into the same book twice!

Figure: Portrait of Janusz Korczak. Postcard, 1933. [Polish National Digital Library]

Janusz Korczak[1]

was born **Henryk Goldszmit** in 1878 or 1879, as a Polish-Jew in Warsaw. The city was under the rule of the Russian Empire. Poland, as a country, did not exist. By the time he enrolled at medical school, Korczak was already earning a living as a political writer and tutor. Highly intellectual and socially engaged in his youth, Korczak quickly became dissatisfied with the standard the Russian education offered. Prompted by his friends, he simultaneously commenced at an illegal Polish university. He studied sociology, pedagogy, psychology and philosophy with excellent Polish professors. During his university years, Korczak found success as a writer and supported himself with additional work as a tutor. After graduation from medical school, Korczak continued his paediatric specialisation in Berlin and Paris, before being conscripted and stationed in China as a doctor in the Russo-Japanese war. During his absence, Korczak books sold well, gaining him minor celebrity status and more publishing offers.

After completing his medical studies and several years of hospital work, from 1912, together with Stefania Wilczyńska, he directed the orphanage, *Dom Sierot* (*Orphan's Home*), for the Jewish 'Aid for Orphans' Society. This new facility established the project of a self-governing community, alongside a research program on the development and social life of children (aged 7 to 14 years). At various times there was also a youth dormitory; serving as vocational

training for apprentice educators. In 1919, together with partners, he created a similar institution *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*) for Polish children.

He served as a member of various educational and social associations including those linked to the turn of the century independence movement. He worked as a lecturer for institutions educating teachers, nurses and social-care workers and participated in numerous social campaigns. The orphanages (known as children's homes) and his many publications, secured Korczak's fame beyond Poland. He gained the admiration of high ranking figures in international education such as Jean Piaget and Nadezhda Krupskaya. His pedagogical ideas were debated internationally during his lifetime with his books translated into Russian in the 1920s and English and French in the 1930s[2].

He was the creator of the highly original children's newspaper '*Mały Przegląd*' ('Little Review') – founded in 1926 and written by children. In the 1930s, Korczak regularly presented on Polish Radio and often appeared as an expert witness in court. Having served as a soldier in three wars and bore witness to revolutions; he was quick to volunteer with civil resistance in 1939. In the summer of 1942, German soldiers began the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, forcing the closure of the orphanage and famous march of the inmates to Umschlagplatz. Janusz Korczak died together with his Jewish associates and children in the German-run extermination camp in Treblinka.

Our desire is to organise the children's society on the principles of justice, brotherhood (fraternity), equal rights and obligations.

Janusz Korczak, in '*Nasz Dom*' *Society Report 1921-1923*[3]

Figure: Janusz Korczak with children from *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*) in the 1930s. [Nasz Dom Archive][4]

Figure: Postcard with view of the Old Town and Wisła River pre-1912. [Public domain]

According to popular philosophy of the time, what remains in a national consciousness is geographic sensitivity and a recollection of past heroes. Legends assume the force of nature. Anchored by their historical and geographic location – Korczak and Warsaw existed together, and he describes his identity as characterised by this relationship:

> *I love my Warsaw-ian Wisła (the Vistula River) and torn from Warsaw I sense a burning longing.*
> *Warsaw is mine, and I am hers. I will say even more: I am her.*
> *Together with her, I was happy and sad; her weather has been my weather, her rain and mud, mine too.*
> *I grew up together with her.*
> *Warsaw was the territory or workshop of my work, here a place to stand, over there graves.*
>
> *Pamiętnik i inne pisma z getta*
> *(Memoirs and other writings from the ghetto)*[5]

Figure: Photography of the Warsaw Mermaid monument.
[Polish National Digital Archive]

Long, long ago there was a fishing village surrounded by primaeval forest on the banks of the Wisła River. The villagers talked about the appearance of a mythical creature blessed with a beautiful voice – a *syrenka* (mermaid).

Now and again, when the moon sat low over the river, the villagers could hear her sing. One night, some fishermen planned to capture the *syrenka* and sell her to the prince for gold. The next full moon, they brought along their young apprentice to help string a net between the boulders in the river. To avoid hearing her captivating singing, they plugged their ears full of wax. Soon enough, the *syrenka* swam directly into their trap, and they hauled her out of the water. While the others went to fetch a wagon, the young lad was left to stand guard over the prisoner. Seeing the mermaid trying to speak, the boy became curious to hear what she was saying so unclogged his ears. 'Please, help me', she pleaded, give me my freedom, and you can come with me', humming her melody. Enchanted by her words, he cut the *syrenka* free and carried her

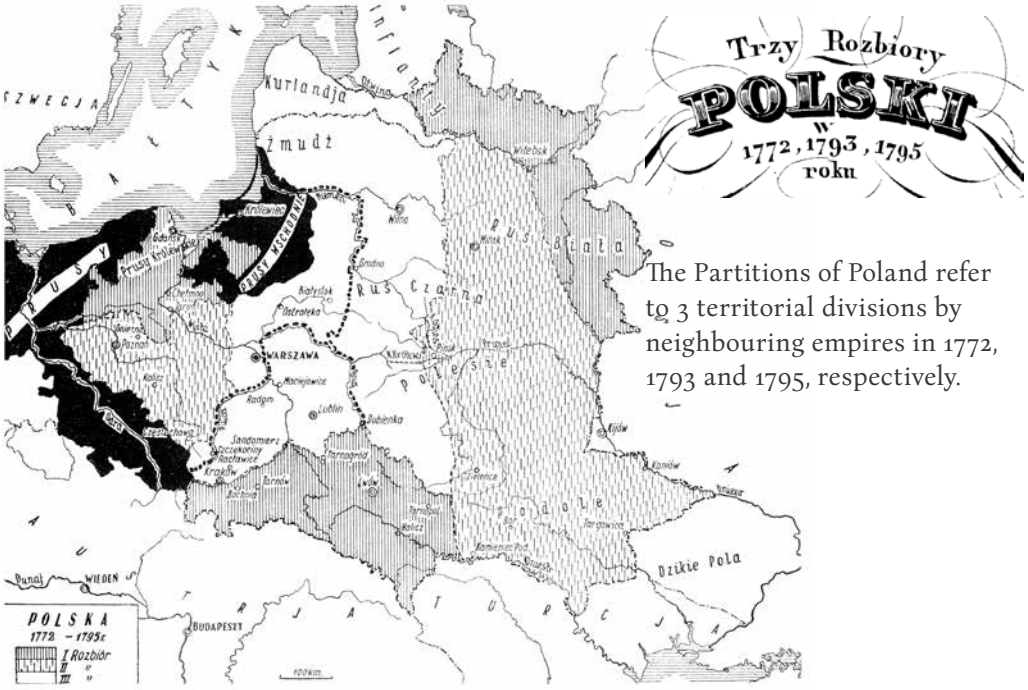
to the water's edge. The other fishermen returned to see their nets empty and chased after them, but it was too late. With the *syrenka* already swimming in the fast-flowing river, the boy also jumped in as the angry mob ran towards him. The *syrenka* stopped and called out to the furious villagers left behind on the shore –

I came to bring you a magical gift, but all you saw was a fish to catch and sell at the market! I forgive you, and I promise one day I will be back. With sword in hand, I will protect you once more.

With these words, the *syrenka* disappeared, and no-one knows what happened to the boy who dared to follow.

Today, the city of Warsaw stands in the place of that village on the banks of the Wisła River. Though Polish women often appear represented as mothers or saints, their legacy as conspirators and military heroes is legendary. Serving as role models for resistance and independence, the Tsar described the Polish woman as his greatest fear because the Polish nation always acted through them[6]. In 1938, the City built a bronze sculpture to protect them once more. This *Syrenka* with sword raised stands on the riverbank symbolising the real-life women who answered the call.

Figure: Photography of the Warsaw Mermaid monument. [Polish National Digital Archive]



The Partitions of Poland refer to 3 territorial divisions by neighbouring empires in 1772, 1793 and 1795, respectively.

Russia, Prussia and Austria progressively reduced the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth until Poland and Lithuania ceased to exist.

Figure: *Map of the three Partitions of Poland.* [Polish National Digital Library]

The first national uprising in 1794 against the partitioning powers became known as the Kościuszko Uprising. Led by General Tadeusz Kościuszko, who had returned from success in the American Revolutionary War, the Polish-Lithuanian rebels claimed victory. Unfortunately, the fear of pro-independence spreading to other regions rallied the Empires' armed forces to seal the final partition.

Without a Poland on the map, Poles fought to save the idea of their nation against increasing repression of 'Polish-ness' in public spaces. Literature, music and art became instruments of resistance by maintaining cultural and linguistic identity. Adam Mickiewicz portrayal of Kościuszko in his poem *Pan Tadeusz* holds the status of a literary classic to this day. At the same time, the Polish national anthem *Dąbrowski's Mazurka* is a tribute to another veteran of the Kościuszko Uprising.

To avoid the harsh Russian censorship, the Poles had to disguise any historically and geographically significant names, folk traditions and art. Political messages were encrypted within ancient legends as writers replaced words such as 'Poland' or 'country' with 'ours' (*nasz*) or 'home' (*dom*). Elaborate symbolism, allegories, insider jokes and even song lyrics fused to became the dense style of late 19th-century literature and the unofficial language of the Polish intelligentsia[7]. By the turn of the 20th century, writers, poets, publishers and journalists were at the heart of the revolutionary movement, speaking directly to the people. In his work, Korczak created interlinked puzzles to pay tribute to his literary heroes but also to challenge readers to delve deeper into their ideas.

Writers such as Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and Ernest Buława[8] inspired Korczak who adopted their phrase 'sculptors of souls' in his educational work.

Korczak's *Confessions of a Butterfly* (1914) borrows from Buława's (1875) poem of the same name though not directly referring to the content. Keenly aware of Russian censorship, he is probably reminding his fellow Poles of Buława's verse *'On the Question of Nursery Schools'* from 1868.

> ***Philanthropists are shouting on all sides,***
> ***Education of the people! Enlighten Poland,***
> ***And independence will follow her in the tracks!***

A Short History of Polish Education[9]

Figure: Monument of Mikołaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus) at the Academy of Science in Warsaw. [Public domain]

Across Europe, 18th-century Poland became a symbol of anarchy without order or clear leadership and authorities feared a French-inspired revolt loomed[10]. Forming a unique partnership, both King and Church promoted science and mass education as essential to save the endangered Polish Commonwealth. The renewal of the nation began with educational reform involving the secularisation of all schools and access to education for all social classes, including women.

A few years ahead of the French revolution, Poland had modern Europe's first national education authority. Remarkably progressive, the curriculum for children recommended teaching through the senses and hands-on experiences with a focus on children's needs and development. Elementary schools even advocated learning through play and promoting children's curiosity. Despite maintaining ties with the clergy, moral education differed to religious education, with a focus on everyday duties and citizenship. The new schools taught responsibility through a set of secular virtues related to Stoicism. Emphasising economic, political and social development emphasised children demonstrate respect for property and others. Self-governance appeared as a fundamental principle for citizens to experience governance and self-determination within all spheres of life. This short-lived government promoted education as essential for the happiness and prosperity of the people and the country. A surprising attitude for the 18th century was in teachers instructed to treat the peasant children with respect, gentleness and avoid corporal punishment. Despite its inevitable failure, it seeded a revolutionary idea; that everyone could achieve status with their right to access education. A new national myth was born, one that would last for centuries to come.

'Enlightenment' required a new vocabulary and reformed ways of thinking accompanied by the appropriate logic. Rebuilding the Polish language around ethical concepts, produced one such example relating to *wychowanie* (*vi-ho-van-ye*) an untranslatable word concerning education, care and upbringing. It links to the philosophical volumes of Bronisław Trentowski, titled *Chowanna, czyli system pedagogiki narodowej*[11] (1842; 1846 – *Concealment, or the System of National Pedagogy*). Educators like Korczak found inspiration from Trentowski who prioritised **society's discovery of children's rights**.

> ***There is a beautiful Polish word: '*wychować*' (to raise) associated with 'to hide'. Not the German 'erziehen' – pull – drag – tear. To hide is to protect, defend, shield – protect against cold, abandonment, suffering. Poland, exposed to invasions and partitions, raised children in order to pass them on to new times and the new content of life from generation to generation. This process continues.***
>
> *On Rescue for Children*, 1937[12]

In the *Chowanna* (*ho-van-nah*) pedagogy, each nation had to ensure the elevation of culture is inclusive of everyone, even the weak or undesirable. The process patiently supported free action and self-education to tame the 'primitive man' within. This concept states the savage is not amongst the lower class or in a distant land. Instead, the primitive lives enraged or subdued, driven by hunger, need and desire, inside the hearts of all individuals of all nations.

> ***[the infant] as a primitive man listened to the murmur of the forest, the murmur of the river, the howling of the wind to read the instructions of the gods***
>
> *Bobo*, 1914[13]

Poland's Resurrection

During Poland's absent years, Polish émigré writers in Paris blurred the poetic and the philosophical into a movement known as Messianism. The poets such as Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki gained cult status as the saviours of the nation. The tragedy of Poland became a Romantic symbol of martyrdom for all of humanity, especially in France. Polish Messianism emerged out of the French idea that achieving progress

Figure: The procession on Freedom Day 1905. At the Adam Mickiewicz statue in Warsaw. [Polish National Digital Archives]

came with successive reincarnation[14]. Poles drew parallels with Christ's suffering and resurrection as bringing about spiritual liberation. Extrapolated to social and political transformation, the plight of Poland represented its martyrdom to provide redemption and a return to ethical life for all of humanity. In the revolutionary years, many revered their work as sacred texts. In his *Diary*, Korczak refers to his poetic predecessors, wondering if he should write his memoirs in the style of Słowacki. In writing *How to Love a Child* (1919) during World War I, Korczak barely disguised the quasi-nationalistic sentiment by quoting from his Messianic poem:

For to be born is not to be raised from the dead;
the coffin may give us up again, but it will never gaze
like a mother at us.

Juliusz Słowacki, *Anhelli.*
In: *How to Love a Child, 1919*

Figure: *Poland raised from the dead.* Fragment of the theatre poster. [National Digital Library of Poland]

The 11th of November, 1918; is taken as the symbolic date of Poland regaining its independence. The propaganda leaflets said that 'the fetters that were forced onto us over 100 years ago by Russia, Germany and Austria'[15] fell off. This process was not sudden and simultaneous. The independence of Poland and negotiating the terms of the new state reality took place gradually. The symbolic time of 'regaining independence' was only the beginning of challenges and set new tasks for the authorities of the young state.

The political consequences of the end of World War I and the signing of international peace treaties strengthened Poland's sovereignty. On the 10th of November 1918, Józef Piłsudski came to Warsaw, and a little earlier the People's Government of Poland was formed. After 123 years Poland returned to the map of Europe. The lands so far divided between the three partitions: Russia, Prussia, and Galicia were reunited. The challenge was to 'unite' parts of the nation with various cultural and linguistic influences. The economic and urban equalization of different parts of the country was also critical. 'What has been destroyed and ruined by slavery in our political, economic, and moral life, we must repair and build a new construction

of the whole of national life. It is hard work, requires great persistence and great energy, and above all, the concentration of all creative forces of the entire nation'[16].

To understand references to the nation's reincarnation, resurrection or as being re-born, it is useful to understand the legend of how Poland was born in the first place.

Figure: *1918-1928 Ten years of Polish Independence*. Fragment of the occasional poster. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Figure: Portrait of Józef Piłsudski. One of the Fathers of Polish Independence. [Polish National Digital Archive]

Figure: Królewska Street in Warsaw. Independence Day decorations in the 1930s. [Polish National Digital Archive]

Polish history is a well-known theme in Korczak's children's story, *Król Macius Pierwszy* (*King Matt the First*). Teachers plan lessons around the book, using the 1793 Constitution and various wars to discuss historical events in Poland. However, if King Matt is a snapshot of the period of resurrection, the story is loosely based upon the birth of Poland itself. That legend tells of *Król Mieszko Pierwszy* (*King Mieszko the First*) a little blind prince who gains sight and upon becoming king, attempts to reform his country.

Vox populi, vox Dei

The Legend of Poland, as it became known, dates to the 12th century written by a monk, Gallus Anonymous[17]. The legend celebrates a pagan ruler, Mieszko I as the founder of Poland becoming a Christian nation. The boy is described as blind and miraculously recovered his sight. The interpretation is that by converting to Christianity, he became *enlightened* in his faith and wisdom to become the saviour of his people. One part of this legend is highly unusual for any writing from the Middle Ages. His father, the old King, did not believe the news of the boy's miracle until it came from someone he trusted – his wife. Canon law at the time dictated that women were not to serve as witnesses in disputed cases. This story shows the strong influence of local tradition overriding the teachings of the Church. The pagan Poles considered some women as having extraordinary character, virtues or even the gift of prophetic sight. Once the King gains faith, he can understand the rational explanation of the given order of things which his wife already knew intuitively.

Sapere Auso

His ancestors facilitate young Mieszko's rise to power as he inherits the abilities and customs of the dynasty. However, to move beyond this starting point requires his effort in developing his innate capabilities and improving upon the old ways. The young king must gather and carry the past forward, gradually making modifications in line with continually changing conditions. This process of enlightenment was successful if the 'bringer of light' effectively improved the lives

of others. In historical terms, Mieszko's religious conversion was likely due to his Christian wife. She had refused to marry him unless the King gave up Paganism. Mieszko's foreign-born wife brought wealth, knowledge and customs of her nation to enrich Poland. The themes of an authoritative female advisor-partner with strange looks, custom and manner appear in Korczak's story, in the form of King Matt's friendship and betrothment to the African princess, Klu Klu.

For Korczak's hero, King Matt must also learn the traditions of his Kingdom, and by teaching himself to read, the little king who was 'blind' can now see. However, just as Mieszko continues Medieval feuds with neighbours, 'good' King Matt is grounded in his industrialised era. The story echoes colonial realities of the time and the race of European nations to conquer and strip continents of their wealth. It draws mainly upon the English who sought to formalize colonial rule by controlling their subjects through means other than force or coercion. Similarly, Matt employs the 'friendliest' of methods to build a railway to transport African resources to enrich his kingdom and fund his war.

Figure: Still from the *King Matt the First* movie by Wanda Jakubowska, 1957. [Public domain]

Do Mean Boys Read Books About Awesome Girls?[18]

A child posed the question "Do mean boys read books about awesome girls?" and suggested Korczak had a deliberate strategy to combat pervasive stereotypes held by the public. Rather than viewing children as innocent or good, Korczak acknowledged children as already real-life experiences of power in an unjust and violent society. Suppose adults try to teach moral lessons by erasing or ignoring the realities of racism, sexism and classism. In treating symptoms, they reduce awareness of the problem while appearing to children as ignorant or naive. Books can generate intense emotions – upon encountering unfairness, and injustice children may become sad, outraged or even self-aware, translating into action and change. Questioning notions of power in society, Korczak explained how roles become internalised:

> ***Why does a girl at a neutral age already differ so much from a boy? Because in addition to the drawbacks of childhood, she is subjected to extra limitations as a woman. The boy, deprived of rights on the grounds of being a child, firmly grasps with both hands the privilege of his sex and will not loosen his grip to share it with a female peer.***
> ***'I'm allowed to, and I can – I'm a boy'*** [19]***.***

In the children's book, everyone teases King Matt about his height, age, and foolishness, so he seldom seems like a hero. Meanwhile, further into the story (where gatekeepers rarely check) appears a counter-narrative of a girl starting from a lowly position to rise successfully. Quick to learn, she has a remarkable memory and aptitude for the natural sciences – a quality much admired. She even leads the Kingdom's military, political and educational strategies while the boys take a back seat. Like male characters of the era, Princess Klu-Klu displays the heroic virtues of courage, innovation and commitment to justice. She demonstrates loyalty to her friends and also to her people and culture while navigating a new world. Although she has displeased her father (the paternal break), she is becoming a wise ruler and working out

her roles in life. In contrast to Matt's sometimes tyrannical demands, Klu Klu demonstrates an understanding of democratic leadership, its risks and limitations.

As an explicitly African female character, the villagers do not embrace her taking much time to appreciate the dark-skinned, curly-haired girl. Subjected to outward racism, she works hard to gain their trust.
Her growing popularity amongst the people peaks with a forceful performance in the Parliament. Korczak took a significant risk to include a black heroine as an example of 1920s disruptive text. In recommending books and film for children and young people, he craves to win the 'right of citizenship' in literature generally[20]. Newspapers and biographical films can become a source of knowledge and deep experience, in his opinion. Meanwhile, in a book the child may find answers to questions they are anxious, sad or ashamed to communicate. Presenting unexpected plots and a protagonist from a visible minority to expose children to ideals beyond the dominant narrative provides space to think critically. Despite any shortcomings, Klu-Klu, the African princess, appeared more than half a century before Shearer's *Snow White* (1980) and for that alone she should be celebrated.

Figure: Stamp commemorating the 20th anniversary of Korczak's death (1962)[21].

Figure: Janusz Korczak as a child. [Public Domain]

At 64 years of age, Korczak described himself as entering his 10th stage of life by dividing his lifetime into 7-year blocks or '*mentalite*'. He is aware of this as a tradition of medicine but confesses it came from an encounter with 'old magic' as a child. Each *mentalite* suggests not only biological or psychological development but the influence of the social group and the spirit of the age. Young Henryk attended a primary school on Freta Street near the Old Town, and a gymnasium (high school) in the Praga district, remembering both as humiliating experiences. Under the Russian authorities, education was harsh and characterised by severe corporal punishment. His schooling reinforced his resolve to work for change.

> ***The school should be the forge where the most sacred slogans are hammered out – she should loudly call out for human rights...***[22]

In his story, *The Feral Week*, the main character is not a child of the street or trapped in the salon, but the child of a regular middle-class family. Yet he still endures the same daily humiliation in the school system. In a hierarchy beginning at the top – the headmaster after being scolded by the school inspector, in turn, humiliates the

teachers who abuse their students. Overworked parents craving peace and quiet, give little attention to their children. Instead, tutors, nannies and coaches are hired to produce academic and social results while working under the threat of an hourly salary. The child, is always the victim at the bottom, except when he responds to his humiliation by tormenting girls or younger children. Gradually, the adult institutions of the school and the family suppress all forms of resistance and rebellion. Korczak claimed education and child-rearing was not tailored towards the individual or even the common good but generally aimed at future work for the benefit of employers and the State.

Figure: Newspaper strike at the 'Warsaw Kurjer' 1905.
[National Digital Library of Poland]

Maria Konopnicka is described by Korczak (1942) as one of his 'teachers in civic work' in his 'Application' or CV. That he shared her perspective of social justice for the marginalised and oppressed is evident in Korczak's first novels (1901 and 1904), written from the standpoints of poor street children and the isolated child of wealthy families. His text *Koszałki Opałki* (1905) translates as 'imaginary things' or 'nonsense' and shares its title with one of Konopnicka's characters. Here Korczak takes a satirical look at the various 'tribes' of Warsaw. His book is described by critics as a 'protest' novel and earns Korczak the label of 'agitator'[23].

Figure: Portrait of Maria Konopnicka. [Polish National Digital Library]

Maria Konopnicka[24]

A polyglot of at least seven languages, Konopnicka was initially homeschooled in the Greek classics and Biblical psalms by her father, while reading Polish literature. She embarked on a career as a writer, achieving success and the financial independence allowing her to raise her six children on her own. Interweaving Biblical and classical references, Konopnicka was the champion of the unheard, by giving a voice to the poor and ill-educated. Not satisfied with literary success, Konopnicka was an instrumental figure against the government in the children's strikes at the turn of the 20th century. Her involvement with 'Orphan's Nests' publicised the plight of children to her audience[25]. Despite heavy censorship, her skill in weaving deeply patriotic symbols galvanised communities in standing against brutal treatment by these regimes. Overall, the role of culture and writers served the cause of Poland's freedom with such texts becoming iconic protests.

As a poet she created a large body of work and also inspired the next generation. She wrote about the beauty of the world conveying faith, hope and love[26]. Today, Konopnicka is now best known for her much-loved story, *Historia o Krasnoludkach i o Sierotce Marysi* (*History of Gnomes/Dwarves and of Little Orphan Mary*, 1896). Free of explicit moral lessons and highly original, Konopnicka aimed to awaken aesthetic sensitivity

in young readers. Following the seasons of the year, it tells the story of a group of gnomes who spend winter underground and surfacing in the spring. On this occasion, the heroic gnomes help a little orphan, Mary and a miserable family during the autumn. The *krasno-lud(ek)* is better translated as a gnome, but the literal translation is 'rustic-people' and in the story, the gnome, Koszałek Opałek related their ancient history during the Piast dynasty. Still, the dwarf has become closely aligned with Snow White, and so the story escaped communist censorship. The figure of the gnome or dwarf inhabited Slavic beliefs about spiritually bound tribes of people and is not to be confused with the Germanic literary dwarf appearing in fairy tales. Although many relegate Konopnicka's story into the genre of children's literature, the symbolic standing of the gnome has remained in the Polish psyche as a symbol of rights for the oppressed. One example is in the 1980s student uprisings in Wrocław, known as the 'Revolution of the Dwarfs'. The protestors demanded 'king-size' rights for even the littlest, evoking Konopnicka's powerful symbol which for many lay dormant since childhood.

Figure: *Historia o Krasnoludkach i o Sierotce Marysi* (*History of Gnomes/Dwarves and of Little Orphan Mary*). Book cover. [National Digital Library of Poland]

A story can be told a hundred times and always be different because the relationship changes over time as we change. The circumstances of the reading also change, as each new audience of children brings new sensations; a fresh taste. The role of the educator or narrator of the book is to gain awareness of the individual child's reaction to different moments:

> ***…he takes, digests and grows, spits, throws away and down.***
> ***A fairy tale and a child – so different fairy tales and different children –***
> ***and different ways of storytelling: form, technique – voice, gesture, facial expressions, pace, accents – all important!***

Bajka, 1935/1936[27]

Korczak imagines a future where each Faculty of Education would include a professor of children's literature and labelled his literary theories as *Bajkoterapia* (*Bai-ko-te-rup-ya*) or *Folktale Therapy*. It differs from psychological therapy, closer to the participatory stance of researchers and practitioners. He disagreed with the popular psychoanalytic method by arguing that each folktale does not have only one analysis and different children respond in different ways. He claims the stories are not inert and provide a reflective space for the child to form a relationship not necessarily with the author or the characters but with the book itself:

> ***We do not pay much attention to the child's relationship to the book, to her free will in communion with the book, at her one-on-one reviewing the pages. The child firstly, and perhaps only, feels the book. To write a book for children requires direct contact with the listener, not the content, not the story, but the emotional stimulus like music.***

The World of Books, 1929[28]

Children have their individual opinions on stories, reacting uniquely to the visuals and concepts presented within them. Korczak

explains that he operates only with the material of 'childish questions' and defends the child's belief in such tales. Though containing flights of imagination and universal elements, Korczak explains the historical significance of stories to parents.

> ***A fairy tale, but it is not the product of our fancy.***
>
> ***Before our very eyes, a female human being has emerged out of the concubine. For centuries, she has succumbed to a role imposed upon her by force; she was made to a pattern moulded by the will and selfishness of the man who did not want to see a woman as a worker among the people, just as today he still fails to see a child as a worker.***
>
> *Fr. 64, How to Love a Child: Family*[29]

Like the imagery used by 19th-century women activists, Korczak attempted to develop an analogy between children and slavery. Throughout his books, he pointed to vocabulary meanings, custom, dress and discipline to underpin his theory of children as oppressed people.

> ***The child feels the pinch of slavery, suffers from the fetters, longs for freedom which he won't find because, while the form may change, the substance of the ban and coercion is sustained. We cannot change our adult life so long as we are reared in slavery. We cannot liberate the child as long as we remain in chains ourselves.***
>
> *Fragment 98, How to Love a Child: Family, 1919*[30]

Figure: Photograph of children playing in the Saxon Gardens with a view of the Saxon Palace in the background, 1890. [Public domain]

Henryk Goldszmit was born on the 22nd of July in 1878 (or 1879) in Warsaw. The family's first home was on Bielańska Street (near Długa – no longer standing) though they moved many times during his younger years. As a shy and thoughtful child, Henryk was often lonely and recalled fondly his time spent in the Ogród Saski (Saxon Garden) and the various people he met.

Raised in a respectable, Polish-Jewish household, Korczak writes of the boy who is estranged from other children by an overprotective parent, possibly referring to his mother, Cecylia Goldszmit (Gębicka) (1853-1920). In the family, both his father, Józef Goldszmit (1844-1896) and his uncle, Jakub were qualified lawyers and dedicated writers. Both brothers wrote in similar genres focused on moral tales, almanacs

and life-stories, which highlighted similarities in Christian and Jewish traditions and the aspirations of both communities in terms of improving education. This older generation adopted the label 'Jew-Pole', which Korczak later used to describe himself. Jakub Goldszmit audaciously secured patronage from the famous writer, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski. Years later, his young nephew Henryk renewed the family's dedication by choosing the pseudonym, Janusz Korczak, adapted from a character in a Kraszewski novel[31].

> *I love you, respect and worship you.*
> *You yourself are the Sphinx, an unsolved riddle.*
>
> Janusz Korczak wrote about Kraszewski[32]

Figure: View of the Kierbedź Bridge, Warsaw, pre-1899. [Polish National Digital Library]

Figure: Postcard with view of Niecała Street, 1893. (Location of publisher '*Kolce*'). [Public domain]

Henryk's father had increasingly erratic interactions with him and his sister Anna. His mental illness progressively deteriorated until committed into an insane asylum during his son's adolescent years. With the family plunging into poverty, Henryk took increasing financial responsibility working as a tutor. The first publishing success came in 1896 coinciding with the death of his father. It was a humorous piece in the satirical gazette, '*Kolce*' ('Spikes'), where he would publish more than 30 articles on various social subjects such as family, literature, theatre and morality[33].

Starting university in 1899, significantly changed Henryk's motives towards a more sophisticated social critic. Although continuing his humorous style, his writing took a different form with a permanent feature column in 'Spikes' where he mockingly commented upon the hypocrisy in society and family life. This new trend coincided with his joining a sister journal, *Czytelnia dla Wszystkich* (The Reading Room for Everyone) oriented at social welfare[34]. Illiteracy rates were high,

and reading rooms (public libraries) were commonly banned, so reading was not really 'for everyone' as the title cheekily suggests.

Satire is not purely a genre of comedy but a philosophy which offers a blueprint for how to survive during uncertain times. Korczak, as a classics scholar and satirist, mixed humour with serious matters to ridicule how absurd and foolish people could be. His language mirrored his ethical position, not seeking perfection but calling for constant self-reflection and improvement with genuine positivity towards others.

Hodos ano kato

Rather than preaching against evil and applauding good, he criticised such beliefs. Instead, values existed not as opposites but in tension with one another. The road up is the road down, as Korczak explained that, his father called him names such as 'klutz', 'loudmouth' and even 'idiot' or 'donkey'. In defence, his grandmother called him a philosopher. He decided both of them were valid, both right, half and half[35].

> ***The child – that little nothing, is the flesh-&-blood brother of the ocean wave, of the wind & ashes; of the sun and the Milky Way.***
> ***This speck of dust is the brother of every ear of corn, every blade of grass – every fledgeling from the nest.***
> ***There is something in the child which feels & explores – suffers, desires & delights – loves & hates, believes & doubts, something that approaches, something that turns aside.***
> ***In its thought, this small speck of dust can embrace everything: stars & oceans, the mountain & the abyss.***
>
> *Bobo*, 1914

Figure: University of Warsaw. Postcard, 1912. [National Digital Library of Poland]

The decade in which Korczak began his professional career as a doctor was a period of unexpectedly quick social changes. It coincided with a tumultuous period in Korczak's personal life against the backdrop of war and revolution. Some student revolutionaries had taken to gathering in public; in parks and on the shores of the Wisła River. Still, private apartments were the preferred meeting places for trusted alliances. Korczak spoke of his youth wandering along the riverbank with friends amidst the seedy side of the city. His friendship with the feminist, Zofia Nałkowska, was life-changing by way of her social introductions and her enrolling Korczak at the illegal women's Flying University. Above all, Korczak credits her father Wacław Nałkowski, as highly influential with creative educational reforms[36]. Korczak's last year in medical school at the Warsaw University, coincided with the end of his 9-year writing partnership at the 'Spikes' gazette. Publishing an article at least every week, his interest in pedagogical topics was already evident. For example, in 1904 Korczak reported on an experimental school intent on supporting failing students where

he worked with his former employer, Stefania Sempołowska[37]. Guided by one of his 'illegal' professors, Ludwik Krzywicki, the school operated without formal grades or punishment and prioritised physical wellbeing with regular breaks and hot meals. Associating with the socio-political critics at the magazine '*Głos*' ('Voice'), they soon invited him into their inner circle.

> ***the sun rises, this time already in the west***
>
> *Panie Stanisławie!*, 1906[38]

Via such illegal publications and networks, radical kulturalniks sought to steer political and cultural life in Warsaw at the turn of the 20th century. Unlike the word for a citizen in other languages, the origins of the Polish word '*obywatel*' reflects the idea in its expression as a spirit of citizenship, civic duty and acting civilly. Polish writers often criticised the Poles for cultivating heroic virtues to produce a population willing to die in battle for the homeland, but unable to live for it[39]. Their remedy not solely to degrade the heroes but to turn more attention to everyday struggles and work for society. It was a quality Korczak greatly admired in his 'Voice' editor, Jadwiga Szczawińska-Dawid.

> ***We fear death, naively unaware that life is a procession of moments both dying and newly born. A year is only an attempt to understand eternity for our daily use. An instant moment is as long as a smile or a sigh. A mother is anxious to raise her child – she will not succeed. Every time they bid each other farewell, she is a different woman who welcomes a different person upon return.***
>
> *A Child's Right to Respect*, 1929

Figure: Portrait of Jadwiga Szczawińska-Dawid. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Jadwiga Szczawińska-Dawid[40]

If we acknowledge Korczak as the 'father of child rights', then Szczawińska-Dawid should be recognised as 'The Mother of Independence'. As a talented student, Szczawińska had no trouble securing a coveted teaching position at a prestigious private school in the 1880s. However, she attempted to teach a progressive curriculum which promoted patriotic and socialist ideals leading to her dismissal. At twenty years of age, frustrated by her inability to access further education, she formalised the underground feminist study groups in Warsaw. The so-called *Latający Uniwersytet* (Flying University) continuously moved locations, attempting to stay ahead of the authorities seeking to close it down. With a ban on women's education by the Tsar and limited opportunities in neighbouring countries, this institution spawned numerous copycats. More than 5000 young women graduated, including dual Nobel prize winner, Maria Skłodowska-Curie. Her thirty published articles and books demonstrate her commitment to social and political issues and her grasp of how these relate to problems with education. Topics covered ranged from women's pensions, girls' education to the need for public libraries. In 1907, she criticised the suffragette struggles in Britain for the 'votes' campaign's class division. Ideas on women's rights at the turn of the century in Warsaw were different from those in the West. Her claim considered voting as just one political instrument amongst other

tools for women and the poor to widen economic and social freedoms. Operating under constant threat of arrest or worse, Polish feminists, both male and female, characterised the struggle for emancipation. Men could not vote either, so the movement aimed for equality in other areas, especially in education and socio-economics.

Banned leading scholars unable to teach in universities created cutting-edge programs and materials for bright young women. Thus, Szczawińska surrounded herself with stellar academics, one of whom, the psychologist-pedagogue Jan W. Dawid, 15 years her senior, she eventually married. Soon after a conflict with the Board cost her the director position despite being the university's founder. Although Korczak respectfully credits her husband, Dawid (1859-1914) as an intellectual influence, it is unlikely that he took much from the older academic's teaching style. As a writer, Dawid was thought-provoking, but in person, his students described him as a distant and lonely figure. Speaking with a lisp and demonstrating obsessive habits, Dawid often avoided contact with the young people who gathered in his house[41]. By contrast, his much younger wife known for her energy and organisational skills drew people readily into projects. Quick to laugh, she may have taken a shine to Korczak's quick wit, so for years, he became an evening regular in the Dawid's salon[42]. In February 1910, villagers discovered Szczawińska-Dawid's body in a well. She had left Warsaw to recuperate from a brief illness and write her memoirs. Officials deemed her cause of death as a suicide. In his eulogy, Korczak recalled restarting the newspapers after the 1905 revolution was only possible through her 'iron hand'[43]. He hinted they planned to open a school together with a farm and vocational programs along the lines of a commune. Szczawińska-Dawid's death signalled with Korczak ending his association with her husband.

Across the Empire, Warsaw became known as 'the Wild West', forcing Russia to keep almost 250,000 soldiers on Polish territory, far more than engaged in the war against the Japanese[44]. Even where people gathered peacefully, authorities were swift and harsh making clashes inevitable. Chaos and violence reigned in Warsaw streets between 1903 and 1906 when at least ten bombs exploded killing 83 police. On the 14th of January 1905, an estimated 60,000 shots fired at civilians. Children and youth in unsupervised groups were highly visible, actively involved in strikes, crime and political marches. Fuelled by the violence against them, the protestors used terrorism to bring attention to their ideas and activities[45]. Propaganda postcards appeared to publicise various events, including arrests and damage caused by bombs.

Figure: Postcard of a bomb explosion in a café on Miodowa Street in May 1905. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Near the Old Town, Miodowa street is only metres from where Korczak went to primary school. Years later, he remembers the events teaching him a great deal; when the 'old man puppet show' was dreadfully mutilated in the siege of Warsaw[46]. Yet at the time, Korczak barely writes a word on the bombings. Using his real name, Dr Henryk Goldszmit instead he wrote a letter to the 'Voice' newspaper. He defended young Moscow arsonists who were aged 13 to 17 years, but strangely the case was decades-old. He outlined the reasons for lighting the fires as a 'monument to their youth'. At the time, the Moscow crimes had caused a sensation with crowds gathering outside the court demanding the death penalty. However, in a counteraction, fire victims also came to defend the youth, and on that basis, the court decided to send the youngsters to reform school. Korczak concluded that it would have been a terrible mistake for the whole community if Moscow had sentenced 'the little ones'[47]. What did he foresee or what did he know was coming? For what was he preparing the Warsaw community?

> ***So many of us, so many young faces, clenched fists, so many sharp tusks, we won't give in.*** *[...]*
> ***Death to the old world, to the new world – Viva!***
>
> *Fr. 114, How to Love a Child: Family*[48]

Figure: Portrait of Wanda (Krahelska) Dobrodzicka. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Wanda Krahelska-Filipowicz[49]

code name 'Alinka' or 'Alicja', was a leading figure in Warsaw's underground resistance movement throughout the years of German occupation during World War II in Poland. As the well-connected wife of a former ambassador to Washington, she used her contacts to assist both the military and political leadership of the Polish Underground. She co-founded the organisation Żegota, significantly aiding Poland's Jewish population during the war. Her relationships with various networks are secretive, but Krahelska is extraordinarily influential throughout her lifetime. When her husband was arrested in Russia on suspicion of spying during a diplomatic mission, Krahelska personally contacted Lenin to arrange for his release.

Examining her earlier years reveals links to political events seldom mentioned 'officially'. Following the suicide of her fiancee, she joined Pilsudski's militia, firstly smuggling printed materials and later weapons. The baby-faced 20-year-old graduated to terrorist attacks during the Warsaw revolution. In a plot with two other women, she rented an apartment on Natolińska Street to gain access to the Governor's entourage. On the 8th of August 1906, Krahelska threw dynamite laden bombs from the flat's window in an assassination attempt. Only succeeding in wounding the Governor's guard, she fled from authorities. Entering a sham marriage gave her foreign citizenship

and protected her from extradition. Though she confessed to the attack, her trial in an Austrian rather than Russian court resulted in a full acquittal. After Polish independence, she resurfaced in Warsaw. By the 1920s, she involved herself in the care of worker's children, partnering with Janusz Korczak to open his second orphanage, *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*). She also appears instrumental in securing finance for his new building. These were not 'nice ladies' doing charity work in kindergartens; they were shaping politics and society, often by extreme deeds.

I. Name of the Society. Headquarters, goals and area of activity
§ 1. The Society is called 'Nasz Dom', is a legal person and has its seat in Warsaw.

§ 2. Extending its activity throughout Poland, in compliance with local laws on associations, 'Our Home' [Nasz Dom] is to establish and run foster homes, prepare educational staff, make parents aware of upbringing matters and press activity in line with the Society's slogans.

The founders of the 'Our Home' [Nasz Dom] Society are: [...]

(-) Wanda Filipowicz – Szopena 12 m. 8
(-) Jan Durko – Czerniakowska 208/54
(-) Henryk Goldszmit – Krochmalna 92

The Statute of the 'Nasz Dom' Society, 1921

In June 1905, the Russian army drafted Korczak into the Russo-Japanese war. In his correspondence from China, Korczak described the conditions as similar to those in Poland only magnified in speed and intensity as foreigners wreaked misery and starvation on the Chinese people. He viewed the conflict as 'another colonial war' between two powers, seeking new territories and transport routes for resources. Russia's stake hinged on the acquisition of a year-round port but also on completing the two regional railways passing through the cities of Harbin and Irkutsk. One of Korczak's texts described his admiration of the wounded and sick in Harbin who would rather die walking than sit on the train[50].

Korczak states his military service as beginning in his 21st year and defining the period between 1899 and 1906. The date coincides with starting university, not his army conscription occurring at the end of the period. He talks of coming to terms with death, so young Korczak likely joined the student revolutionaries. Much later he wrote of his younger self, 'my rebellion against the law of nature, not the social conditions, came to a head. Get ready, aim, fire'[51]. His involvement in violent action probably did not last long, as he reminisced that a stint in jail 'knocked off his rough edges'. However, Korczak was not in Warsaw at the time of the failed 1905 revolution. Drafted into army service for the enemy, Korczak found himself far away as his friends were in the thick of the action. We ask the question, what effects do missing such events have?

Korczak returned to Warsaw in March 1906 to find the 'Voice' magazine had closed but the group reformed quickly with a new publication. Although later he condemns violence and war, his circle of friends and colleagues appear to have been active revolutionaries and even terrorists. Calling Korczak a moral educator leads many to draw a sharp line between good and evil. In contrast, Korczak held a complicated view of crime and punishment, so it is useful to look at the actions of his partners at *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*). The violent deeds of hot-blooded terrorists had achieved nothing more than a bad reputation, and public opinion turned against those fighting for political inde-

pendence. Across Europe, groups that favoured abolishing private property turned to armed robbery to fund their political activities.

The political-criminal trend climaxed with the famous incidents of the Piłsudski train robbery and the London jewellery heist. English newspapers and politicians fanned existing anti-immigrant sentiment against Jews and Eastern Europeans. In 1911, Korczak published a short article on the issue in a sympathetic paper affiliated with Roza Luxemburg's political party SDKPiL[52]. He warns his readers not to emigrate explaining that Poles did not understand the cold-hearted nature of the industrialised West. Above all, he singled out the hypocrisy of London's outrage over the crimes while remaining morally blind to the wealth it stole across its vast Empire.

> ***The face of the world has changed. No longer muscle power that does the work and defends against an enemy. Not the strength of muscles that tears from the land, forests and seas – control, supply and security. A dominated slave – the machine. Muscles have lost their sole privileges and their singular knowledge.***
>
> *The Child's Right to Respect*, 1929

Figure: Violent SDKPiL protests in Łódź, 1905. [Public domain.]

Aleksandra Piłsudska (1882-1963)[53]

Figure: Aleksandra Piłsudska with her daughters Jadwiga and Wanda. [Polish National Digital Archives]

In 1908, Józef Piłsudski and his specially trained revolutionaries, known as the '*Bojówki*' (The Militias) staged a daring train robbery. The sixteen men and four women included Pilsudski's lover and future second wife, Aleksandra, and three future Polish prime ministers. The militia group succeeded in boarding a train and netting themselves over US$4 million in the current equivalent. The haul would fund the political party, PPS in its activities such as acquiring weapons and printing propaganda but also to support the widows, orphans and the disabled all affected by the unrest.

Polish women grew confident in their actions with men frequently absent – at war, imprisoned or in exile. The women's movement was ahead of its time, demanding sexual liberation and a range of economic freedoms. The criminal networks produced energetic and devoted young educators and social workers restless to build a new society. The PPS political party was a combination military and training organisation, and the 'freedom fighters' involved in the failed 1905

Revolution changed direction. Thousands of young women joined to national cause to educate and mobilise the masses. Guided by their Flying University professors, many shared an ethical code to respect human dignity and the desire to put words into action.

Like others in her generation, Piłsudska shared the unconventional views of the 'New Woman' movement. Though she eventually married Piłsudski, her public affair with a married man resulted in both her daughters born out of wedlock. Despite a troubled relationship, she was probably influential in getting the women's vote upon Poland's independence. By 1927, she was on the organising committee for Korczak's boarding school home for Polish workers' children, *Nasz Dom*. Her political and social network gained much needed financial security for the project, resulting in the home's relocation to a new purpose-built building. Piłsudska also financed the purchase of the Mężenin site used as a 'colony' by the Warsaw theosophical/freemasonry movements, where Korczak often holidayed.

Meanwhile, Piłsudska's commitment to women's equality was evident in her parenting style. After the death of her husband, Piłsudska supported her teenage daughter, Jadwiga, to take flying lessons and study aeronautical engineering. Following in her mother's footsteps, the young woman eventually overcame a British ban on women pilots to fly for the RAF during World War II.

Figure: Jadwiga Piłsudska as a RAF pilot. [Public domain]

The Child's Body and Soul (1907)

At the turn of the century, Social Darwinists had fuelled debates on whether delinquents and criminals were born or made. Even Montessori (1913) promoted her method as an educational intervention for the born criminal cursed with 'primitive' genetics[54].

During holidays from his medical studies, Korczak enlisted as a boys' counsellor for a Jewish organisation running summer camps (colonies). He described the children as 'recruited from damp and dark chambers, from dull cheder (religious) schools, from dirty and stinky courtyards'. With the boys living in different conditions from the family home, Korczak examined the ideas behind racial stereotypes on impoverished Jewish children (and later, Polish ones). He concluded a straightforward truth that a child is a child and people were being confused by the racial debates on hereditary factors[55].

Later attending Polish summer camps, Korczak declared both groups of children, taught him the 'abcd's of practical education sparking a series of pedagogical articles and stories for children. He views summer camps not only as a place for health and physical development but a potential environment where they will be reborn or as he writes 'resurrected'. In the colony, he aspired to create an environment of freedom where one thread of sunshine could penetrate a gray, dark life. However, he realised quickly never to underestimate that 'children are a force'[56].

Such free camps and the orphanages generally accommodated children who authorities inevitably sent to reform school or prison. Meanwhile, criminologists argued the value of new forms of punishment, whether isolation, deprivation of exercise or food, visual stimulus and even simply the passing of time were effective measures. Many students and writers in Warsaw spent time in prison, and Korczak was no exception. He suggested that school simply modelled itself on the prison system, if only as a gentler version of torture. For example, he explained the old punishments at summer camp-colony as based on freedom or restriction of movement;

1. the right to go outside the colony without supervision;
2. the right to go out under the supervision of an educator;
3. the right to go out to the clearing outside the colony;
4. the right to move freely around the colony;
5. the right to play in the supervised region ('arrest')
6. isolation of an offender under the chestnut tree ('cage')[57].

Early in his career, he was unsure how to adapt this system for excursions and distant trips. Admitting the flaws of his ideas came from the existing legal system, Korczak suggested outings as far and wide as possible. Closing the door on a child in isolation such as 'time out' should be a rare punishment, only for the shortest period and most serious of offences, he wrote. In a far-sighted warning, he claimed that prisoners accustomed to jail begin to prefer it. Being sent to their rooms, grounded or in detention will cease to function as a punishment, leaving few options for parents and teachers who cannot bring their isolated children out of their 'prison cells'.

Appearing in the Juvenile court in defence of a boy who had killed his headmaster, Korczak testified as follows:

> ***I do not see a crime – (the teacher) died just like a chemist who carelessly boiled his materials, this one exploded.***
>
> *Nasz Przegląd*, 1927[58]

Law reform and morality were issues central to Korczak's philosophy in practice. Like a Panoptican, the layout of his *Orphan's Home* had observation decks and a central glass box, pointing to an experiment in criminology. His aims of prevention, reform and enlightenment developed an experiential pedagogy of law.
Conflicts with others and even their cultural traditions provided children with the experience of the struggle, limits and possibilities for justice through democratic change.

Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919)

In a letter to her family, Rosa Luxemburg (1906) wrote on the events in Warsaw from the Citadel prison. She considered despite the chaos, loss of life and her imprisonment that her life's struggle was boldly progressing forward, and 'our work will be a model for later times in all of Russia'[59]. The failure of the revolution had quickly descended into a brawl between the various political factions. More importantly, it spelt the end of any reconciliation or future collaboration between the two socialist parties of Luxemburg's SDKPiL and Piłsudski's PPS. Luxemburg's connection to Warsaw was relegated to personal rather than political, as she aligned herself more closely with the idea of the revolutionary proletariat and party unification across Russia and Germany rather than the pursuit of Polish independence. Many ethnic minorities held similar views, which nationalistic Poles denounced as betrayal and treason.

Figure: Portrait of Rosa Luxemburg. [Public domain]

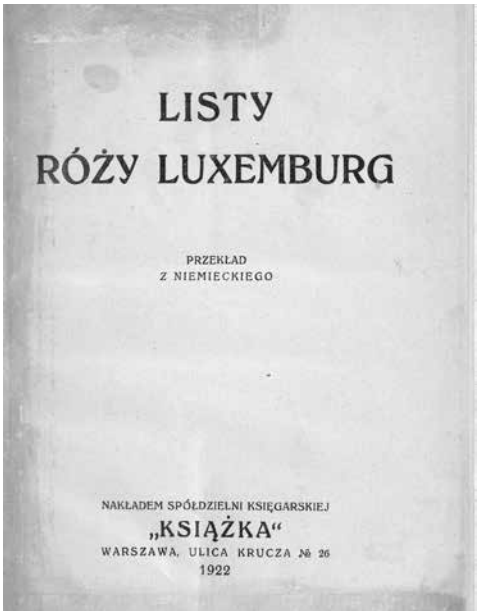


Figure: Rosa Luxemburg's *Letters.* Polish edition, 1922. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Self-Government in Schools

Before starting his orphanage, Korczak must have been thrilled with the effects of his books on his young readers. Singled out were *Mośki, Joski i Srule* (1908) and *Józki, Jaśki i Franki* (1909) children's books about Jewish and Polish boys at summer camp, respectively. The stories functioned as ethnographies and provided detailed observations. Outlining his work as a camp counsellor, Korczak described implementing a 'children's court'. First, to direct a group of 150 Jewish street children. Followed by camps for wealthy Christian boys – 'whose mummy never lets him play, because they may spoil (the boy): teach him to fight, whistle loudly, say "bloody hell" and wipe his nose in his sleeve'[60]. The books stress that without institutions of self-governance, the author could not manage within such large groups.

The Teacher Union had requested Korczak's presence to defend himself against charges that had surfaced due to the influence of his publications. In 1910, newspapers reported that young readers of the novels had become so intrigued by his ideas, that school children organised courts around the country. His early efforts to put theory into practice by promoting his ideas in literature were successful but not without controversy. Rather than destroying schools and starting again, he sought to reform existing institutions in new ways for a self-governing society to grow from the ground up. In less than two years, school children around Poland had spontaneously organised themselves and initiated Korczak's experiment.

Demonstrating that results were possible fortified Korczak's commitment to continue with his orphanage experiment. However, teachers complained that what might have worked well for children on summer camp collected negative influences for urban children returning to school. Required to appear before the Union, Korczak defended himself against charges laid by his former employer, Stefania Sempołowska. She protested that his experiments unleashed children into judging each other without control or mastery, putting at risk the dignity and greatness of the person-child's soul[61].

Figure: Portrait of Stefania Sempołowska. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Stefania Sempołowska[62]

The biographer of Sempołowska describes her as a teacher, activist, writer and fighter for children's rights. Born on the family estate in a small village, Sempołowska and her family moved to Warsaw following the death of her father. In a dire financial position, her innovative mother opened a flower shop. Running a successful business, she provided for her children's education at some of the best high schools. In 1887, Sempołowska passed the teacher's exam for men and continued illegal studies at the secret Flying University for women. Becoming the University's youth representative, Sempołowska gained the support of the founder, Jadwiga Szczawińska-Dawid and often acted as her assistant.

As a talented mathematician and geographer, Sempołowska opened a secret girl's school on Świętokrzyska Street. She drew equally gifted teachers from her elite network, including Helena Skłodowska-Szalayowa (Marie Curie's sister). She is likely to have met a young Henryk Goldszmit (Korczak) at the Flying University and employed him as a teacher around 1901. Her innovative system of teaching and upbringing was non-denominational, striving to develop the students' independent thought and social relations.

Affiliated with the PPS political party, she also joined a *Koło* (Circle) organizing secret education and libraries for children and adults in rural communities. Despite her reputation as an excellent teacher, her activism resulted in the reluctance of private schools to employ her.

Though arrested several times, she would quickly resume her unlawful educational activities upon release. Eventually, the authorities exiled her from Warsaw for her role in the school strikes. Conditions eased after 1905, and she joined the new Teacher's Union and Society of Hygiene's pedagogical divisions. Her projects included building children's playgrounds and tackling illiteracy. With a well-established network, Sempołowska attended the International Congress of Moral Education in 1908.

Her activities expanded to writing and publishing progressive magazines, and she often entered public debates with Korczak. Often opposing one another, Sempołowska maintained a relationship with him. As his editor in '*W Słońcu*' ('In the Sunshine') children's magazine, she published his political columns for children. Upon Polish independence, Korczak assisted Sempołowska and Maria Falska, both on the board of the organisation 'Care of Worker's Children'. This partnership suggests the likely origin of the orphanage for Polish worker's children, *Our Home*.

Despite, or perhaps because of, working together and sharing goals, Korczak and Sempołowska developed an adversarial relationship over many decades. In his memoirs, he criticised her dogmatic approach. Throughout her lifetime, Sempołowska was a polarising figure. Her leftist sympathies and cooperation with the Russians attracted calls for boycotts of her children's periodicals and caused problems for those associated with her, like Korczak. During revolutions and wars, Sempołowska helped political prisoners through the Red Cross. In World War II, she organised help for the Jews but did not survive the war and died in 1944.

When the Russian-Japanese war ended, the young doctor returned to find his beloved city crippled by martial law. Protestors no longer marched and patrolling Russian soldiers severely limited freedom of association. Demonstrations appeared pointless, and the revolutionaries look for new ways to take action. In response, Korczak delivered an original publication, *School of Life* which he describes as a novel. The book written as a fictional account of an alternative school invites the reader into the performance of this parallel world. Although what he offers is more than a fantasy but an ideological concept infused with practical information for the reader. His vision of the school contains no specific classrooms. Instead, the complex spreads out along the river banks of the Wisła, resembling a village with shops, a library, hospital and concert hall. However, there are also offices for loans, legal advice and security service. The bathhouse, community kitchen, pawnshop and shelter hint that economic realities infiltrate this utopian picture. In the *School of Life*, Korczak sought to demonstrate collaboration between his ideas and those of another 'Voice' writer, Stanisław Brzozowski.

> ***We will fashion something sacred and mysterious out of work – a noble feast – we will give her joyful flight – dress her in royal robes. We will hang a rainbow of work infused with proud thought in the bright sky of life. Humanity will drink labour like a pure healing elixir from a crystal goblet. [...] We will build a school where students will not learn dead letters from dead scriptures.***
>
> *School of Life*, 1908[63]

Here work, is of becoming, of the creative act of which sits closely connected with art and with existence itself. Revolutionary action against the system is of no use, as it is the person who must change, that is, 'to be raised' and in turn shape the world around them. The adult is a conservative adhering to old ways which preserve the system thus finds enlightenment difficult. In contrast, the child not yet immersed

fully within society is the radical, more willing and able to embrace change to create a new moral order.

> ***The child gives me experience, affects my view, the world of my feelings; I get from the child orders for myself, I accuse myself, I indulge myself, or I absolve myself. The child instructs and educates.***
>
> *'Education' of the 'Educator' Through the Child*, 1925/26[64]

This is not to suggest the child is 'good' or innocent and Korczak reminded his readers that this microcosm reflected larger society.

> ***There are just as many evil ones among children as among adults — but the former has neither the need nor the possibility of showing it. In the children's world, everything happens exactly as in the rotten adult world. You will find examples of every conceivable type of person and specimens of every imaginable evil. For children imitate the life, conversations and striving of the surroundings in which they were reared. All adult passions are latent in them.***
>
> *Fr. 69, How to Love a Child – The Boarding School*[65]

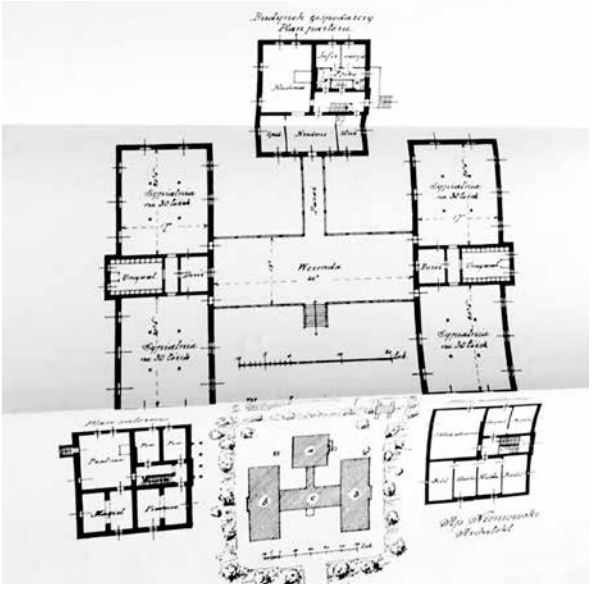


Figure: Floorplan of the summer colony/camp building, attended by Jewish boys where Korczak began working as a counsellor in 1904. Later it became the setting for his 1907 book *Mośki, Joski, Srule* (Wrażenia z kolonii letniej w Daniłowie). [Public domain.]

Figure: Children swimming at the Christian boy's camp 'Wilhelmówka' pre 1912. In 1908, Korczak's work here formed the basis for his book *Józki, Jaśki, Franki* (Kolonia letnia w 'Wilhelmówce'). [Public domain.]

Though the school of life is often compared to other progressive educators like Dewey, the difference was on the value of work and its purpose. Likewise, though schools have a role in creating a new social order, it is insufficient to catalogue isolated practices as being democratic. Instead, Korczak held a different collective idea that democracy existed as a force of nature made up by the mass.

> ***...children are a force, which can be encouraged into cooperation or alienated with disrespect, either way a force to be reckoned with.***
>
> *Fr. 14, How to Love a Child: Summer Camps*[66]

One of his first experiences at summer camp, Korczak describes feeling helpless against the mysterious collective soul of the children's society. To create transparency and order within this society, he introduces the vote and the court as cultural building blocks. His methods and tools using interviews, journals, noticeboards and newspapers shine a light into the political mood of the group and the process of change. It is a cultural and historical approach spanning generations

of injustice and oppression as this explains how disproportionately violent some children react.

> ***In the veins of some children course the collected agony of many painful centuries. Under the action of a slight stimulus is released the latent potential of pain, grievance, anger and rebellion. [...] It is not a child but the centuries weeping.***
>
> *Fr. 84, How to Love a Child – The Boarding Schools*[67]

Understanding this cultural evolution shines a light on his research of democratic processes within different groups. Precisely, he believed that without enlightenment, it was impossible to transfer rights into a society with a history of slavery, oppression and cruelty. Instead, self-governance and justice had to emerge progressively from below; starting with the children. Studying society, Korczak's advised educators to act like the natural scientist (Fabre) studying a beehive, not an individual bee[68]. At summer camp, he recorded statistics of children's violent conflicts to study how the groups established social norms. Korczak's vision of education was not for a utopian school which isolated children from the complicated realities of society. His aim was not 'goodness' but equipping each child to find their own way in a life of obstacles.

> ***What sort of preparation for life is it to convince the child that everything is right, equitable, sensibly motivated and unchangeable? We forget to insert in the theory of education that the child should be taught not only to appreciate the truth but also to spot a lie. Not only to love but to hate. Not only to respect but to spurn, not only to condone but to be indignant, not only to submit but to rebel.***
>
> *Fr. 98, How to Love a Child: The Boarding School*[69]

Figure: Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital on 51 Śliska (and 60 Sienna) Street in Warsaw. [Polish National Digital Archives]

As part of the 'Voice' circle, Korczak was a regular guest at various salons invited along with other notable writers, artists and thinkers. Mixing in diverse groups around Warsaw and abroad introduced him to wide-ranging social and political perspectives. In his opinion, psychologists are poorly equipped to provide solutions for work within the collective. Instead, the *wychowawcy* should seek answers within multiple sources, from medical to prayer books, from sociology and poetry.

Ars longa

The Latin motto above comes from an ancient medical text. It explains that the physician does not work in isolation but must seek cooperation from patients, assistants and the wider community. An alternative meaning suggests the immortality of an artist's creation, long after death[70].

> *[...] millions of them – they are the same as yours. Mothers – you think firstly about the happiness of your own, maybe for a moment you will be filled with horror at the thought of them, but your children are above all dear to you. So know this, that neither co-education, nor gymnastics, nor sex education – none of this will offset the evil influences of modern life if you do not always and consistently from an early age infiltrate them with the awareness that their task, one goal, the content of all life is to fight for the rights of the others. [...] The only meaning, the sole raison d'être for your hundreds of children – is to work for hundreds of thousands of those children, and join them to fight for their rights.*
>
> *On Raising Children*, 1907[71]

The 'Physician of Culture' is based upon an ancient metaphor, that of applying the method of medicine, to diagnose societal conditions and offer treatments and prognosis. Responding to the diagnosis of the modern age being 'sick', Korczak ambitiously embarked on his experiment in living as the 'physician of culture'. Just like the thermometer and scale could assist his judgement in a hospital, Korczak sought to develop similar tools to aid diagnostics and forecasting in society. Working in a complex system of 100 children made Korczak hope for an invention that will 'record the hidden powers of the system; they will enable not only diagnosis but prognosis'[72].

Construction of the Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital on 51 Śliska Street (and 60 Sienna Street) began in 1876 funded by two affluent Jewish families. Until 1915, the hospital treated over 20,000 patients, free of charge for children from low-income families irrespective of nationality. Korczak officially qualified as a doctor in March 1905 and worked under Drs Kramsztyk, and Eliasberg[73]. Boarding at the hospital provided access to the library for his writing, a relationship he maintained until officially moving into the Children's Home in Krochmalna Street in 1921. Many eminent doctors worked in the hospital,

with Anna Braude-Heller joining the staff shortly after Korczak resigned to open the orphanage.

> *I remember... the hospital on the first floor, infirmary at street level – tens of children at the top, hundreds at the bottom. In summer – diarrhoea, vomiting, in spring and autumn – coughing. And you worked with resignation, irony and shame. What was there to do? We knew what it should be like... elsewhere. Now we know that it was necessarily not more, but necessary to knock down two hostile thrones. Humiliation and a sense of desertion fermented in me. And yet the old ones stayed there – I ran – escaped, ran away. I couldn't stay longer. On my routes around Warsaw, I carefully avoided Śliska street.*
>
> *Little Hospital*, *Nasz Przegląd*, 1928[74]

Figure: Anna Braude-Heller. A fragment of a photo from the publication *Hunger in Children: Clinical Observations* (issued by American Joint Distribution Committee in 1946).

Anna Braude-Heller[75]

was born on January 6, 1888, in Warsaw and raised in a Jewish family speaking both Yiddish and Polish. The family supported her and her sister in their medical studies abroad. Deeply affiliated with the Jewish people, Braude also maintained her Polish patriotism. Committed to social justice with socialist sympathies, she enthusiastically established a children's sanitorium upon returning to Warsaw. Joining the Bund, she served as their doctor for an affiliated Yiddish school organisation. By 1913, Braude Heller began working at the Jewish hospital on Czyste Street (*'Szpital Starozakonnych na Czystem'*) and shortly after, the Berson and Bauman Children's Hospital. The hospital set high standards for the care of Jewish children but served low-income families regardless of nationality. The outbreak of World War I forced the closure of the hospital coinciding with Braude's marriage to Eliezer Heller (1885–1934), an engineer.

Throughout her marriage and the birth of her two children, Heller maintained her professional career. Continuing to work at various clinics, she founded the Friends of Children Society (*Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci*) in 1916. Her main objective was to reopen the Children's Hospital, alongside expanding into well-baby clinics and promoting social work aimed at children. The Society allowed Braude-Heller to establish a school for training pediatric nurses in 1919, securing Korczak as a lecturer on child psychology. In 1923, the hospital and school lost its wealthy patrons prompting the

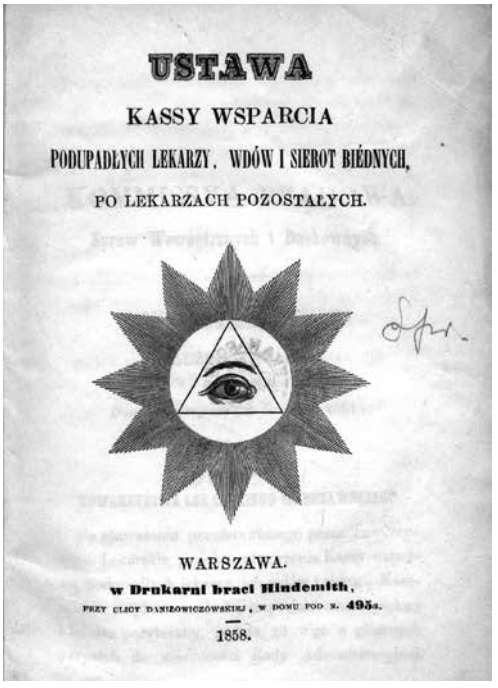
City to withdraw its subsidy and resulting in its closure. Undeterred, she embarked upon sabbaticals in European hospitals securing a reputation as a highly-respected paediatrician, praised for her diagnostic accuracy and intuition. Through the efforts of Braude-Heller and the local Jewish community, together with funding from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the institution was refurbished to a capacity of 150 beds reopening in 1930 with Braude-Heller as its director and chief physician. The facility many considered to be one of the most modern children's hospitals in Poland and she published on various topics such as treatment of ulcers and hormone therapy. By the outbreak of WWII, she had expanded the capacity to 250 beds.

Meanwhile, her personal life was fraught with tragedy with the death of her youngest son and husband. Her older son, also a doctor, joined his mother in her life's work at the hospital. In the bombings of World War II, the hospital struggled to treat the city's wounded and Heller evacuated 100 children to private homes amidst the chaos and rubble. The creation of the Ghetto by the Germans caused a surge in mortality rates as children succumbed to hunger, epidemics and accidents. Meanwhile, Braude Heller's standards were extraordinarily high, and Korczak criticised her strict approach to cleanliness as hysteria[76]. Nonetheless, her professionalism and devotion earnt her great admiration as she continued her meticulous research into children's hunger even under the gravest of circumstances. In the winter of 1943, urged by friends, she helped her son and his family to escape. However, Braude Heller and her sister, Dr Róża Aftergut, stayed with their patients and were killed soon after by German soldiers liquidating the Warsaw Ghetto. Her research, *Hunger in Children: Clinical Observations* published in 1946 with the introduction:

> ***To you, the Jewish Doctor, a few words of appreciation. What can I tell you, Comrade of Misfortunes and dear Friend? You were part of the crowd. Captivity, hunger, displacement – all these deaths in our ghetto also hang over your head. And you gave the murderers one answer with your work. The answer is – non omnis moriar. Amen.***

Three Currents

In striving for independence, the Polish nationalist movement created unlikely bedfellows with the clergy joining both left and right political sides. Uniting to form institutions such as co-operatives, learning institutes and credit unions, they attempted to raise socio-economic standards. Hard work and solidarity became another form of resistance, encouraging modernisation and progress as the alternative. However, the harsh realities of early capitalism and urbanisation created unbearable living conditions, with 3.6 million Poles choosing to emigrate between 1870-1910[77].


USTAWA

KASSY WSPARCIA

PODUPADŁYCH LEKARZY, WDÓW I SIEROT BIEDNYCH,

PO LEKARZACH POZOSTAŁYCH.

WARSZAWA.

w Drukarni braci Hindemith,

PRZY ULICY DANIŁOWICZOWSKIEJ, W DOMU POD N. 495.

1858.

Figure: 1858 Statute of the Support Fund for Doctors and their Widows & Orphans

By the end of 1904, in Warsaw alone, over 50,000 people relying entirely on charitable organisations to survive the winter. Criminal gangs and vigilante groups of Poles, Jews and other minorities controlled the streets with civil servants and police unable or unwilling to take action against them. As Russia bled resources in its disastrous war with Japan, patriotic youth movements revived to take advantage of the situation and regain the independence of their homeland[78].

The youth were not all necessarily driven by the communist worker's movement as is popularly assumed. Expressed as a practical form of socialism, many found their hero in Stefan Żeromski's famous book *Ludzie Bezdomni* (*Homeless People*, 1902). The plot has a young doctor sacrificing love and happiness to serve the poor. There is no doubt that Żeromski's book had a massive impact on the young generation of Poles. Many were inspired by its moral message,

to fight social injustice and poverty. However, this was not the case with Korczak who described Żeromski as one who 'did not write for us'[79]. From this early perspective, Korczak did not see himself as a lone doctor or solitary writer but as one of many collaborators working on the same ideas. The portrayal of a young Jewish doctor trying to reform society is a plot easy to parallel with Korczak's life events. However, it is incorrect to assume any influence, as Korczak scoffed at the naivety of Żeromski's hero.

'stupid Żeromski and his stupid homeless people'

Child of the Salon, 1906[80]

The book, *Homeless People*, was not set in Warsaw, but briefly portrays one of the cities worst streets at the time. The scenes are of despair caused by starvation and illness, with the name Krochmalna becoming a symbol of Jewish misery the doctor character is trying to escape[81]. Was it to prove his point or just an insider's joke that Korczak chose the street of Krochmalna as the site of his new Jewish orphanage? With such complicated views and antagonistic temperament, Korczak often attacked both Polish and Jewish thinkers. He accused others such as Zamenhof's Esperanto work, Sienkiewicz' patriotism and the Young Poland poets as hijackers of the 'project'.

> ***The child – one hundred masks, one hundred roles of a skilled actor. A different one for the mother and a different one for the father, grandmother or grandfather, for a stern or a lenient teacher, still another in the kitchen and different for other children, different amongst the rich and poor, different for everyday wear and another as festive costume.***
>
> *Fr. 64, How to Love a Child: Family*, 1919

Helena Radlińska (Rajchman) (1879-1954)

Figure: Helena Radlińska (third from the left) sitting with dr Henryk Elzenberg, Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, Wanda Krahelska-Filipowicz and others. Secretariat of the National Committee in Kraków 1915/1916. [Wikimedia Commons]

Helena Radlińska (Rajchman)[82]

was a political activist, social pedagogue and educational historian. She achieved professor positions at both universities in Warsaw. Her Jewish family was well-known in Poland, and internationally, as her father led the Warsaw Philharmonic and her brother, Ludwik Rajchman became the founder of UNICEF. After graduating from illegal training courses in nursing and teaching, Radlińska worked in reading rooms, medical clinics and actively promoted education for girls and peasants. Her marriage to the surgeon, Zygmunt Radliński provided her with the financial freedom to pursue wide-ranging activities. As a writer, she used over ten pseudonyms, sometimes publishing under male names. Hiding behind her family name and profession,

she was heavily involved in the 1905 revolution coordinating school strikes, smuggling weapons and providing medical care to the wounded. Her husband's arrest led to a period of exile in Siberia. However, Radlińska was able to escape and return to Warsaw on false papers. Completing a doctorate in philosophy, Radlińska cooperated with Jan Dawid to establish the first Polish Pedagogical Institute. Energetic and dedicated, in 1913 Radlińska participated in the Congress of National Independence representing the new Peasant's Union. Her activities continued during World War I as she created teacher courses, supplied schools with materials and set up libraries. While travelling the country, Radlińska (a.k.a Orsza) accessed her many political and military contacts for the cause of liberation. Not shying from danger, she often carried grenades into the conferences she organised.

Post-independence, she focussed on establishing university courses and battling illiteracy across the newly independent country. Faced with a teacher shortage and scarce resources, she found respected individuals who used their professional skills in social work for whole communities. Engineers taught new ways of farming, medical doctors engaged in health promotion, and teachers assisted parents. Through their example, they mobilised and engaged with whole segments of the community to effect widespread and radical change. Radlińska synthesised the extreme experiences of the freedom fighter and broad skill base of the national instructor to create a new type of social professional.

After independence, Radlińska represented Poland at multiple international conferences and became a Professor of Education and Social Work at the University of Warsaw. Developing her international network, Radlińska established the Polish chapter of the New Education Fellowship and influenced the direction of social work abroad. Utilising her extensive experience of the German, Belgian and Danish systems, she transformed the Department for the discipline of Social Pedagogy, defining and leading the field since 1908. Her highly original approach of research-theory-practice she labelled 'action through research'. She innovated professional education, influencing others including

possibly Kurt Lewin who attended her NEF lectures. With hundreds of publications to her name, Radlińska also served on editorial committees until the outbreak of World War II. As a Jew under German occupation, a religious order of sisters offered Radlińska protection, and she continued her work in secret from the convent. Post-war, Radlińska reestablished ties with universities and publishers although the communist authorities quickly banned the discipline of Social Pedagogy. She died in Łódż in 1954.

Figure: Poster *Declaration of Rights of the Child*, Polish Committee of Child Protection Care, 1930s. [Public domain.]

In August 1911, Korczak delivered a lecture *Berlin-London-Paris* relating his experiences from his travels abroad[83]. Though the visits were educational, he is far from impressed and issues a warning against emigration to London in particular. His articles denounce England, France and Germany for their colonialist policies, attitudes to foreigners and cold-hearted capitalism. Schools are linked to such complex issues directly, faithfully reflecting them he argued. Therefore, the case of school reform is related directly with general State reform. Korczak branded each State's education system with its distinctive trademark designed to replicate the existing social order which would perpetuate injustice.

> ***So English school educate the brave, clever and nimble plantation owner-colonists and industrialists, whose goal is to operate more and more territories, to exploit more and more new territories, to harness more and more new markets, squeeze the benefit of English power through more and more tribes and nations. And throughout these immoral purposes, through exemplary schools, the English government achieves successfully.***
>
> *Contemporary School*, 1905[84]

Korczak described London's schools and parks as 'built from the blood and sweat of millions of slaves – black, yellow and white indentured in the colonies of Africa, Asia and Australia'[85]. This negative assessment challenges the usual account of Korczak's positive experience of London, or that he was inspired to run an orphanage by the English treatment of children, especially poor ones.

The contrast of children's starvation and disease in the East End on the outskirts of the world's most prosperous city must have been shocking for the young doctor. At the time of his visit, approximately 150 orphanages were in operation within Greater London and if unable to find an orphanage or work placement authorities forced children to migrate overseas. The authorities relocated many children from the East End community area into orphanages outside of the city lim-

its, for example, Forest Hill. At the end of his London visit, Korczak described giving a beggar a coin for a meal. He called this final moment an 'act of revenge' for what he had experienced[86]. The visit to London allowed Korczak 'to understand the essence of charity work on the spot (big achievement)'[87].

Despite the wealth of the British nation, Korczak witnessed firsthand how philanthropy and charity served to maintain class division and oppression. The negative experience cemented his resolve to return to a new orphanage not merely as a board member but as its director. The Orphan's Aid Society under the auspices of Dr Isaak Eliasberg had commenced construction of a new building in June 1911 just before Korczak's trip. A newspaper report on the new building argued most orphanages combined the disadvantages of 'the monastery and barracks'[88]. By cultivating passive obedience coupled with brutal regimens, the child suffocated. The article claimed existing institutions were prison-like where a child is a number, describing them as 'anti-hygienic, anti-liberal, and anti-human'[89]. It stated the goal of the Society was to redesign the facilities in terms of lighting, heating and space. More importantly, in line with growing demands, it aimed to free and open up previously closed institutions.

> ***The littlest number of punishments there, where within the social environment the child has the thoughtful conditions of physical and moral wellbeing for being and developing, [...] where the child is ensured according to rights to movement, meals, warmth, work, research, entertainment, and a joyful shout.***
>
> *The Imposed Punishment, Opieka nad Dzieckiem*, 1923

Figure: Portrait of Stefania Wilczyńska (1927). [Public domain]

Stefania Wilczyńska[90]

Born in Warsaw to a wealthy, Polish-Jewish family, Stefa Wilczyńska had the means to pursue an education abroad. Following studies in natural sciences in Belgium and Geneva, she decided to specialise in education. To the surprise of her family, but with their support, Wilczyńska embarked on unpaid work at an impoverished orphanage in Warsaw's Old Town.

Despite her limited experience, Wilczyńska took responsibility for the relocation of those 87 orphans to the new Jewish orphanage to be co-directed by Korczak. As the live-in manager for over 100 children, her energy and organisational skills developed her daily relationship with the children that enabled Korczak's vision to take shape. During Korczak's army conscription during World War I, Wilczyńska managed the home alone until his return in June 1918. This daily role and her demeanour aligned her approach more closely to the other director, Falska rather than Korczak. Unlike other pedagogues working under his direction, Wilczyńska never published her experiences, which served to keep her out of the limelight until recently[91].

There is no doubt that Wilczyńska, fondly known as 'Pani Stefa', was dedicated to the children and devoted thirty years of her life to their care. However, like Korczak, this was not unwavering nor superhuman. In a state of exhaustion caused by the severe material

conditions and Korczak's absence, up until 1920, she had planned to resign from the orphanage[92]. As the years passed, both Korczak and Wilczyńska sought younger successors to run the Krochmalna home but found little interest. In her later years, Wilczyńska became more critical of the residential care model, stating her preference for foster families.

Eventually in 1937, after a 25-year association, she resigned, writing to a friend that ultimately 'organisation replaces people'. Wilczyńska secured employment with another Jewish educational organisation, CENTOS advising on improvement strategies in their institutions. Perhaps, most of all, Wilczyńska desired to be needed. She had lost faith in her role at the orphanage and Poland in general, which influenced her decision to emigrate to Palestine. Seeking her own renewed purpose amongst the Jewish pioneers, she found it difficult as an older woman to find her place within this young émigré community. Generational misunderstandings and different perspectives saw much of her advice on educational matters disregarded. The planned emigration ended with a regretful return to Warsaw, months before the German invasion leading to her death with Korczak and the children at Treblinka.
Non omnis moriar – she lives in the memories of her children.

Figure: A military funeral on the grounds of the Ujazdowski Hospital. [Polish National Digital Archives]

As WWI raged, and Poland fought to exist, another battle erupted to stop typhus spreading from Eastern to Western Europe. With no medicine or disinfectant, the epidemic threatened to explode over the 1918 winter. The famous pianist and future prime minister, Ignacy Paderewski, became the public voice speaking out internationally on the plight of the Poles. With a hint of jealousy, Korczak writes in his Diary, that he too dreamt of appearing on stage in American concert halls showered with money to achieve his goals. The Paderewski couple drove the relief efforts raising vast sums of money with concerts, balls and the support of celebrity friends and wealthy industrialists. The Rockefeller Foundation funded the new State Hygiene Institute, headed by another Polish-Jewish doctor, Ludwik Rajchman. With his political connections and medical expertise, the League of Nation's selected Rajchman as its new medical director (precursor to the World Health Organisation)[93].

In 1919, Poland recorded over 230,000 typhoid cases with almost 20,000 deaths[94]. A newspaper reported 'the outstanding pedagogue, Korczak' became infected while working in an army hospital[95]. Although nursed back to health by his mother, she contracted the disease and died a few weeks later. His time away in the army and during illness, cost him dearly in his professional ambitions. The possibility of influential positions lured Korczak, as he made concerted effort to demonstrate relevance beyond institutional care or Jewish education. He rapidly and specifically addressed the home and school contexts with *How To Love A Child: The Child in the Family* (1918/1919) and *Educational Moments* (1919). Both volumes attracted admiring reviews declaring them as essential books for anyone working with children. Though Helena Paderweska sought his advice for the government's new children's committee, his input was late and not the impact he had hoped[96]. Reflecting upon this period of depression, paradoxically Korczak vowed to write a tribute to this time and honour a 'fine insect' – the louse[97]. Without the threat and opportunity provided by the typhus epidemic, Poland could not have fought off her enemies and garnered sufficient international support to gain social, political and economic independence.

Figure: Patients of the Army Hospital in Jazdów, 1920s.
[Polish National Digital Archives]

Figure: Portrait of Helena Paderewska. [Polish National Digital Archives]

Helena Paderewska, nee Rosen,

Górska – 1st marriage[98]

Born in Warsaw, her father was a Polish nobleman and soldier, while her Greek mother died shortly after childbirth. Home-schooled by her grandmother, she dreamt of travelling the world so, at age 18, she married a violinist ten years her senior and joined his entourage.

On tour in Egypt, she met the young pianist and widower, Ignacy Paderewski and his son, paralysed since birth. As the musicians arranged further concerts, Paderewska cared for the boy, with kindness blossoming into a relationship. The pair became inseparable, with Paderewska leaving her husband and eventually marrying Paderewski in 1899. As Ignacy Paderewski shone internationally, his new wife managed his affairs, from social engagements to his health. The media described her as exotic and intelligent, scrutinizing her every move. Amassing celebrity fame and fortune allowed the Paderewski couple to purchase retreats in Poland, Switzerland and the United States. While musical compositions captivated her husband, Paderewska discovered her passion for a country lifestyle. She gained recognition across Europe as an expert in poultry breeding, exporting stock and starting courses for the industry.

As the outbreak of WWI interrupted her project, Paderewska joined her husband's efforts to launch the Polish Victims Relief Fund by going on a whirlwind tour of concerts, interviews and charity events across the United States. Utilising her connections with Polish artists, she arranged an exhibition of dolls in folk costumes.

The 'Paderewska Dolls' were a surprise hit and fashion item amongst American celebrities. Amidst a gruelling schedule, she marketed the dolls with proceeds assisting artists and the relief efforts. Leveraging her husband's fame, she campaigned tirelessly in London, Paris and New York, successfully recruiting 20,000 members to her new White Cross aid organisation. The initiative boosted the *Ratujcie Dzieci* (Save the Children) national campaign begun in Poland in 1915. It expanded internationally by securing the Catholic Church's blessing for donations, a feat usually attributed to Eglantyne Jebb.

Figure: Helena Paderewska sells her dolls, raising funds for Polish artists in Paris. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Meanwhile, the famous pianist capitalised on long-standing friendships to advertise the Polish cause in newspapers and to audiences at the Royal Albert Hall. London's elite clamoured to assist the renowned musician, and in her memoirs, Paderewska described the English women as kind but politically naive. Fluent in several languages, she pitied them as monolingual, politically ostracised and socially constrained. One of the only women present at the Versailles' peace talks, Paderewska, proved a formidable partner accompanying her pianist-turned-diplomat husband everywhere. Her initiatives had raised millions of dollars from as far away as Australia and attracted 20,000

members to her White Cross organisation. Co-operating with her international network, Paderewska managed a remarkable array of initiatives from sending aid packages, training nursing staff and supply of medical equipment. In February 1919, Paderewski became Prime Minister and Paderewska, the First Lady, a role where she attracted frequent criticism for overstepping. Amidst a volatile political climate, the assassination of the first President prompted Paderewski to resign. Retreating to Geneva, Paderewska handed her aid organisations to others. However, her humanitarian work was not without recognition as Pope Benedict XV awarded Paderewska the pontifical cross in 1921. Increasingly unwell, she frequently retreated to the Swiss house where she eventually died, leaving behind her distraught husband.

Figure:
Helena Paderewska and her dolls. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Figure: Polish Victims Relief Fund, London 1914.
[National Digital Library of Poland]

Figure (on the left): Poster 'Save the Children!' Campaign by the RGO (Central Committee), 1917.
[National Digital Library of Poland]

Figure (above): Flag 'Save the Children!' Campaign. [National Digital Library of Poland]

The Polish diaspora around the world closely followed the relief efforts, with fundraising drives organised predominantly by young women. The noble efforts of the Quakers' Friends Society, Red Cross and Jewish Distribution Committee were no match for the Polish 'Save the Children' campaigns. In America, donations from the Polish immigrant community and sale of Polish Liberty bonds raised over 100 million dollars. The partnership between the Paderewski's and Herbert Hoover's American Relief Administration (ARA) brought American expertise into coordinating the aid efforts[99]. Though the new Polish government financed both Polish and Jewish orphanages, foreign financial support remained crucial. The predecessor of Our Home for the Polish worker's children on Cedrowa Street received additional Quaker funds. Meanwhile, the Jewish Distribution Council and Red Cross supplemented the Jewish Home on Krochmalna. Donors received reports on the distribution of donations, but in reality the scale of ARA absorbed all operations to fight famine and disease across Eastern Europe[100].

Official American aid transferred to a new organisation, the PAKPD (Polish-American Children's Relief Committee) created by the Polish

POLISH MEMBERS, P. A. K. P. D. FOUNDATION COUNCIL.

Stanisław Staniszewski	President of Council.
Zygmunt Kmita	Vice President of Council.
Rev. Wacław Bliziński	Member of the Diet.
Dr. Emil Bobrowski	Member of Diet, Representative of Cracow City.
Stanisław Dzierżanowski	Delegate of the Ministry of Finance.
Stanisław Drzewiecki	Delegate of the Ministry of Interior.
Dr. Emil Godlewski	Representive of K. B. K. Combatting Typhus.
Dr. Henryk Goldschmidt	Representative of Israelite Child Relief Inst.
Stanisław Jarkowski	Representative of Publishers.
Dr. Stanisław Kopczyński	Delegate of the Ministry of Religions and Education.
Jan Kuncewicz	Delegate of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.
Dr. Stefan Rotermund	Member of the Diet.
Dr. Henryk Trenkner	Delegate of the Ministry of Health.
Dr. Władysław Szenajch	Representative of Children's Medical Society.
Władysław Szumański	Representative of Lawyer's Council
Dr. Juljusz Trzciński	Member of the Diet.

Figure: Polish Members, PAKPD. (Dr Goldszmit) [National Digital Library of Poland]

Ministry of Health. Moving from his role in ARA, Hoover's trusted assistant, Maurice Pate came to Warsaw to manage the Polish operation. Based on his experience in the Krochmalna home, Korczak joined the PAKPD board as an advisor on culturally appropriate assistance to Jewish children, who made up almost a quarter of the total number assisted in Poland[101]. The partnership of Hoover, Pate and Rajchman proved invaluable to relief efforts and the trio reappeared during World War II to form another children's fund, UNICEF. The speed in which the Polish diaspora and supporters unified under Paderewski, perhaps overlooks that internationally, 174 organisations co-operated with their efforts. With independence, the Poles officially accepted offers of assistance from the US government administered under ARA. However, in 1919, Hoover was not reporting on children's nutrition to the Allied Council but estimating the unemployment and coal output of Europe, that is, his primary concern was the people's 'fundamental economic issues of their lives'[102]. Likewise, when Korczak refers to Our Home as forced to choose between coal or potatoes, he means not only the children's need for warmth and food in the orphanage but as a metaphor of Poland fighting for either the coalfields to the West or the agricultural fields to the East.

In his whistle-blower book, 'The Economic Consequences for the Peace', John Maynard Keynes (1920) credits Hoover as having 'not only saved an immense amount of human suffering but averted a widespread breakdown of the European system'[103]. He suggested a far-reaching plan beyond merely providing 'Hoover meals' to starving orphans but in preventing Lenin and the Bolsheviks from reaching a vulnerable, starving Germany and stopping further revolutions. On the ground, it was the PAKPD undertaking tasks within Hoover's comprehensive economic plan. Several critical factors stabilised Central Europe including restoring economic production in areas affected by war and famine to export levels, rebuilding a comprehensive rail and communication network, supporting the scientific capacity of populations, supporting the economic management of immature governments (including Finland) and avoiding profiteering by creating an entrepreneur class.

Evidence of the significance of the rail distribution network within the campaign appears in the PAKPD report, which includes an early examples of an infographic, representing food tonnage as a railcar, directed towards a highly illiterate population. Winning over the railway workers in the contested borderlands, was imperative for the foreign aid organisations such as the YMCA which used American

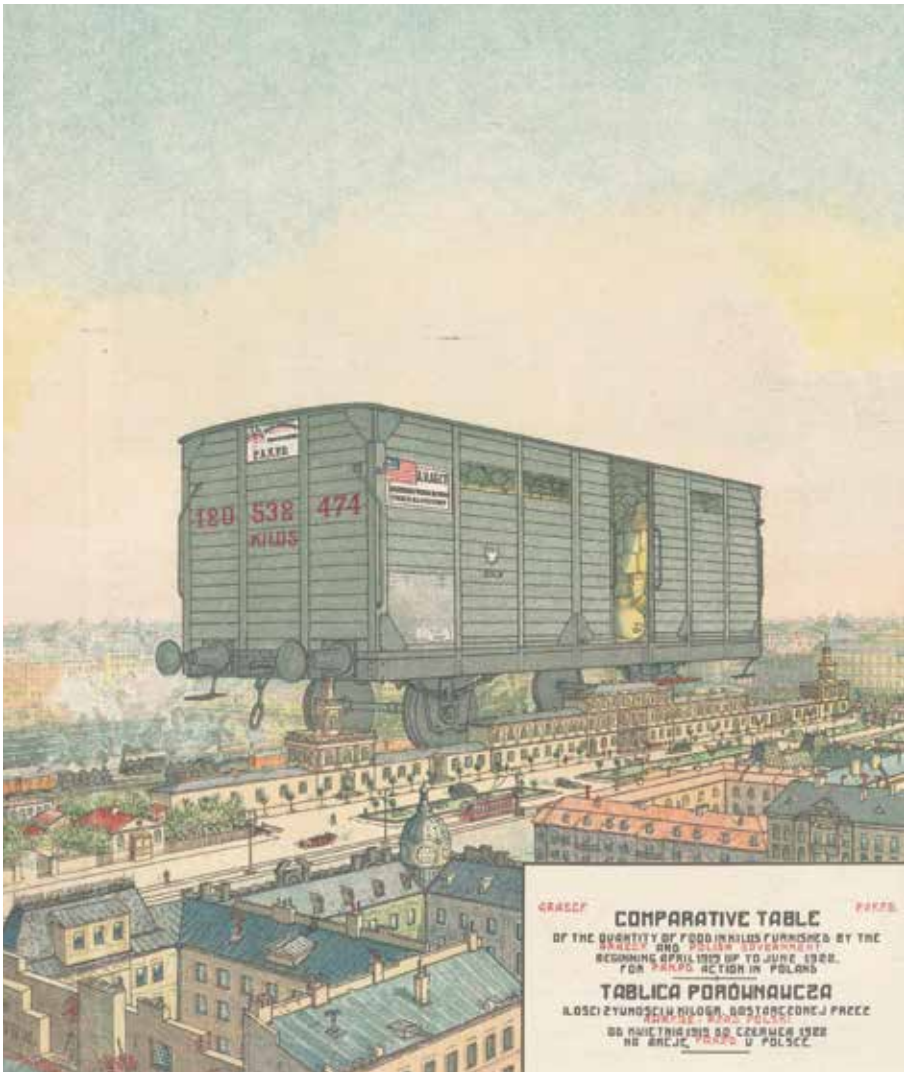


Figure: PAKPD infographic in 1922 with a train carriage represents the child feeding program in tonnage overshadowing Warsaw. [National Digital Library of Poland]

frontier mythology for its propaganda[104]. In his CV, Korczak eluded to being well versed with military strategies of revolutionaries, and for many years he considered himself as one of them:

> ***I familiarized myself with the recipe of wars and revolutions — I took direct part in the Japanese and the European wars, and in the civil war (Kiev); now as a civilian — I read the words with great care and then between the lines. Otherwise, I'd have persisted in my resentment for and disdain of the civilian.***
>
> *Diary*, 1942

Complications were inevitably encountered, in cities split by Polish, German or Russian control across newly independent Poland. As the Polish troops advanced, relief kitchens sprang up in towns often within days of a ceasefire to feed children regardless of ethnicity or religion. In Minsk, the PAKPD supplied Lithuanians and Belarussians amongst others, reporting that different provisions catered for Christian, Jewish or Muslim communities. The initial age of children receiving assistance was up to 15 years but later raised to 17 to ensure physical growth and strength within these local populations which were desperately short of capable and healthy workers[105]. In each localised region, the PAKPD operation restored the social economy and provided a stable foundation for municipal government. The building of governance structures and local capacity was an essential feature of the Hoover-Polish plan. The ingenious grassroots strategies relied on women establishing kitchens, health clinics and orphanages to win over the locals and secure the unstable Polish territories that had been tentatively won by the Peace Treaty and Piłsudski's army.

We ask do rights emerge initially from the Washroom or the Courtroom? Can law reform succeed without the physical, grassroots 'work' needed to implement human rights? Embedded in custom, tradition and religious rituals, Korczak clarified that kitchens and laundries were 'the brightest examples of our spiritual Middle Ages and the chaos of the

Figure: Storefront for distribution of essential goods. Source: PAKPD, 1922. [National Digital Library of Poland]

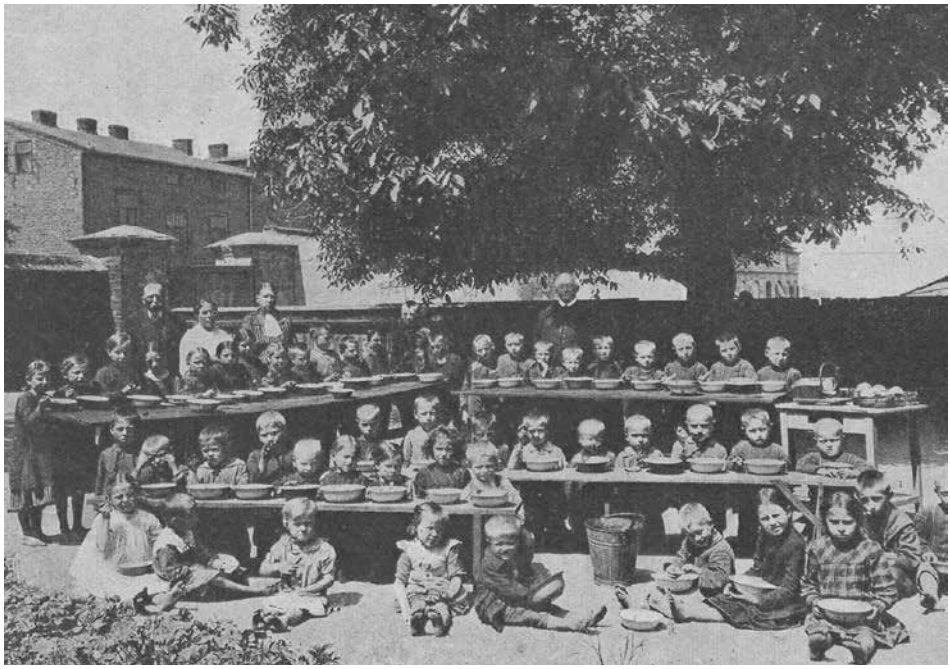


Figure: Outdoor kitchen for orphans, 1919. Source: PAKPD, 1922. [National Digital Library of Poland]

social economy' where thousands of women's hands worked in service to create the moral and intellectual resources for humanity[106]. The domestic work of the 'washroom' is a physical sphere of human rights' activity which gains visibility and status during epidemics and famine.

The placement of bilingual Polish-American women created an active network loyal to Poland, while enemy forces still crisscrossed the territory. Known as the Grey Samaritans, reports were deliberately written in Polish directly to the leadership of PAK-PD rather than to the Americans[107]. The action and representation by women was extraordinarily successful for the very reason that it was subversive, underestimated and often unreported. The various humanitarian organisations employed a vast array of tactics to convince the West to care about the plight of children in Central Europe. The maternal image of the Polish woman devoted to children aimed to overcome the animosity between enemies and make widespread relief action possible post-war. Designed to use existing Western beliefs about both women and children as innocent and victims, the narrative sometimes differed from the Polish experience in action.

Figure: *Liga Kobiet* (Women's League), Lwów 1920. [Public domain]

Failing to establish his influence in the network of Polish orphanages, Korczak returned to subversive political writing in the 1920s. Venturing again into the thriving genre of children's books, he revived the Voice battle against his enemies by addressing issues of social, economic and political rights reform in his children's books. Some clever readers have noticed economic notes scattered throughout the text of Korczak's children's book, *King Matt the First*. Elements of the 'Hoover Plan' for post-war reconstruction appear as problems for the young king who deals with war reparations, distribution of goods, social benefits, unemployment, and colonial exports. Unlike the standard inclusion of financial issues within children's books, Korczak avoids messages reflecting the adult hierarchy with the child as a recipient of values and didactic instruction. Instead, in various texts he incorporated the ‚mechanics of money' and the realities of children's exclusion from the discussion of such matters[108].

> ***„Why don't they print more paper money?"***
> ***„What is tax?"***
> ***„What does the Minister of Finance do when one country lends to another?"***
> ***I would like to explain, but I do not know myself.***
> ***Anyway, a little consolation to know if nothing can be done, because it does not depend on us.***
>
> *The Rules of Life*, 1930

Meanwhile, *The Bankruptcy of Little Jack* was an instant hit with audiences in 1924 by reflecting the Polish economic reality of the time, the book was soon added to school reading lists. Glowing reviews issued at the time of publication celebrate it as a career pinnacle of Korczak, the artist presenting the 'ethics of the child'[109]. Gaining celebrity status outside of Poland, translations of *Little Jack* appeared for almost two decades, in Russian (1929), Czech and German (1935), Lithuanian (1936) and English (1939) as *Big Business Billy*[110]. True to Korczak's philosophy of examining the world within a microcosm, *Little Jack* tackles the questions of economic reform facing independent Poland. Introducing the basic

concepts of commercial and economic activity, Korczak demonstrated what skills and qualities small business endeavours need, with money bringing positive and negative consequences. At the time, many Polish family homes treated money as a taboo topic, thus, with the myriad of problems encountered by the interwar population, the book introduced financial literacy to the household. In fact, some even consider the lessons contained in *Little Jack* should grant it status as one of the leading economic textbooks of the era[111].

Figure: *The Bankruptcy of Little Jack*, 1946. [Public domain]

As the new Polish government struggled with hyperinflation attempting to introduce reform, the general population remained illiterate on financial issues. In fact, general illiteracy rates persisted at shockingly high rates amongst the adult population. Learning about Little Jack's economic enterprise establishing his school cooperative, the reader learns in practical terms, such concepts as risk, costs, profit, and credit. More than an illustration of capitalist mechanisms, Jack's business functions more like a cooperative or rental company, where everything is shared, with decision-making to serve the common good. Unlike other attempts to teach moral lessons, though *Little Jack* answers questions on accounting, assurance and the role of a notary, he also appears as an anti-hero as his honesty, hard work and aptitude provide no guarantee for success.

Social relations underpin the course of Jack's business and centre upon his taking responsibility for the unpredictable effects of his activities. Though the boy could blame others or harsh economic realities for the outcomes, eventually Jack must directly face the consequences of his decisions and actions, no matter how well-intended. Rather than abstract economics, the characters involved themselves in authentic relationships between friends, classmates, and the broader community. Much of Korczak's plot follows Jack in negotiations, attempting to explain misunderstandings or correct mistakes, persuade partners and generally communicate with others to demonstrate ethical behaviours. The various motivations and mix of decision-makers, a reader could find in a contemporary textbook on behavioural economics or psychology. Similarly, the micro-foundations present in *King Matt* is of interest to those studying international relations theory or war studies. That is, if only they were not simply children's books!

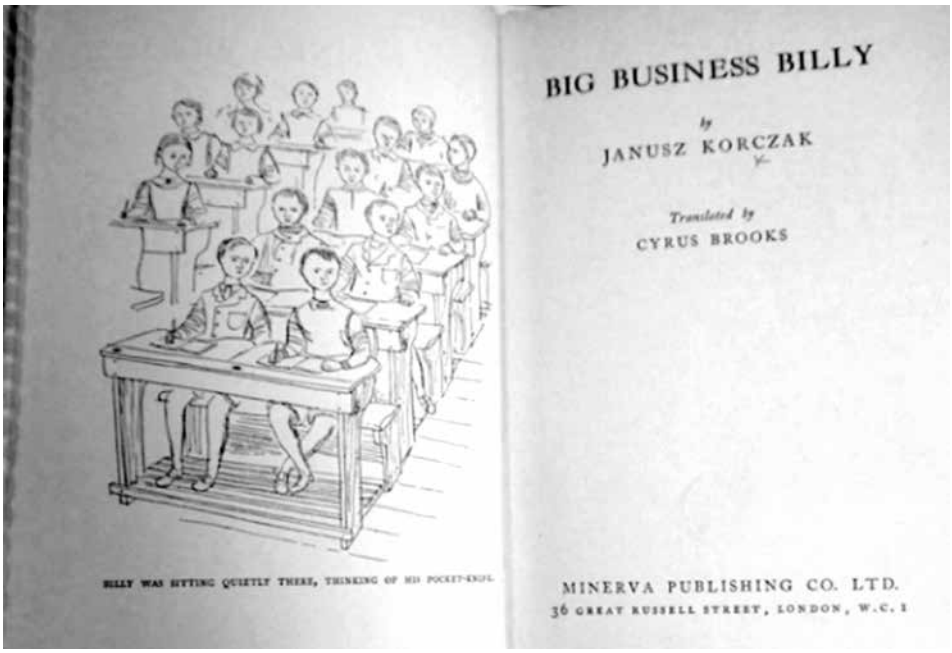


Figure: *Big Business Billy*, 1939 (English title of *Bankruptcy of Little Jack*). [Public domain.]

Figure: *To Polish Children*, 1921, PAKPD-Red Cross Health Booklet. [National Digital Library of Poland]

In the fight against typhus, sheer political will and medical innovation could not achieve results alone but required physical action and cooperation on the ground. Tackling the epidemic required the eradication of the lice transmitting the disease. Maintaining quarantine and cleanliness was difficult, with a chronic shortage of bedding and clothing. Even worse than tending to the sick was the delousing work of bathing and shaving hostile people as the volunteers disinfected homes, laundered clothing and bedding. Entering homes and crowded sick bays was not only unpleasant but also dangerous with frequent attacks by enemy soldiers and loyalists on the health workers.

The health promotion strategies were groundbreaking, using propaganda style images to fashion health practices as a patriotic duty. Instead of presenting doctors, medication or foreign aid as the solution, publications appealed directly to women and children. Simple booklets gave children advice for managing their own and others' health and hygiene. In regions without effective health clinics, the organisation urged children to initiate Junior Red Cross projects in their school or village[112].

From the very outset of WWI, the cause did not restrict itself to child welfare but served the democratic struggle for Poland's independence. Charity organisations later admitted accepting money under the guise of philanthropy[113]. Meanwhile, Hoover backed the Poles against the Bolsheviks to stop the spread of communism[114]. As the Polish government oversaw the transport infrastructure for donated foodstuffs, they entrusted local PAKPD volunteers with the set up to organise the kitchens and equipment to supply the food to children. The assistance in Poland included ethnic minorities and Muslim communities. Hoover made excuses for expanding the action beyond the child feeding program to the provision of shoes, clothing and revitalizing the textile industry[115]. Gradually Hoover and the Poles highjacked America's moral and economic reputation to undertake an active anti-communist agenda within a model of democratic nation-building.

Despite the monumental losses, the war and crisis provided political opportunities under the guise of what Hoover called a 'Trojan Horse of Emergency'. For example, Maria Kelles-Krauz (1882-1969) stated her goal in volunteering with PAKPD was not food distribution or helping the children but ensuring equal citizenship rights, both political and economic, for women in newly independent Poland. Becoming the President of the City of Radom in 1918, she wrote:

> *at this very critical moment of action when the old forced the world order into collapse, and the snowmen of superstition are falling apart, at that moment there should also be a firm autumn voice of women*[116].

Accusations spread against the various religious and political groups requiring a rapid strategy to depoliticise and secularise the humanitarian aid. Easing concerns about assisting potential enemies, a new narrative of 'Save the Children' developed in England concentrated on helping innocent children and their vulnerable mothers[117].

Our Home in Pruszków 1919-1927

Figure: 12 Cedrowa Street in Pruszków. Former *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*) seat, 1970s. [Nasz Dom Archive][118]

On November 15, 1919, Janusz Korczak, Maryna Falska, Wanda Krahelska and Maria Podwysocka, established a new institution called *Our Home*. The full name of 'Care Home of the Department of Childcare at the Central Trade Union Commission'[119] was initially used. The institution took care of children (orphans and half-orphans) of workers who died during World War I and in the independence battles that followed.

Maryna Falska managed the facility, adopting regulations and educational techniques developed by Doctor Korczak at the *Orphans' Home* since 1912. The importance of the project attracted 10 other pedagogical advisors. The first address of the *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*) facility was a small, rented, modest building at 12 Cedrowa Street in Pruszków near Warsaw.

> ***the entire facility owes its establishment to the efforts of the workers. [...] supported this effort of the workers, creating a bright and sunny House in Pruszków, where children in need of care will undoubtedly be fine!***[120]

Before long, press articles popularised the educational activities of *Our Home*, drawing the public's attention to the innovative programs. Relatively early in Korczak's career, other social critics had embraced concepts of generational equality and emancipation as the pathway to enlightened citizenship. Already, in 1924, Bańkowska treated his children's book *Bankruptcy of Little Jack* as a foundational text[121].

Figure: A group of children and educators. *Our Home* (*Nasz Dom*), Pruszków 1925. Standing (from the left) Stanisław Żemis and Eugenia Kosińska, (from the right) Maria Podwysocka, Maria Falska, Janusz Korczak; sitting (first from the left) Leokadia Ambrzykowska[122].

She wrote in the newspaper, *Robotnik* of her hope that 'the good, beautiful and wise book' would be read by both adults and children, enticing them to undertake and write their critical analysis of society. Likewise, Korczak's children already published similar sociological work in the book *Wspomnienia z maleńkości dzieci Naszego Domu w Pruszkowie* (*Memories from Littleness by the Children of Our Home in Pruszków*) (1924). Indeed, it appears the children dictated the book to Maria Falska in conjunction with Korczak, who wrote the introduction.

> ***Instead of a Foreword.***
> ***This honour fell to my undeserved participation.***
> ***I subscribe to this document***
> ***as one of historical significance.***
> ***The child-artist spoke in his own language.***
> ***The volume is aiming for the future. – It will be! – It is of a long***

time ago, as there was a people that were not seen until now.
The school obscured the child.
A revolutionary volume!
Whoever does not understand it, this long introduction, translation – will not help.

Memories from Littleness, 1924

Within the text, readers find categories such as school emancipation and differentiated experiences of children as people. The uniqueness of each childhood is unable to be fully shared with others, as Korczak declared it to be written by the 'child-artist in his own language[123].

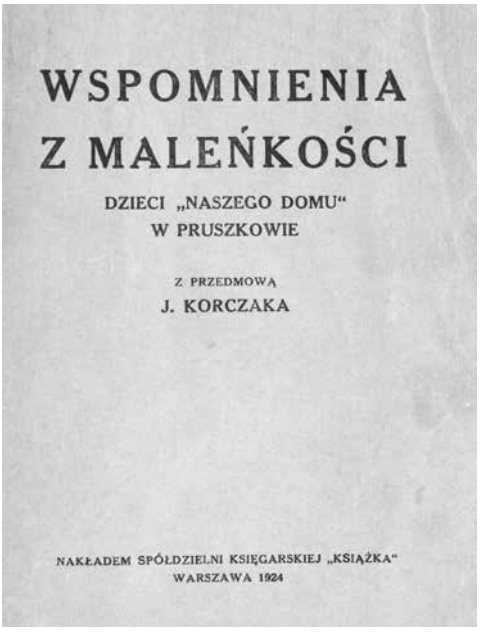

WSPOMNIENIA
Z MALEŃKOŚCI
DZIECI „NASZEGO DOMU"
W PRUSZKOWIE
Z PRZEDMOWĄ
J. KORCZAKA
NAKŁADEM SPÓŁDZIELNI KSIĘGARSKIEJ „KSIĄŻKA"
WARSZAWA 1924

Figure: *Wspomnienia z maleńkości dzieci Naszego Domu w Pruszkowie* (*Memories from Littleness by the Children of Our Home in Pruszków*) [National Digital Library of Poland]

Figure: Portrait of Maria (Maryna) Rogowska-Falska.
[Nasz Dom Archive][125]

Maria (Maryna) Rogowska-Falska[124]

As a teacher, educational author, and socio-political activist the government decorated Falska with the Cross of Independence in 1931. Post-humously she is recognised amidst the 'Righteous Among the Nations'.

Born on the family estate, she was educated at home before passing her teacher exams. After moving to Warsaw in her youth, Falska became active in pro-independence activities amongst other students of the Flying University. She became personally acquainted with Józef Piłsudski, joining his Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Using the pseudonym 'Hilda', she was repeatedly arrested for political activity in Warsaw and Łódź by the tsarist authorities. Exiled after the split in the PPS, she continued her association with legal and semi-legal educational institutions. She married another PPS member, a doctor Leon Falski. Tragically, between 1912 and 1914 she lost both her husband and daughter. With the outbreak of World War I, Falska engaged in aid operations and in 1915 returned to teaching. While running a Polish boarding school in Kyiv, she met Janusz Korczak.

Returning to a newly independent Poland in November 1919, she took charge of *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*) Educational Institution in Pruszków (later in Warsaw). After years of partnership with Korczak, from the mid-1930s, she developed an original localised program for the functioning of *Our Home* complementing the district.

During World War II, under her leadership, the youth of *Our Home* joined the army resistance movement (Armia Krajowa). The members took part in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, and the Home became an asylum for a group of Jewish children. She died suddenly after receiving a German order to leave her settlement and Warsaw.

For the pupils of *Our Home*, she was 'Pani Maryna' ('Madam Maryna'). Her memory is preserved to this day with the renaming of *Our Home* as *The Maryna Falska Our Home Children's Home*. The historic building bears a commemorative plaque with the Maryna Falska Square nearby.

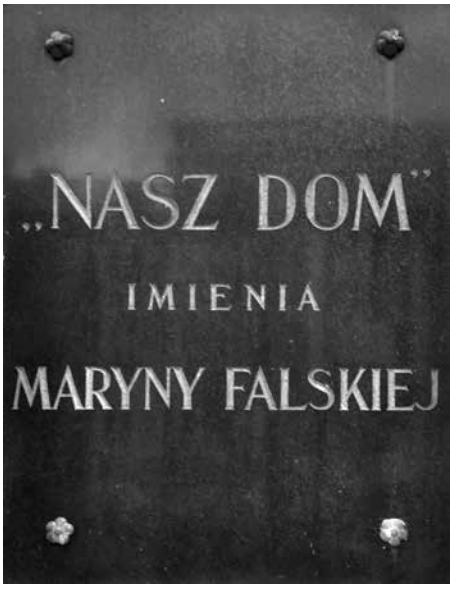


Figure: Commemorative plaque on the historic building near 34 Zjednoczenia Avenue in Warsaw. Photo: Z.Sękowska

Figure: Maryna Falska Square in Bielany. Photo: Z. Sękowska

Beware of the illusion that you already know something for sure and that you have already known the child.

Maria Rogowska-Falska, *Information Sketch, Our Home Wychowawczy Institute, 1928*[126].

Figure: Maryna Falska (in the middle). The scouts swearing-in ceremony. *Nasz Dom* (*Our Home*), Bielany. 1930s. [Nasz Dom Archive][127]

There is School

Besides the aid organisations, post WWI Korczak was active in the Paediatric Society, Department of Childcare Workers at the Central Council of Trade Unions, Pedagogical Commission of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Education and collaborated in the formation of the Central Societies for the Protection of Jewish Children and Orphans in Poland (CENTOS). The 1919 Teacher's Congress was commonly called the 'Teacher's *Sejm*' or 'Parliament' with Korczak preparing materials for the Teachers' Association and State primary schools. His support for pre-war female colleagues continued as he participated in the Socio-Educational Labour Study organised by Helena Radlińska at the Free Warsaw University. Meanwhile, he joined the staff at the new State Institute of Special Education (PIPS) headed by the formidable, Maria Grzegorzewska (1888–1967).

His new role was educating teachers and educators to work in special schools for blind and deaf children, and those with other disabilities. He directed academic research accompanied by conferences, short courses and field trips[128]. Grzegorzewska recalled his lectures as 'not theorising, not ready formulas, not deliberations resulting from book knowledge – he said becoming a wise educator is about learning from mistakes and successes, about learning about life within normal development, in daily, continuous work [...]. It worked not only with content, but and in a strange way, for him only, a proper form of expressing thoughts. [...] he was triggering the truth already outright with his presence. Everyone became himself in dealing with him – he was himself'[129].

Figure: Portrait of Maria Grzegorzewska. [Maria Grzegorzewska University Archives][131]

Maria Grzegorzewska[130]

was born on the 8th of April 1888, the youngest in a large family. A gifted student, she attended a boarding school for girls in Warsaw and became a governess for wealthy families. Though embarking on a degree in natural sciences in Kraków, financially, she was unable to continue. Equally, her personal life was fraught with tragedy as her fiancee succumbed to illness with Grzegorzewska vowing never to marry. Depressed and seriously ill, she stumbled upon the work of Józefa Joteyko at the International Pedological Faculty in Brussels. Fascinated, she left to continue her education abroad and developing a friendship; her new professor introduced Grzegorzewska to outstanding scientists. War interrupted the faculty's activity, so she went with Joteyko to Paris.

Obtaining her doctorate at the University of Paris (Sorbonne) in 1916, she submitted a dissertation on aesthetic education. However, a life-changing visit to a hospital for the disabled prompted Grzegorzewska to change her career to special education instead. Returning to Poland in 1919, she advised on special education at the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education. She also joined Korczak and others, as a pedagogical advisor to *Nasz Dom*[132].

In 1922, Grzegorzewska was appointed the head of the State Institute of Special Education (SIPS now APS), a position she held until 1967. Meanwhile, she also chaired the Special Education Section of the Polish Teachers' Union and founded the journal 'Special School'. Courageously outspoken on educational and disability issues, Grzegorzewska fell victim to an increasingly oppressive political climate. In 1935, she was dismissed as director of the State Teacher's Institute, prompting her staff including Korczak, to resign in protest.

Post-war, she became a professor of special education at the University of Warsaw. Grzegorzewska's achievements cannot be overestimated as the first Polish researcher to undertake a systematic study on the issues of pedagogy for disabled children. Adopting a holistic approach, she specialised in working with deaf-blind people and adapted Decroly's work centre model for Polish schools. Establishing the disciplinary foundations, Grzegorzewska herself considered her most important work as related to teacher education. She summarised her approach to the education process in '*Letters to a Young Teacher*' (1947-1961) with her evaluation of an outstanding teacher as one with the ability to 'harmonise' with students.

The concept of self-governance is embedded within the history of Polish education, a legacy which Korczak revised and built upon in his rights-based approach. In his storybook, King Matt is jealous despite having anything he desires as he watches the newspaper boys allowed to scream and run, earning wages for their efforts.

> ***The concept behind self-government is actually 'work', so that everything works equally well for those who work, learn and spend half a day together. So that they do not hurt each other, do not disturb, do not tease, do not ridicule. On the contrary, that they do favours for one another, help, look after each other and keep order. The self-government is not only work but also a fight to defend the decent, meek and weak against the enemies of order and justice.***
>
> *Self-government in Schools, Mały Przegląd, 1927*

The work of a poor child is utilitarian, not educational, without accounting for individual strengths and achieving little satisfaction and joy. In the case of affluent children, parents and educational institutions isolate children from work, especially the kind usually relegated to servants and low pay workers. A happy childhood becomes synonymous with leisure and pleasure, avoiding work, except for educational activities which will pay off in the future. Here, parents and teachers shun tasks which resemble work, especially those considered dirty or degrading and performed by the lowest class. The children learn such activities are humiliating and to be avoided by all means emphasizing the class divide between mental and menial labour. Whereas, Korczak argued such an approach deprives children of their need for purposeful action, creating no satisfaction, sense of duty or outlet for their boredom, frustration or sadness. The adults suppress or distract the 'child of the salon' until no longer able to manage apathy or obstacles himself. This fully booked childhood is gradually transferred into a life of lethargy without action, no duty of care or anything worth fighting for.

[...] show by your own example that there is no dirty work, and any sloppiness will frustrate or destroy. I will cause an indulgent smile or a grimace of disgust when I say that a two-volume book on laundry and laundresses would be equally dignified as one on psychoanalysis. Often more intelligence and initiative are required in the kitchen making broth than a bacteriological laboratory and a microscope. And I would entrust an infant more willingly to an honest nanny than to Charlotte Bühler

The Ambitious Educator, 1938[133]

Figure: Summer camp/colony 'Wilhelmówka' pre-1912. [Public domain.]

With the political climate shifting in 1926, Korczak began a unique project, the children's newspaper '*Mały Przegląd*' ('Little Review'). He attaches great importance in responding to the reader's letters, but leaves disappointed only three years later.

> ***I understand my task as the editor of 'Little Review', is to organise the received letters in a way which integrates into a whole, like arranging flowers into a bouquet, like a mosaic made of colourful pebbles. Like building brick towers. There are those who are impatiently trying to prevent everything. They will not succeed. [...] (The letter) will have value as a document, because the fascinating issue I am researching is the organisation of coexistence and cooperation in such a way as to neutralize those who demand a lot, without giving anything themselves, maliciously disturbing and mocking them. And to help those who shyly withdraw, fearful, to notice them in the noisy crowd and not offend, perhaps even carelessly.***
>
> *Little Review*, 1927[134]

Similarly, it easy to view the newspapers in the Homes' as a platform for child participation. This masks how each served as a resolution tool for conflict within a democracy. The newspaper and bulletin board were sources of information, events and reports but also publicised opinions, proposed changes and violations of rights. The complicated relationship between information, consent and the vote is fundamental within modern democratic systems. Each component played a role in the Homes as elements of the experimental Children's Republic as a whole. If we take these institutions seriously, it reveals the sham separation of the child from the adult world deemed as preparation or protection. Considering the timing of the 'Little Review' and its target audience of Polish-speaking Jewish children, a three-year survey of their lives on a nationwide scale, and we ask again, what does Korczak say he is researching?

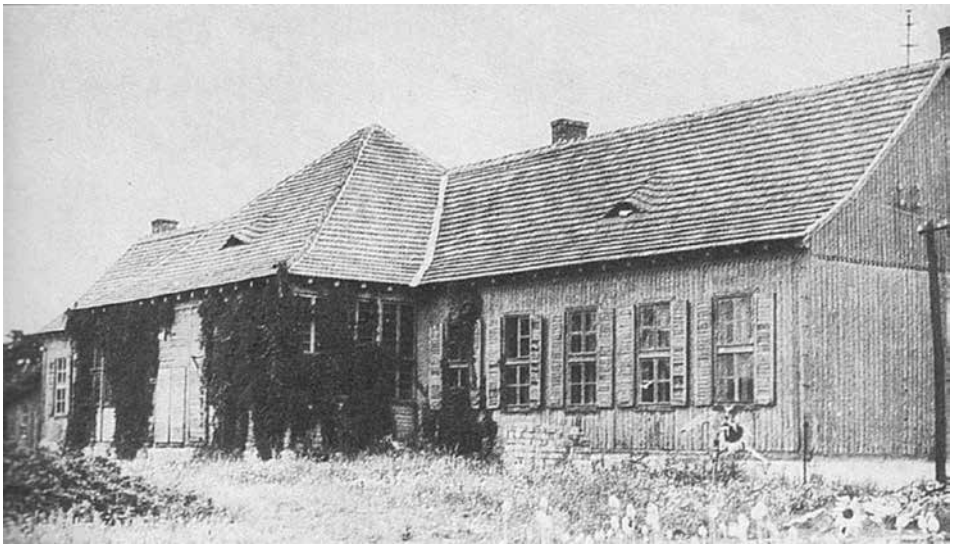


Figure: *Różyczka* (*Little Rose* Kindergarten), Czaplowizna. [Public domain]

From the mid-1920s a kindergarten was planned in the Children's Home and eventually achieved at the summer campsite, *Różyczka* (*Little Rose*) operating from 1928 to 1933. Simultaneously, a kindergarten also opened in *Nasz Dom* from 1928 (at first only for boarders, but open to the public from 1934). It also conducted sociometric research on early childhood issues such as sleep, bedwetting, onanism and language development. For a brief period, Korczak presented seminars at the Hebrew training institute, Tarbut, recruiting their brightest Froebellian-trained teachers to his endeavours.

Inside *Różyczka* were many familiar kindergarten aspects such as blocks, musical instruments, a library, child-sized furniture. The teachers added plants, flowers, tablecloths and curtains to create a homey atmosphere. Play with dolls was considered necessary for both boys and girls. Anticipating resistance from adults, the director Ida Merżan recommended setting up a 'doll's hospital' with doctor play, a repair workshop and even making furniture and clothes. Sewing and tailoring were considered appropriate vocational skills for both boys and girls so more likely to be accepted.

> ***A game is not so much the child's medium as the only sphere in which he is allowed to display more or less initiative. When participating in a game, the child feels to some degree independent. Everything else is a transient favor, a temporary concession, whereas to play is the child's right.***
>
> *How to Love a Child*, 1919

For approximately two years, *Our Home* had an experimental school for 20 children with two teachers. There were no bells but allowed free movement of the children within the big hall '*sala*', classroom and eventually beyond. The classroom had 11 tables with a changeable layout, and the child duty monitors set this without permanent seat places. It also included a quiet corner with mats, blankets and pillows. Outside of the central classroom, there were various spaces – a quiet room, a noisy room for movement and activity and a workshop which included sheet metal work. Lessons included reading, arithmetic cards, singing and arts, crafts and workshop and a weekly excursion. The school experiment ended in favour of all children attending neighbourhood schools with an increased role for the *Bursa* (Dormitory). The *Bursa* assistants attended secondary, vocational or higher education. Working on average 2 hours per day, after tutoring, the *Bursa* supported extra-curricular activities such as sports, games, workshop and handicrafts. Korczak prioritised a minimum of half an hour to be allocated after school, for every child to play and participate in group games before any chores or school homework. This period allowed educators daily observation of children who experienced difficulty in joining others or were disinterested in play.

Figure: *It's Time to Get Up* (1932) book cover. [Public domain]

The observations a teacher can make in the playground are invaluable to democratic education and how the individual interacts with the mass. Which child is the organiser, the leader or the most valuable player, he asks? Which child is desperate to stick with a trusted friend and which invites a stranger to play? Who is flexible in the roles they play and who unwilling to trade places? Who laughs loudest, impatient, breaks up play and who is offended? Which mother forces their child into play, and which child is taken out when the game becomes too dangerous? The game, unsupervised by adults, is free and without the compulsion to play by the rules, or fairly or kindly. The bored one, the patient one and even the ten-year-old who becomes a leader-psychologist to intervene in disputes; all involved in the collective activity but differ in particular ways.

> ***Psychological puzzles, subtle conflicts of various natures, fights and rivalries – in a few words, the dramas of life.***
> ***We do not notice these, do not see; we pay no attention to it.***
> ***Yet, they apply the most in pressure with their stamp onto children's character; they exert a significant (positive or negative) educational influence.***
>
> *Teacher's Voice,* 1919

From the game, each child's situation in life becomes publicised, amongst others in their actions and values. Not necessarily the inner depths, but what is most valued by the group? What is marketable restrains independence and changes the individual's resistance to the mass. Through group observation Korczak could note the child's capabilities within the community, attitude towards others and motivations behind that attitude.

> ***If he 'gets obedience, how has he achieved it and how does he use his power. Failing to attain it, does he ache for power, suffer, is he angry or sulky, does he envy passively, strive, or give up? Does he voice opposition, frequently or rarely? Is he right?***
> ***Does ambition or whim guide him? Does he enforce his will upon others tactfully or brutally? Does he resist the leaders, negotiate or follow?***
>
> *Fr. 77, How to Love a Child: Family,* 1919

Figure: Ida Merżan (in the middle) with her sisters: Gicia and Sara. *Dom Sierot* (*Orphan's Home*), Warszawa 1930[135].

Ida Merżan[136]

Ida Merżan arrived in Warsaw at age 16 to attend university, and she remembers first meeting Janusz Korczak at lectures in education and child studies. She was encouraged by friends to apply to live in the *Bursa* dormitory at his Children's Home in exchange for work as a trainee teacher. In her application, Merżan wrote that despite lacking experience, she was young and able to play with the children. Although selected, many years later she admitted being ashamed of that statement having learnt that facilitating children's play had little to do with age and more to do with attitude. The early lessons on play from Korczak, the other teachers and especially the children stayed throughout her teaching and writing career.

In 1967, Merżan advocated that parents and teachers understand the child's right to play as stated in the *United Nations' Declaration*. Outdoor play was Merżan's favourite activity and she advocated collective observation of both children and their playmates, as well as parents directing their activity in play (even when appearing that the children played independently).

From Merżan's (1967) book:[137]

In the shade stands a baby pram. Not too far, more in the sunshine, a second pram. Both 'citizens' are the same age. Janek is dressed in a (one-sie) sleepsuit and holds in his hand a coloured rattle, which is tied by a ribbon to the pram. Older children, who come by, peer into the pram, and if they notice that the rattle has fallen out of the little one's hands, they give it back to him. Janek examines his hands or pulls his feet to his mouth. It is difficult work. And it is not always successful. However, this does not discourage him and he returns to his training. This is his preliminary physical training and first play, but also a training of his will. He really wants to get those feet into his mouth. Later he looks over his fingers, turns his hands, then turns them in every direction. He is so pleased that he smiles to himself. It is pleasant to lay like this. He also smiles at the children, those that look into the pram. It shows that he does recognise them. They are his first social contacts.[...]

But conditions for development are different for Paul, although he lays in an identical pram. His arms and legs he has tightly wrapped by a warm blanket, which stops his movement. So he lays only looking at the little bears tied to his pram. He cannot move his legs, his arms either. He is a sensitive child and worried about his health his mother tucks his arms back under the covers. Toys get dirty when they fall on the ground so she has removed anything unnecessary. He lacks the opportunities for movement like his colleague Janek and frequently has colds. So, she prefers other children not to come towards little Paul. They may wake him or bring some sort of infection. Sometimes she checks on him if he has uncovered himself while sleeping, and she goes back to sitting on the park bench.

Figure: A ship on the Vistula, taking Warsaw residents to Bielany. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Zdobycz Robotnicza — Bielany, najzdrowsza dzielnica Warszawy

Workers Quarry – Bielany, the healthiest district of Warsaw

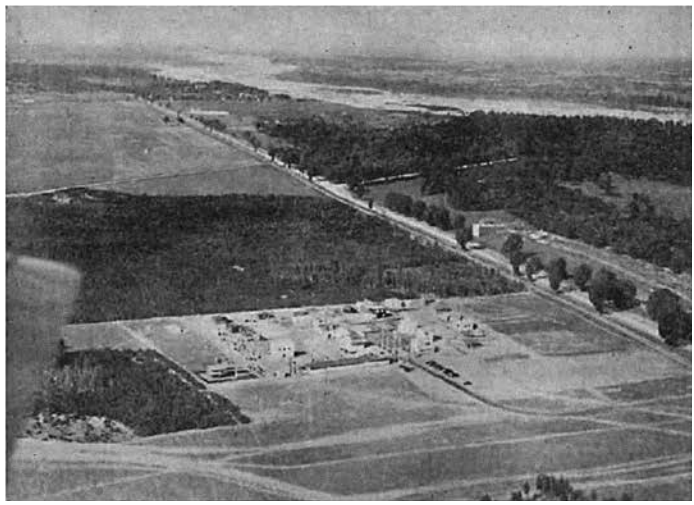


Figure: Press photography. Bielany – the area of former military training grounds; urbanised in the 1920s. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Figure: Forest in Bielany. [National Digital Library of Poland]

The 1920s was a dynamic time for Warsaw as it claimed its place amongst European capitals. Modernism influenced plans to create a functional district on the northern edge of the city, Bielany Fields. Numerous press articles and advertisements drew the citizen's attention to this greenfield location, praising both the natural landscape and health benefits. The promoters emphasised the green terrain amidst old pines of the Kampinos Forest, contrasted by the sandy soils on the banks of the Wisła River. A model of carefree, healthy living, Bielany was associated with boat trips to folk festivals, religious holidays and carousel fun for the children. The air purity and woodland setting, even had urban planners envisaging a future spa district attracting tourists. The urbanisation of the former military training grounds began in the 1920s, and soon after the construction of the 'Worker's Quarry' Estate commenced (Quarry as meaning reward for the hunt or prize). Starting with the Central Institute of Physical Education and its sports stadium, the neighbourhood also housed the 'Save the Babies' Society, a tuberculosis sanitorium and eventually, became the new location of *Our Home* run by Korczak and Maria Falska[138].

Figure: Buildings of the *Workers Quarry* Estate, Bielany 1920s. [Polish National Digital Archives]

The Child – Tomorrow is Ours

Throughout his texts, Korczak criticised the quest for individual fame and glory as defined by most people, whether these be at the Olympics or a singing contest rather than as 'a faithful servant'. He warned that 'it is a short-lived vogue, a mistake, a folly to consider as a worthless misfit everybody who is not outstanding'.

Fr.51, How to Love a Child: Family, 1919

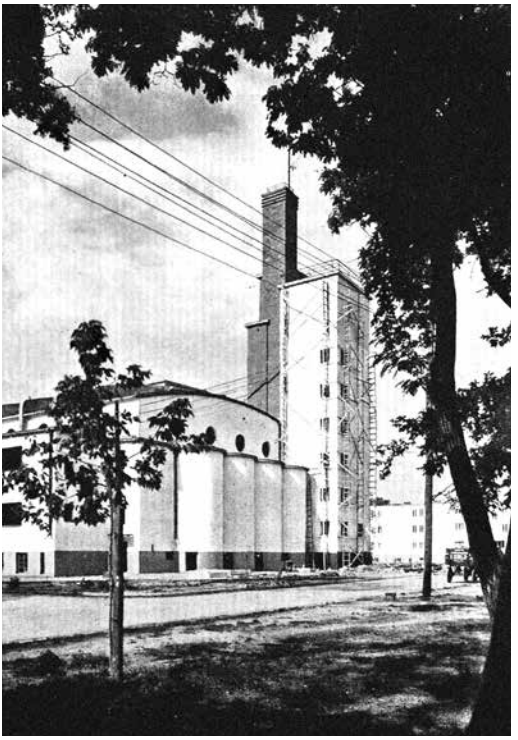


Figure (on the right): Campus buildings of the Central Institute of Physical Education in Bielany. [National Digital Library of Poland]

Figure: Athletics competition in the hall on the campus of the Institute. [Polish National Digital Archives]

Figure: Photographs documenting „Save the Babies" Society – activities included care for single and homeless mothers, helping them look for a job and providing child care.
(above) Society building in Bielany, late 1930s. Architects: Ludwik Szczęsny Dąbrowski, Marian Rybczyński. [Polish National Digital Archives]
(below) Staff at work caring for babies. [Polish National Digital Archives]

Another association operated in Bielany known as the '*Opieka*' (Care) Society initiated by first lady, Aleksandra Piłsudska. It cared for impoverished children, half-orphans and orphans. The Bielany social organisations worked closely together, creating a protective umbrella over the neediest and most vulnerable residents in the district[139].

NASZ DOM

Our Home

Figure: The opening ceremony of *Nasz Dom* at Bielany, November 1928; with a large sign '*Witamy*' (*Welcome*). Architect: Zygmunt Tarasiński [Polish National Digital Archives]

> ***Not a word here about education for all, village schools, garden cities and the scout movement. This was all so unreal, so hopelessly remote at the time. The content of a book depends on the categories of personal feelings and experiences available to the writer, on his surroundings and sphere of activity, on the soil on which he has nourished his mind. That is why we come across naive opinions expressed by authorities, foreign in particular.***
>
> *Fr. 40, How to Love a Child: Family*, 1919

Our Home was established by Korczak and colleagues in Bielany and designed for 10-20 children of preschool age, 70 children of school age and 30 older youth who assisted the staff. Many of the children were 'social' orphans with a living parent or extended family. Therefore, the general public and other educators regarded the institutions as reform schools providing therapeutic interventions for children in vulnerable circumstances, with challenging behaviours or having experienced trauma. These children were less likely to succeed in education and often negatively viewed as already on a criminal path. The structure and operation of *Our Home* were similar to the Home for Jewish children on Krochmalna Street. Inspiring international visitors and educators, fascination grew in the educational outcomes achieved at both.

Although lauded as having created the best children's homes in Poland and visited by many dignitaries, Korczak's emphasis on the value of institutions rather than families did not impress everyone. Neither would be preserving children's cultural and community connections please the progressive scientific educator who perhaps branded the experiment on Krochmalna as too Jewish, too Polish or just insufficiently universal for the needs of the international community. Many misunderstood this close theory-practice relationship, like the Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, who reinterpreted it in terms of his psychological approach to reforming individual behaviour. It appears Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya (1869-1939) best understood the underlying political agenda as reforming society and raising culture rather than a focus on individuals. She sent representatives to interpret the 'modernist' spaces and engaged authors to create new fairytales and elementary textbooks for children with a Marxist spin[140].

In the spirit of forgiveness, this Russian Bolshevik and Polish-Jewish patriot formed a partnership during the tentative first steps of Soviet-Polish co-existence. Gratitude for Korczak's assistance was repaid by Krupskaya, as one of the directors of the Soviet Education Commission, she translated and published Korczak's second volume on the *Internat* (Boarding School) highly praising the work.

> *I am convinced that everyone should read How to Love Children. This book encourages reflection on many issues, enables careful analysis and assessment of many aspects of life in children's homes, to take a more thorough look at the psyche of resident children.*
>
> Nadezhda Krupskaya, 1922[141]

The enthusiasm of the Russians may have contributed to the association of his system with communism, while in Eastern Poland suspicious teachers charged that Korczak propagates Bolshevist education[142].

Our Home is not philanthropy,
it is also not a social duty towards poor orphans,
it is not a shelter, not a boarding house;
it is a '*wychowawcza*' institution.

Wychowanie – this is the motto of Our Home. The issue of 'upbringing, raising, educating' has begun to persistently impose itself on the pedagogical and social thought of our times. It was understood that upbringing must take care of the welfare of the pack and the welfare of the individual to a large extent. It has to be both social and individual at the same time. That social habits and moral forces must be exercised in parallel.

It was understood that upbringing is not an art, but a science, that an educator is not a magician but a specialist. It was necessary to develop a methodology of collective upbringing. These issues are of great interest to educators and social activists all over the world. [...] The Orphans' Home (on Krochmalna) and Our Home work on developing the methodology of collective education. Theory and practice – here merged into one whole—the only such attempt in Poland.

This is the social and pedagogical meaning of Our Home. Educational work in Our Home is a work aware of its paths and goals, [...] moving forward step by step.
Contemporary education is permeated by the principle that the educator is responsible to society for the way the children are. We want to base upbringing on the principles where the educator would be accountable to the children for the way society is.

Modern education aims to prepare children for life, when they will become people after many years, we want to convince the general public that children are already people, and should already be treated as living human beings. We want to organize a children's society on the principles of justice, brotherhood, equal rights and responsibilities. For now, having no better models than those developed by adult society, we will imitate them, adapting them to the needs and characteristics of the children's society. We want to replace punishment with order, swap compulsion to the voluntary adaptation of an individual to forms of collective life, we want to change a dead moral into a joyful striving for self-improvement and self-struggle.
We value self-respect on a par with kindness to our neighbours or better said – our fellow-citizens.

'Our Home' Society Report, 1921-1923

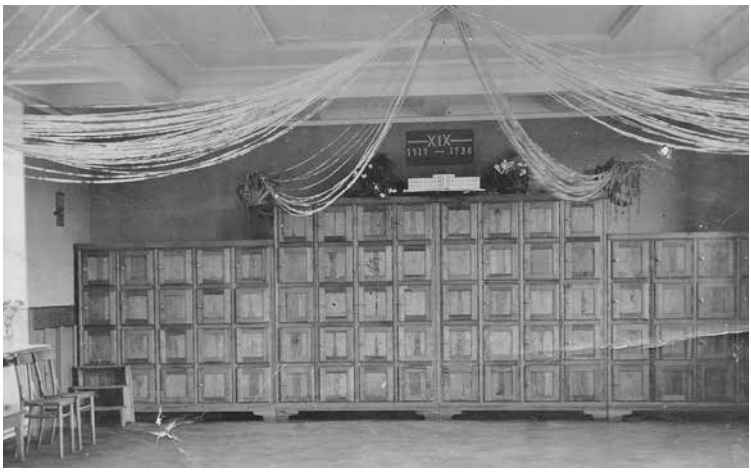


Figure: Drawers for children's personal belongings and small items in the so-called 'large hall' in *Nasz Dom*. [Nasz Dom Archive][143]

Figure: Corridor on the ground floor, *Nasz Dom*. [Nasz Dom Archive][144]

The layout in *Nasz Dom* indicated the astute awareness of the designers of the long-term organisational and diverse needs of a group of children living together. The variety of sensory spaces accommodating both active and passive individuals in younger and older generations. The design facilitated complex long-term social relations by including bright and dark corridors, large hall for rowdy games, library and retreat room. Looking beyond the children's court and parliament, reveals the role of social institutions such as the lost and found box, contract book and personal drawer-lockers preserved privacy and property rights as part of the economic order of the 'Children's Society'.

Upholding the laws of rightful ownership mirrored that the restitution of Poland in miniature from below. Rather than abolish property rights, instead Korczak sought to extend them. Cautiously, he admits to signs that challenge parental authority, but argues the child is still materially worse off than a beggar or prisoner as the child truly owns nothing. Even a wealthy child must account for the whereabouts of gifts and the state of his or her clothing. The child is unable to give away, use or even destroy any possessions[145].

> ***The child – nothing. We – everything.***
> ***We order about and demand obedience.***
> ***Morally and legally responsible, wise and far-seeing,***
> ***we are the sole judges of the child's actions, movements,***
> ***thoughts and plans.***
> ***We give instructions and supervise the execution.***
> ***Depending on will and understanding – our children,***
> ***our property – hands off!***
>
> *Fr. 46, How to Love a Child: Family*, 1919

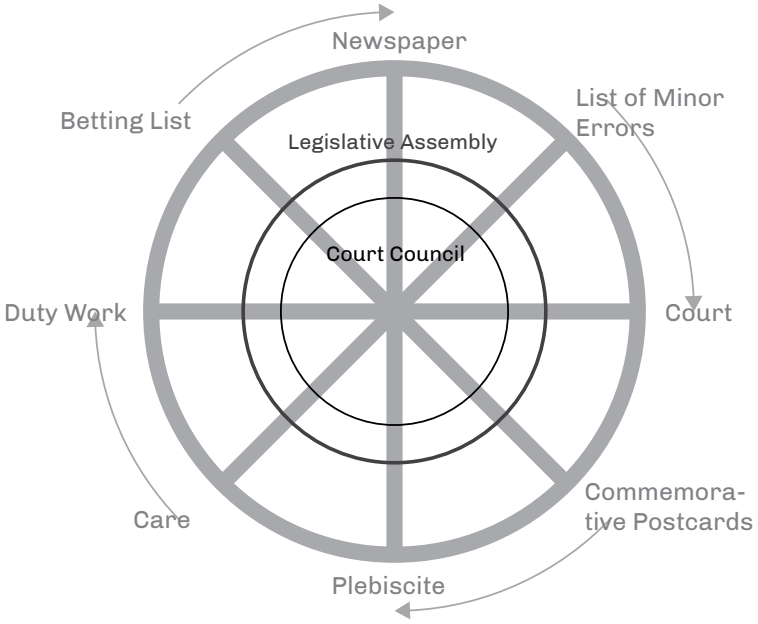


Figure 12: Organisational Chart of The *Orphan's Home*[146].

A common error regarding Korczak's approach is that the child is the subject of education or raising. Instead, he strove to raise the adult, educate the educator and enlighten society in their relationship with the child-citizen. To the building design, Korczak attached significant importance for improving social relations, democratic practices and citizenship. Neither Falska nor Korczak adhered to any religion but disagreed on the need for a chapel within the design. Central to his pedagogy is the history of law and custom fashioned by different religions, often centred upon practices related to food, hygiene and rest. The celebration of traditional holidays and legends marked progress or transitions when societal rules were overturned or changed to accommodate new knowledge and different generations of people. The 'No Baths' and 'Stay in Bed' holidays in the Children's Homes, recognised the discomfort and difficulty that washing and getting out of bed presented for many of the children, particularly during freezing winters. However, the required 'law' for close living conditions solved the conflict between individual rights and group interests with personal days off.

During the 1930s, travelling to Palestine, Korczak experienced kibbutz life, observing and advising on the educational system. His philosophy drew upon 1000 years of law and tradition of the nations buried within the Polish soil, so he was curious to observe the struggle of a 'live system', that of the child, transplanted into the new soil. His observation was that the pioneer movement based itself on social, economic and political goals. Whereas, it needed more than just, work and oranges; it needed a new faith[147]. To develop a new system of national pedagogy in Palestine, Korczak estimated would not only span recent migration but require him to consider, the sky, and the landscape, and Jordan and the sand, and many, many ruins and mementoes (artefacts). The struggle he had undertaken in Poland, was hard work but not daunting as Korczak operated within, his own climate and flora, and traditions, and people whom he knew well'[148].

The desire for a 'new Jerusalem' was an idea popularised by Theosophists and historians relate the doctrine to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim beliefs about the end of history[149]. Themes about resurrection, messianism

and divine justice appear in many ancient cultures. Rather than focus solely on the content of these beliefs, the shared foundation is one of liberation and optimism for the future world. Adopting 'new Jerusalem' as a key tenet, the Freemasons employed its hopeful symbolism as machinery for change, self-development. With a spark of the divine, they worked towards creating a new heaven on earth.

In Poland, the official revival of Freemasonry found fertile ground and, in many ways, the Lodge replaced the private salon. The safe meeting house allowed discussions on topics such as peace, Zionism and various social issues[150]. With connections to the Polish Theosophical Society, Wanda Dynowska struck a unique partnership with one of Poland's leading generals, Michał Tokarzewski-Karaszewicz. The pair successfully transplanted the Masonic movement 'Le Droit Humain' (The Human Right) and attracted Korczak as a member. No doubt he closely aligned with its purpose to group under a banner of people of all races, religions and nationalities.

The evidence appears the masonic network styled itself as a church and was laying the groundwork for a new moral order. The religious hierarchy was evident in the rituals within the Le Droit Humain movement, some repeated in Korczak's Homes[151]. Each lodge followed rituals for meetings, initiation into the Order and a ceremony of moving to the higher levels within the organisation. The significance of Masonic symbols and methods of working on the 'self-as-art' progressing through particular stages would guide the Lodge activities. For example, the hammer and chisel represent the constant need to sculpt one's superstitions, failings and errors. At non-ritual meetings, discussions focused on social problems, peace and foreign policy. Funded by Aleksandra Piłsudska, the manor house in Mężenin hosted conferences between the various lodges. Maria Falska accompanied Korczak to at least one of these gatherings in May 1931, and his regular holidays here are the subject of his last publication, *Moje Wakacje* (*My Vacation*, 1939).

With this foundation in mind, Korczak resists artificially transplanting his pedagogical system and favours an indigenous, multi-national

pedagogy organically over time 'from the soil'. Otherwise, any new hierarchy, whether secular or religious, would eventually replicate the oppression of the system it replaced. Different religious traditions, however, served people by providing symbols of love, (the Star of David, suffering Christ or compassionate Buddha). In contrast, the West now honoured symbols of status, wealth and power. Despite another war on the horizon, Korczak anticipated struggle, effort and conflict as necessary, even between the adult and child. Achieving spiritual reincarnation only through struggle and suffering. Rather than desire singularity or purity, diverse nations united, under the universal brotherhood of man and all things.

> ***Zamenhof comes to mind. Naïve, audacious, he wanted to rectify God's error or God's punishment. He tried to fuse the confusing language into one again.***
> ***Stop!***
> ***To divide, divide, divide. Not to join.***
>
> *Pamiętnik*, 1942

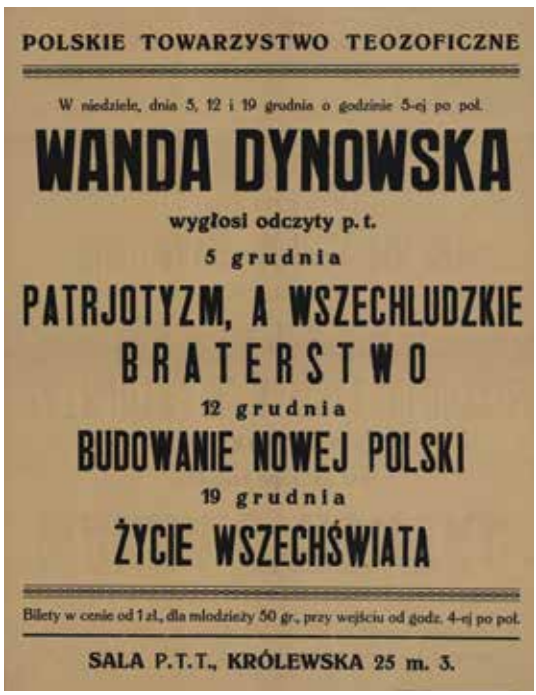
In his memoirs, Korczak explained as he read the works of Eastern mystics, he found alternatives to the brutal contests Europe now faced. He boasted that listening carefully to the master, he found a better road. Did he discover this path at his Masonic Lodge, Star of the Sea, shown the way by his Grand Master, Wanda Dynowska?

Wanda Dynowska (Uma Devi)[152]

Wanda Dynowska was born in St. Petersburg and developed a career as a writer, translator and social activist. She is best known for popularising Hinduism in Poland and promoting Polish-Indian relations. Studying at Polish and Swiss universities, Dynowska was very well-educated and mastered at least 6 European languages by graduation, and later adding Hindi, Tamil and English. Politically engaged, she spoke eloquently on the freedom of the Poles, Irish and Indians, impressing Annie Bessant. A scholar of world religions, she studied the sacred texts of the Quran, Bhagavad-Gita and the Bible. Accomplished as a linguist, she met J. Krishnamurti translating his text, 'At the Feet of the Master' into Polish. She later provided copies of the book for children at the summer camps also attended by Korczak. In 1919, she visited Paris and obtained permission to establish the Polish Theosophical Society in a newly independent Poland. She became editor of the Society's journals, translated literature and the organisation grew its cultural influence in Warsaw.

In 1924, having gained Besant's approval, Dynowska founded the Polish chapter of the Masonic order, Le Droit Humain, with one of the Warsaw lodges counting Janusz Korczak amongst its membership. With financial backing from Aleksandra Piłsudska and several wealthy members, the group purchased a manor house in the countryside in 1925. The site served the community and also operated as a summer camp for children. During the coup of 1926, Piłsudski received support from the Masonic organisations, however, his death in 1935 severely changed the political climate for these groups, prompting Dynowska to emigrate to India permanently. Invited to live-in at the compound of Sri Ramana Maharishi, Dynowska partnered with Mahatma Gandhi and Mauryce Frydman in support of Indian independence activities. It was Gandhi who gave her the name Uma Devi. Working in the Polish consulate in Bombay, Dynowska founded the Indian-Polish Library in Madras. The Library's aim was the popularisation

of culture, literature, history and religion between the two countries.
During World War II, Dynowska assisted refugees, both Polish and Jewish who managed to escape to India. The Poles argued the fate of thousands of children was under threat from both the Germans and Soviets who sought their extermination. With little assistance forthcoming from elsewhere, Poland turned to the Indian government under British colonisation. The shared struggle against imperial oppression goes somewhat to explaining why the Poles did not consider the Indian nation so radically different from themselves. The effects of Indian assistance were two-fold; firstly the rescued children were offered asylum surviving to migrate post-war, preserving the Polish diaspora. Secondly, the support of Gandhian nationalists for the Poles granted unofficial permission to Britain to turn away from Poland as an ally and publicly side with the Soviets[153]. Post-war, Dynowska continued to promote the Polish-Indian relationship. Travelling to Poland on lecture tours, Dynowska met with Karol Wojtyła (future Pope John Paul II) to make a case for the freedom of the Tibetan people. Working with the refugees brought her close to the Dalai Lama, who called her 'mother'. She spent her final years in a Catholic convent in India, where she died in 1971 after an illness.


POLSKIE TOWARZYSTWO TEOZOFICZNE

W niedziele, dnia 5, 12 i 19 grudnia o godzinie 5-ej po poł.

WANDA DYNOWSKA

wygłosi odczyty p.t.

5 grudnia

PATRJOTYZM, A WSZECHLUDZKIE BRATERSTWO

12 grudnia

BUDOWANIE NOWEJ POLSKI

19 grudnia

ŻYCIE WSZECHŚWIATA

Bilety w cenie od 1 zł., dla młodzieży 50 gr., przy wejściu od godz. 4-ej po poł.

SALA P.T.T., KRÓLEWSKA 25 m. 3.

Polish Theosophical Society presents

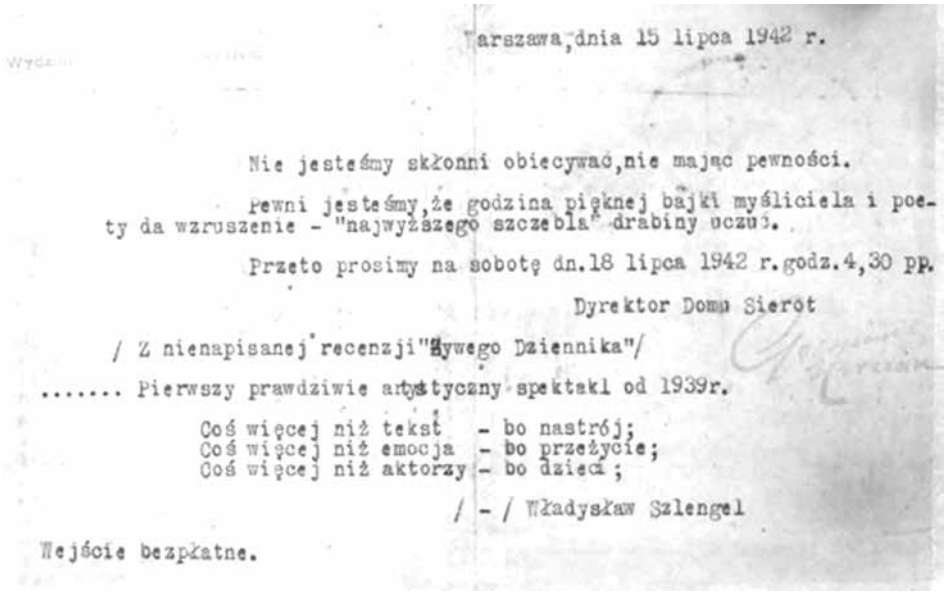
Wanda Dynowska speaking on

Patriotism, and an all-human brotherhood

Building a new Poland

Universal Life

Figure: Announcement about the lecture by Wanda Dynowska. [National Digital Library of Poland]



Warszawa,dnia 15 lipca 1942 r.

Nie jesteśmy skłonni obiecywać,nie mając pewności.

Pewni jesteśmy,że godzina pięknej bajki myśliciela i poety da wzruszenie - "najwyższego szczebla" drabiny uczuć.

Przeto prosimy na sobotę dn.18 lipca 1942 r.godz.4,30 pp.

Dyrektor Domu Sierot

/ Z nienapisanej recenzji"Żywego Dziennika"/

..... Pierwszy prawdziwie artystyczny spektakl od 1939r.

Coś więcej niż tekst - bo nastrój;
Coś więcej niż emocja - bo przeżycie;
Coś więcej niż aktorzy - bo dzieci;

/ - / Władysław Szlengel

Wejście bezpłatne.

Figure: The invitation from the Director of *Dom Sierot* (*Orphan's Home*) to the children's performance of Tagore's *The Post Office* featuring a verse by Władysław Szlengel[154].

> ***...The first real artistic spectacle since the year 1939.***
>
> ***Something more than text – because of the mood.***
> ***Something more than emotion – because of the lived experience.***
> ***Something more than actors – because of children.***
>
> Władysław Szlengel

Reading through Korczak's memoirs, we find references to a few of his favourite writers, Maurice Maeterlinck and of course the famous Ghetto performance of *The Post Office* by Rabindranath Tagore. Both belonged to the short-lived Symbolist literary school which continues to permeate contemporary culture. Symbolist literature is not simply the use of symbols but an attempt to spiritualise literature, to evoke magic while avoiding descriptions of the exterior and material world. The artistic creators who used symbolism tried to describe real phenomena, referring to the observer's experiences. They used symbols where it was difficult for them to speak in real language or due to conditions of the political

situation, by attempting to create a mood. Such writers understood that sometimes, it is more effective to throw a book than a bomb.
The infamous memoirs written during Korczak's final months in the Ghetto ensured his literary immortality, as he wondered if anyone would still read his books 50 years from now. By combining his medical, writing and pedagogical arts, Korczak sought to create and choreograph a living 'performance' in the form of institutional life, where he claimed, without him as the 'puppet master' there was merely a 'creche'. In describing the ideological sphere within which he is active, Korczak compared his own courage 'not in terms of spiritual endurance but of energetic pressing forward and striking':

> *[...] Bold in his own deed, he listens greedily to the sounds of someone else's hammers, he keenly awaits the morrow of fresh admirations and astonishments, cognitions and errors, struggles and doubts, statements and denials.*
>
> *Fr. 55, How To Love A Child: Family*, 1919

You may not believe in resurrection, reincarnation or life after death, but you will not die completely as Korczak explains:

> *The spirit feels nostalgia in the narrow cage of the body. Man ponders over death as the end, but death is merely the continuation of life, another life.*
> *You may not believe in the existence of the soul, yet you must acknowledge that your body will live on as green grass, as a cloud. For you, after all, are water and dust.*
>
> *Pamiętnik*, 1942

In *King Matt* and his other stories, Korczak embeds transgressive examples of displacement. Even small details can adapt literature to the realities of the reader's context. Korczak has built a pattern of subtle details to convey an image which modifies meanings. In changing the type of hero, the time and place, Korczak's conceptions of the world challenge the narrative as he aims to create a new myth.

Throughout his lifetime, he believed in the redemptive power of literature and children. He ambitiously claimed the role of 'sculptor of souls' from literary greats to implement plans for a better society.

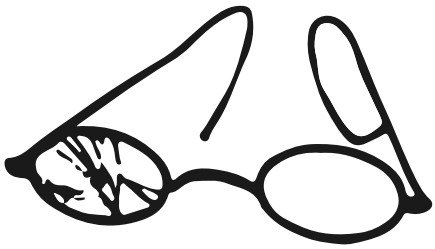
> ***I am carried away by a false ambition:***
> ***physician and sculptor of the soul of the child.***
> ***The Soul.***
> ***No more, no less.***
>
> *Pamiętnik*, 1942

Whenever working in the Children's Homes, he donned a grey-green smock – the standard outfit worn by sculptors. Korczak, with hammer and chisel in hand, worked from a drive to express an inner truth. The 'art', his children, would inspire the audience and show the way to a newly awakened spiritual life in society. The hammer symbol appears in Freemasonry and the Old Testament with Moses, where it is an instrument of destruction against false idolatry. Isolated artists – the painter, the writer and critic are those like Moses, who risk ridicule to bring wisdom and renewal.

> ***The child foretells the spring and foresees the moment when one person will not only arrive at an understanding with another, white with black, rich with poor, man with woman, adult with child, but he will arrive at an understanding with the sun and the moon, with the water and the air.***
>
> *The Child and the Spring*, 1921

The image of the Old Doctor and his children marching to their deaths is captured in a now famous poem by Szlengel, forming the last stage of Korczak's transformation from person to legend.

Figure: Janusz Korczak monument at Jewish Cemetery in Warsaw. [Wikimedia Commons]



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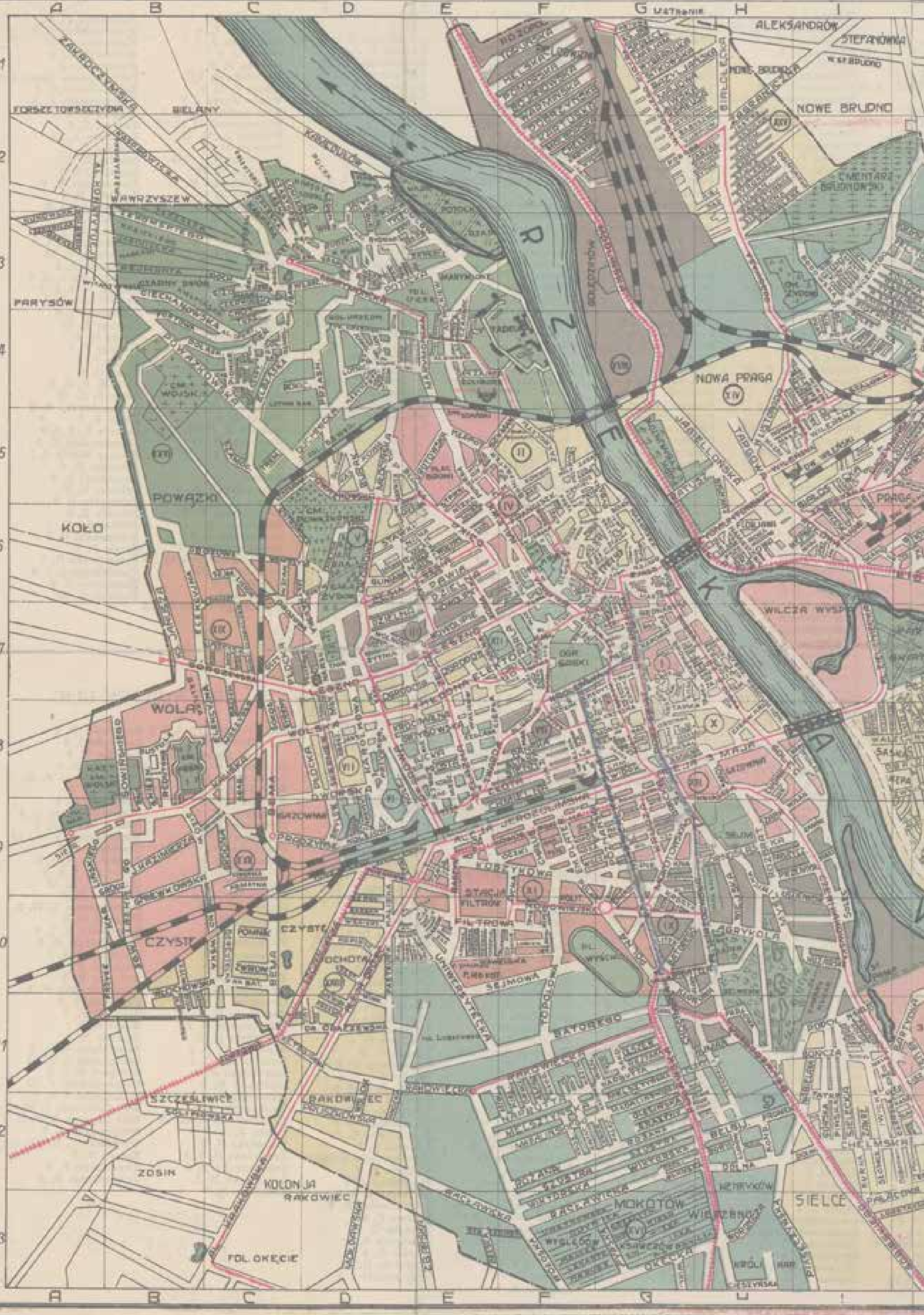
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Linje Tramwajowe.

Linje Autobusowe

1.
Wierzbno—Powązki: Wierzbno, Al. Polna, Bagatela, Al. Ujazdowskie, Nowy Świat, Krak. Przedm., Miodowa, pl. Krasińskich, Nowiniarska, Franciszkańska, Nalewki, Muranowska, Dzika, Powązkowska.

2.
Muranów—Czerniaków: Pl. Muranowski, Muranowska, Dzika, Dzielna, Karmelicka, Leszno, Solna, Mirowska, pl. Żelaznej Bramy, Graniczna, Królewska, Krak. Przedm., Nowy Świat, Książęca, Czerniakowska.

2A.
Muranów-Czerniaków osiedle „Miasto Ogród" Trasa jak linja 2.

3.
Rakowiecka—Plac Krasińskich: Rakowiecka, Polowska, pl. Unji Lubelskiej, Marszałkowska, pl. Zbawiciela, Marszałkowska, Królewska, Krak. Przedm., Miodowa, plac Krasińskich.

4.
Muranów—Dw. Wschodni: Pl. Muranowski, Nalewki, Franciszkańska, Nowiniarska, pl. Krasińskich, Miodowa, Krak. Przedm., pl. Zamkowy, Nowy Zjazd, Most Kierbedzia, Zygmuntowska, Targowa, Kijowska, Dw. Wschodni.

5.
Dworska—Dw. Wschodni: Dworska, Skierniewicka, Wolska, Chłodna, Mirowska, Przechodnia, pl. Bankowy, Senatorska, pl. Teatralny, Focha, Trębacka, Krak. Przedm., Plac Zamkowy, Nowy Zjazd, Most Kierbedzia, Zygmuntowska, Targowa, Kijowska, Dw. Wschodni.

6.
Towarowa—Bródno: Srebrna, Towarowa, Złota, Marszałkowska, Królewska, Krak. Przedm., pl. Zamkowy, Nowy Zjazd, Most Kierbedzia, Zygmuntowska, Wileńska, Konopacka, 11 Listopada, Szosa Odrowąża do cm. katolickiego.

7.
Opaczewska—Radzymińska: Opaczewska, Grójecka, Al. Jerozolimska, Al. 3-go Maja, Most Poniatowskiego, Al. Poniatowskiego, Al. Zieleniecka, Targowa, Ząbkowska, Radzymińska.

8.
Opaczewska—Powązki: Opaczewska, Grójecka, Wiadukt Kolejowy, Towarowa, Srebrna, Złota, Marszałkowska, Królewska, Graniczna, pl. Żelaznej Bramy, Mirowska, Solna, Leszno, Karmelicka, Dzielna, Dzika, Powązki.

9.
Pl. Unji Lubelskiej—Górczewska: Pl. Unji Lubelskiej, Bagatela, Al. Ujazdowskie, Nowy Świat, Krak. Przedm., Trębacka, Focha, pl. Teatralny, Bielańska, Tłomackie, Leszno, Górczewska do ogrodów Ulricha.

11.
Pl. Zbawiciela—Bema: Pl. Zbawiciela, Marszałkowska, Al. Jerozolimskie, Wiadukt Kolejowy, Towarowa, Wolska, Bema.

12.
Wierzbno—Dw. Wschodni: Wierzbno, Puławska, pl. Unji Lubelskiej, Marszałkowska, Al. Jerozolimskie, Al. 3-go Maja, Most Poniatowskiego, Al. Poniatowskiego, Al. Zieleniecka, Targowa, Kijowska, Dw. Wschodni.

14.
Pl. Unji Lubelskiej—Żoliborz: Pl. Unji Lubelskiej, Bagatela, Al. Ujazdowskie, Nowy Świat, Al. Jerozolimskie, Marszałkowska, Królewska, Graniczna, pl. Żelaznej Bramy, Przechodnia, pl. Bankowy, Senatorska, Bielańska, Nalewki, Pl. Muranowski, Sierakowska, Dw. Gdański, Szymanowska, Gen. Zajączka, Mickiewicza, do Marymonckiej, a z powrotem Marymoncka, Felińskiego, Mierosławskiego do Mickiewicza i t. d.

15.
Marymont—Dworska: Marymont, Marji Kazimiery, Potocka, Marymoncka, Felińskiego, Mierosławskiego, Mickiewicza, Gen. Zajączka, Szymanowska, Dw. Gdański, Sierakowska, pl. Muranowski, Nalewki, Bielańska, Tłomackie, Leszno, Żelazna, Chłodna, Wolska, Skierniewicka, Dworska.

16.
Pl. Zbawiciela—Młynarska: Pl. Zbawiciela, Marszałkowska, Królewska, Graniczna, Pl. Żel. Bramy, Mirowska, Chłodna, Wolska.

17.
Pl. Narutowicza—Dw. Gdański: Pl. Narutowicza, Filtrowa, Sucha, Nowowiejska, Plac Politechniki, Śniadeckich, Marszałkowska, Krak. Przedm., Trębacka, Focha, pl. Teatralny, Bielańska, Nalewki, pl. Muranowski, Sierakowska, Dw. Gdański.

18.
Pl. Unji Lubelskiej—Stalowa: Pl. Unji Lubelskiej, Marszałkowska, pl. Zbawiciela, Marszałkowska, Al. Jerozolimskie, Nowy Świat, Krak. Przedm., pl. Zamkowy, Nowy Zjazd, Most Kierbedzia, Zygmuntowska, Wileńska, Konopacka, Strzelecka, Szwedzka, Stalowa.

19.
Wierzbno—Okopowa: Wierzbno, Al. Polna, Pl. Unji Lubelskiej, Marszałkowska, Pl. Zbawiciela, Marszałkowska, Królewska, Krak. Przedm., Trębacka, Focha, Pl. Teatralny, Bielańska, Tłomackie, Leszno, Okopowa.

21.
Wola (Fort Bema)—Pelcowizna: Fort Bema, Wolska, Chłodna, Mirowska, pl. Żel. Bramy, Przechodnia, pl. Bankowy, Senatorska, pl. Teatralny, Focha, Trębacka, Krak. Przedm., pl. Zamkowy, Nowy Zjazd, Most Kierbedzia, Zygmuntowska, Wileńska, Konopacka, 11-go Listopada, Szosa Odrowąża, Białołęcka, Pobórzańska, do ... sockiego.

22.
Towarowa—Dw. Wschodni: Towarowa, Srebrna, Twarda, pl. Żel. Bramy, Przechodnia, pl. Bankowy, Senatorska, Bielańska, Nalewki, Franciszkańska, Nowiniarska, pl. Krasińskich, Miodowa, pl. Zamkowy, Nowy Zjazd, Most Kierbedzia, Zygmuntowska, Targowa, Kijowska, Dw. Wschodni.

24.
Pl. 3-ch Krzyży—Grochów: Pl. 3-ch Krzyży, Nowy Świat, Al. 3-go Maja, Most Poniatowskiego, Al. Poniatowskiego, Al. Zieleniecka, Zamoyskiego, Grochowska, Grochów II.

25.
Kawęczyńska (Brzeska)—Pl. Narutowicza: Kawęczyńska, Ząbkowska, Targowa, Zygmuntowska, Most Kierbedzia, Nowy Zjazd, pl. Zamkowy, Krak. Przedm., Nowy Świat, Al. Jerozolimskie, Marszałkowska, Śniadeckich, Nowowiejska, Sucha, Filtrowa, pl. Narutowicza.

M.
Mosty: Targowa, Zygmuntowska, Nowy Zjazd, pl. Zamkowy, Krak. Przedm., Królewska, Marszałkowska, Al. Jerozolimskie, Al. 3-go Maja, Most Poniatowskiego, Al. Poniatowskiego, Zieleniecka, Targowa.

O.
Okólna: Plac Zbawiciela, Marszałkowska, ... Żelazna, Nowolipie, Smocza, Ogrodowa, Franciszkańska, Nowiniarska, pl. Krasińskich, ... Krak. Przedm., Nowy Świat, pl. 3-ch Krzyży, Al. Ujazdowskie, Nowowiejska.

P.
Powiśle: Dobra, Nowy Zjazd, pl. Zamkowy, Krak. Przedm., Miodowa, pl. Krasińskich, Nowiniarska, Franciszkańska, Ogrodowa, Dzika, Dzielna, Karmelicka, Leszno, Solna, Mirowska, pl. Żel. Bramy, Graniczna, Bagno, Świętokrzyska, Marszałkowska, Al. Jerozolimskie, Nowy Świat, Książęca, Ludna, Solec, Dobra.

Z.
Zewnętrzna: Dobra, Nowy Zjazd, ul. Zamkowy, Krak. Przedm., Miodowa, pl. Krasińskich, Nowiniarska, Franciszkańska, Nalewki, Muranowska, Dzika, Okopowa, Towarowa, Wiadukt Kolejowy, Al. Jerozolimska, Chałubińskiego, Topolowa, Nowowiejska, pl. Zbawiciela, Marszałkowska, pl. Unji Lubelskiej, Bagatela, Al. Ujazdowskie, pl. 3-ch Krzyży, Książęca, Ludna, Solec, Dobra.

A.
ZAMIEJSKA—Opaczewska—Okęcie: Opaczewska, Szosa Grójecka, Okęcie.

NOCNE.

10 — Pl. Unji Lubel. — Dw. Wschodni: Pl. Unji Lubelskiej, Marszałkowska, Al. Jerozolimskie, Nowy Świat, Krak. Przedm., pl. Zamkowy, Nowy Zjazd, Most Kierbedzia, Zygmuntowska, Kijowska, Dw. Wschodni.

20 — Pl. Unji Lubelskiej—Młynarska: Pl. Unji Lub., Marszałkowska, pl. Zbawiciela, Królewska, Krak. Przedm., Trębacka, Focha, pl. Teatralny, Bielańska, Tłomackie, Leszno, Żelazna, Chłodna, Wolska do Młynarskiej.

Linje Autobusowe.

Linje Tramwajowe

„A"—Pl. Teatralny—Pl. Zbawiciela: pl. Teatralny, Wierzbowa, pl. Piłsudskiego, pl. Małachowskiego, Mazowiecka, pl. Napoleona, Szpitalna, Bracka, Nowogrodzka, Krucza, Mokotowska, pl. Zbawiciela.

„Abis" — Stare Miasto — Pl. Zbawiciela: St. Miasto, pl. Zamkowy, Senatorska, pl. Teatralny, Wierzbowa, pl. Piłsudskiego, pl. Małachowskiego, Królewska, Żytowa, pl. Dąbrowskiego, Jasna, Zgoda, Bracka, Mokotowska, pl. Zbawiciela.

„C" — Dworzec Główny — Pl. Muranowski: Dw. Główny, Wielka, Bagno, pl. Grzybowski, Graniczna, Żabia, pl. Bankowy, Rymarska, Przejazd, Nowolipki, Nalewki, pl. Muranowski.

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