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SELECTED WORKS
of
Janusz Korczak

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Selection from Polish

by

MARTIN WOLINS,

Professor of Social Welfare,

University of *California, Berkeley*, California, *USA*

Translated by Jerzy Bachrach

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This volume appears on the twenty-*fifth anniversary* of Janusz Korczak's death *at* the hands of the Nazis. It is dedicated to his memory *and to* the lives of all who act to enhance the humanity of man.

PREFACE

I exist not to be loved and admired, but to act and love. It is not the duty of those around me to help me but I am duty-bound to look after the world, after man.

Janusz Korczak June, 1942

Duty-bound to look after man, of course. How elementary. How human. Yet, how noble and great and revealing is this instance in Korczak's life. He wrote these lines a bare two months before his death in the gas chambers of Treblinka. He wrote them while in bed, exhausted from another day's effort to keep the most gruesome aspects of life from his charges. He wrote at night, in his institution in the Warsaw Ghetto, surrounded by his two hundred children for whom he still feels duty-bound to act and whom he must love. For Korczak this behavior is natural. It is the expected, the inevitable tying of conviction to action, of theory to practice. But what has been the road? How did Korczak come to be at this point? Where does he fit? What has he done?

To those familiar with social work and child care in the United States, Korczak will appear to fit the era in which he lived. The turn of the century and the first few decades of the present one produced at the same time the Muckrakers and the great charismatic leaders of child welfare. This period saw the flowering of concern and its expression in literary works, and the inexorable pressure for change, for social reform based on certain theoretical assumptions. The Abbott sisters and Homer Folks, Julia Lathrop and Jacob Riis — the melding of insight and determination, of theory, lofty ideals and practical, implementable and implemented solutions. Like them, Korczak looked at poverty, at misery, explored them to their innermost depths, identified with their victims and led his small, undermanned army, just like his own legendary King Macius, in the direction of the better life.

By training Janusz Korczak was a pediatrician. By trade, temperament, conviction and ultimately final act of heroic self-denial he was a *wychowawca*. A strange word this one to the English-tuned ear. And an untranslatable one at that. It designates a profession which although it exists in the English-speaking world has gone unnamed. A *wychowawca* is he who rears a child and who, as a matter of professional responsibility, cares for physical and social development. He is not a parent. Nor is he a teacher (although this is what we call him in the translation), but one who shares, supports the functions of both and who, in times of need, replaces either or both.

As a *wychowawca* Korczak probed the child's very being, trying to see, to know, as well as to feel and to do. He did not come to his calling unprepared, nor did he have many illusions. "Looking back over the enormous results of clinical observation of the child in the hospital," he wrote at one point, "I ask: What knowledge did the boarding school give us — none." But he did not despair. On the contrary, his medical training and clinical experience and his zeal to help goaded him into activity. Working on the basis of this own

assumptions and continually subjecting them to detailed, even painful, doubt became his trade-mark: "The most splendid assumption, it seems, needs verification. The most evident truth which turns out difficult to implement, should be conscientiously and critically examined." But it "should be examined independently of the general outlook" and facts should be piled up so that by "their number on this side or that they will permit deduction of general laws." Having acquired "willpower, the pain of ignorance, the delight of seeking" as a "gift from Paris" where he worked as an intern, and the techniques of inventiveness and order from Berlin where his work followed, Korczak was prepared for his self-imposed assignment. The boarding school became the source of his "treasure of observations, ideas, hypotheses."

Any night could find Korczak sitting in his glass cage in the middle of the boys' dormitory observing the children, noting their behavior, delving into causes and roles. Any day could find him running a children's court or a newspaper, sweeping the stairs, clearing the dishes or administering medications. Each observation, every experience was carefully noted, nurtured, held up to the light of some theory, some experience, and filed away for future use. Clearly, the purpose was to instruct the present and to develop laws for the future. The first resulted in an outpouring of guides, observations, instructions. The second, developing laws, delayed perhaps quite unconsciously until the years of leisure and wisdom when the amassed facts will array themselves as evidence for or against a particular position, was cancelled in Treblinka.

Laws Korczak never lived to give us, but a rich legacy remained after him which will serve his purposes as it helps a child. Its hallmark, the point around which all of Korczak's writings revolve, is a passionate, almost religious, reverence for the rights of children. Sometimes, goaded by adult callousness, ignorance or even ill will, his views on the rights and capabilities of children border the extreme and seem to us fanatical dissertations unreal and useless in practice. Yet Korczak breathed life into them — made them practical by his own experiences or, in the event of failure, carefully reported his disappointments and their probable causes.

The child's capacity and his rights are constantly in the forefront. They are part of every relationship. They are consciously weighed, discussed and taught so that ultimately they may be unconsciously, naturally implemented. "When I play or talk with a child," Korczak writes, "two equally mature moments — mine and the child's — have intermingled ... When I am annoyed with a child — again togetherness, only that my evil, hateful instant breaks into and poisons this mature, important instant of his life." And the child's background, the weight of his prior experiences is esteemed, becoming a source of information about his capacities and needs and a source of concern about one's ability to fulfill them. "Whoever wants to be a teacher [*wychowawca*] among the poor must bear in mind that medicine differentiates between *praxis pauperum* and

praxis aurea." Work for the poor and work for gold are distinct, and the former is difficult but has its rewards in possible accomplishment. One learns to overcome the shameful burden of generations, to break the chain of poverty and degradation, to restore the rights of childhood. One also learns that "there are some rare children whose age is not just their own ten years. They carry the load Of many generations and ... under the action of a slight stimulus ... the latent potential of pain, grievance, anger, and rebellion [is released]." Then "it is not a child but the centuries weeping."

How to incorporate these observations, how to bring them into play so that the care of children away from their parents may be at once more scientifically based and more human? It would never be sufficient to amass facts, to discover principles, to formulate laws; they must affect the child, his peers, their lives. This cannot be accomplished, Korczak believed, unless, following in the footsteps of the doctor who saved the child from the grips of death, the *wychowawca*'s assignment is "to let him live, [to] win for him the right to be a child." To accomplish it those who work with children must not be supervisors of walls and furniture, of quiet in the playground, of clean ears and floors, cowhands watching that the cattle do no harm, that they do not disturb adults at their occupations and pleasures; custodians of worn-out pants and boots, and stingy dispensers of cereal; guardians of adult privilege and careless executors of their inexpert caprices. Instead, they must join their knowledge and affection, their objective analysis and subjective empathy and focus these upon the child as man, child as needy unspoiled being, child as equal.

This combination of knowledge and affect, cold analysis and passionate love permeate the works Korczak left behind. Repeatedly, and in many different ways, he tells us that knowledge alone is not enough, but neither is love alone. High flown theories may be useful, but they must be adjusted to, become reflections of the behavior and demands of children. He would, no doubt, agree with Kurt Lewin that nothing is as useful as a good theory, but he would define a good theory as one which highlights and is based upon the assumption of nobility of a child.

A prolific and indefatigable writer, Korczak left a voluminous legacy. He wrote in the slums of Czarist Warsaw. He composed a whole book on HOW TO LOVE A CHILD, while moving about the Russian front lines as a World War I medical officer. He wrote in the quiet of institutional nights and in the constructive turbulence of daytime activity at the Children's Home. Compelled to write by a conviction that "notes are the entries you use to draw up a balance sheet of your life," he produced books and pamphlets for children, essays and instructions for adults and an elaborate public accounting for himself.

It is probably presumptuous to select from such an accounting or to organize it out of

temporal sequence, but given the volume and nature of materials we have been compelled to do both. The pages that follow are therefore not a representative sample of Korczak's writings, but rather a deliberately selected one. Beginning with a four-page "Application" which in the author's own words summarizes his essence, it moves through observations on classrooms, single children, summer camps, child rearing in general, boarding schools and institutions, and ends with the full text of Korczak's "Memoirs" written in the few months before his death.

THE APPLICATION is, as Korczak implies, a last will. Written in the Ghetto, and when he must have expected momentary death, it is a summing up of past experiences, present state of the self and possible future usefulness. In a few brief paragraphs it tells of the man and the situation. More — it tells of the man in the situation.

EDUCATIONAL FACTORS shows Korczak's interest in the individual as well as the social situation. Beginning with the classroom where he is sure to see the aggregate as such and the individual within it, he moves on to focus on the little kindergarten girl, Helcia, and the young war victim on the Eastern front, the orphan boy, Stefan. A few days, two weeks of observation with each and an outpouring of notes, comments, insights, advice and, always, self-analytic soul searching: Am I right? Should I do it this way? Could it have been better?

HOW TO LOVE A CHILD is at the center of Korczak's writings. Beginning almost chronologically he analyzes the child, the child and mother, child and parents, child and peers, child and great, restricting, demanding world. Item by item Korczak chronicles his observations. Then, as if exhausted by the effort, he notes in observation 99 that he will never again try to discuss all stages of development in such a short pamphlet. Yet, he continues and enters now the most incisive, the most expert writing. THE BOARDING SCHOOL, SUMMER CAMPS, and THE CHILDREN'S HOME follow in order. The latter contains observations on a children's court which merits a few words of comment. Children's courts were, of course, not unknown in other countries at the time of Korczak's experiment with them. Generally they have been regarded by professionals as anachronistic at best and pernicious at worst. Reading Korczak's comments on *his* court leads one to the conclusion that neither quality applied. Rather, that the court compelled accountability, introduced a measure of equality and recourse, and taught self-government.

THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO RESPECT revolves around the child as man. Not the child as a potential someone. Not the child as an expectation. But the child as he is and his inalienable right to be himself, to explore and experiment, to seek and search and even ... to suffer.

THE SPECIAL SCHOOL section contains only a few of many observations on

delinquency and its treatment. Those incorporated in the present volume appeared, among others, in a journal entitled *Special School*, founded, and edited until this year, by Professor Maria Grzegorzewska. Korczak was sensitive to the problem of the deviant, as distinct from the poor or deprived child, and insightful clinician that he was, noticed that the differences were administrative, institutional and not personal. At one point he wrote that only the uncritical *wychowawca* can accept the utility of dividing institutions into custodial and correctional. Taken seriously, such a division rules out the thought of reform in the first category and of good care in the second.

LOUIS PASTEUR and FORGIVE ME CHILDREN are qualitatively quite different from the other materials. Appearing first in a periodical supplement entitled "In the Sunshine" these are but a small sampling of numerous writings addressed to children. They show Korczak's simplicity of style and consistency of thought. Their unifying theme, as in all of Korczak, is love and respect for the child as he is.

FORGIVE ME CHILDREN contains an interesting, but not surprising extension on this theme when the frailty of childhood and of old age are joined and the young support the old and weak.

Finally, the MEMOIRS , consist of Korczak's last writings. Failing in health and in hope, yet faithful to his children to the very end, Korczak tries for a semblance of reason in the midst of madness. That he fails is no surprise; that he attempts it is yet another measure of his stature.

Before embarking upon these materials the reader may want an assessment. Was Korczak right: are his observations, conclusions, generalizations consistent with fact? Is Korczak relevant: can we apply what he tells us? As to the correctness of his observations there is little doubt. More difficulty is encountered with the conclusions and generalizations. Some insights are remarkably consistent with subsequent social and psychological formulations. There is evidence to support Korczak's views on the crucial role of the peer-group in the life of children and young people and the major impact it has on the development of personality. Similarly, there is beginning to be much material reflecting the consequences of prolonged deprivation which moves the onus of failure from genetic to environmental forces where Korczak would place them. Korczak's resistance to the purely psychological at the expense of a sociopsychological interpretation of phenomena, while in little favor among the early disciples of Freud, would certainly align him with the more recent. On the whole, however, it is difficult to judge Korczak's writings purely as theoretical or research statements because they are a unique blend of observation, generalization and belief.

Is Korczak relevant? This appears easier to judge. As we read his description of children of poverty our own preoccupations and solutions come into question and

alternatives come into view. The "weeping of centuries" in the child of deprivation. The utility of work as a means of self-expression and self-fulfillment. The meaning of "clean" and "dirty," lowly and noble tasks, occupations, assignments. The capabilities and defects of public and voluntary welfare structures. The meaning of ideology whether it be religious or political or social. All of these concerns of Korczak and of our generation of professionals testify to his relevance. However, the most telling testimony of applicability and utility of his views is contained in Korczak's life and particularly the last few months of it. He tested the applicability of his views by implementing them in the children's court, in self-rule, in work assignments to children of all ages, in staff self-analysis. And, finally, perhaps most convincingly, his views proved themselves under the horrible conditions of war and of the Warsaw Ghetto. The fact is that Korczak's institution, containing two hundred children from the sidewalks of this murder factory functioned almost to the last with an unbelievable degree of order and even creativity. Was it Korczak's system or his personal capability that made it possible? Undoubtedly both. Any useful approach requires the skill to implement it, but skill must be channeled down a constructive path if it is to bear results.

Whether right or relevant, Korczak's claims were modest. In a personal message given every child upon completing his stay, Korczak wrote:

We did not give you God, because you must look and find Him within yourself.

We did not give you love of country because your heart and reason must dictate your own choice.

We did not give you love of Man, because love comes from forgiveness which must be discovered through effort.

We did give you one thing — a longing for a better life, a life of truth and justice which you must build for yourself.

We hope that this longing will lead you to God, to Country, and to Love.

In the very last entry in Korczak's memoirs, probably written no more than several days before his death, he wonders about the guard, marching with gun on shoulder, in front of the institution — his occupation, his background, his motives. Maybe he is a teacher, or a waiter, maybe he does not know that it is the way it is. Still an effort to understand, to look for the human — even in the midst of hell.

MARTIN WOLINS

University of California, Berkeley June 5, 1967

INTRODUCTION

All the ideals and principles which we profess have only such value as we impart to them by our personal life.

Janusz Korczak

There are natures so simple and noble that their very being seems improbable, as though they cannot be of this world. Eliminate them, however, and humanism in the history of humanity would be of little significance.

As related to Janusz Korczak, probably little known to the American reader, that opening sentence calls for elaboration and justification.

Let us glance at the highlights of his life story. We feel an urge to know what went to the molding of the personality of this man who became a legend and a challenge.

Janusz Korczak, born Henryk Goldszmit, first saw the light of day in 1878 or 1879 — precise date unknown. He was born in Warsaw, in the part of Poland then under Russian domination as a result of the partition of the country — from 1785 until 1918 — between Austria, Russia and Prussia. He was the son of well-to-do intelligentsia parents (father a lawyer, grandfather a doctor). His Jewish family had for generations been steeped in the traditions and culture of Poland, and Janusz Korczak considered himself a Pole. Only after thirty odd years was the question of his pedigree to become a problem — to grow year by year more acute, until it involved his life or death.

We have dallied over this earliest moment of the biography because of its importance. Korczak must have been right when he said that daydreams establish the program of a life.

So far, this introduction to life demonstrates intelligence, imagination, and sensitivity — an excess, a dangerous excess of sensitivity. Shortly, it will become clear that this boy also has character and a good heart. He moves out of his comfortable childhood immured in a beautiful house. He goes first to a private school where learning is enforced with the cane. Later, to a typical Tsarist secondary school, with teaching in a foreign language — the Russian language — with dull lessons learned by rote, the curriculum overburdened with Latin and Greek, the pedagogues having the mentality of prison guards or drill sergeants. Humiliation, frustration — the necessity in self-defence to seek regions of the spirit far and fair. In the meantime, his father dies in a mental institution. A catastrophe, and an apprehension for the rest of his life: "So I am the son of a lunatic? So I bear a dread hereditary burden?"

On the heels of opulence comes poverty, the more painful because proud, desperately

hidden before the eyes of strangers. There's nothing for it — must help mother, must start earning. Hence — giving lessons, cramming, rushing from one rich house to another, working with children not always pleasant, for a pittance. Can it be that all this will lay the foundations for the vocation of an educator? Rather will it imbue a sense of grievance, of rebelliousness, and regret that for one's own studying, for books read with hungry passion, there remain only the nights. If therefore he contemplates future work in some profession, it is rather in the profession of medicine. At the same time, he has interests and aspirations of quite a different bent: he writes poetry, short stories; he possesses also a thick copybook with the sinister inscription — *The Suicide, a Novel of Psychology and Manners*. The hero has come to hate life lived in the shadow of lunacy.

At long last — his matriculation certificate, a document of release from confinement, and — the university. Saying good-bye after matriculating to the only real teacher in his school, to the man who taught him to love Hellade — Henryk will unexpectedly kiss the hand of the good philologist.

Such is Henryk — a poet in the strength of his emotions, an inquiring mind seeking the good in life -- when he starts to study medicine. Named after his grandfather, he intends also to follow his profession. It is the year 1898, a year in which first steps will be taken toward profound spiritual metamorphosis, as a result of which after a few years a personality later to be known as Janusz Korczak will be molded and set.

The origin of this name is connected with a certain historical novel. At twenty, Henryk writes a four-act play entitled *Which Way?* He is entering it for a young writers' literary competition announced at that time in Warsaw. Rewriting the play in a hurry — it is the last day for the receipt of entries — Henryk suddenly realizes that he has not yet devised a pen name, as required by competition rules. On his table lies a book, a historical novel, the name of the hero of which is Korczak. At random he assumes that name — and under it wins his first small laurel, the prize in the competition.

During the period of Henryk's university studies, important changes are developing in the political life of the country. The initiative in Polish politics, hitherto shyly nursed by conservatives trying to coexist with the Tsarist regime, is now passing into the hands of young radicals. Politics are abandoning the drawing rooms and going out into the streets. In Warsaw, there are noisy anti-Tsarist demonstrations; the subterranean river of conspiracy is intensifying the struggle both patriotically and socially; society, the university students in particular, is becoming more and more radically minded.

We cannot here seek an answer to the riddle as to why a young man of such sensitive conscience and exceptional personal courage did not throw himself into the active political struggle. Suffice it that both then and later he will only make clear on

which side he takes his stand. He publishes his writings in the socialist press, he has close friends among socialists, for years he will regularly contribute to funds for the aid of political prisoners. Even so, he deliberately avoids every political activity, and until the last he will maintain a skeptical attitude as regards the possibility of human problems being solved exclusively by revolution.

He is seeking another "theme of life," the meaning of which he will explain later in a letter to a young friend:

"If the theme of life be satiation — of stomach or spirit — bankruptcy will forever hang above our heads; such a theme will exhaust itself. Surfeit or a sense of void. But if you receive in order to nourish, then you have an aim, you are conscious of the need of achievement — to fuse own suffering into knowledge for yourself and joy for others, to drown it in own aspirations. Then, failure may be the more painful, but it will never deprave,"

At the time when one is ripening intellectually, choosing one's own "theme of life," one is instinctively seeking an association, intercourse with some powerful, rich and iconoclastic personality. From this point of view, the teaching body of Warsaw University was probably the poorest of all Russian alma mater. Whoever could raise the means went to study abroad — in Petersburg, Moscow, Dorpat.... But in Warsaw there existed another, unique source of learning, a free academic high school, a credit to any nation — the Peripatetic University. In secret, with many a glance over the shoulder for fear of police spies, in constantly changed meeting places, in private flats, university program lectures were given by such eminent scientists as the Polish sociologist Ludwik Krzywicki, the geographer and publicist Nalkowski, the pedagogue and psychologist Dawid, the philosopher and theoretician Mahrburg, the orientalist Radliński and many others — all men of profound learning and noble character.

The years 1898-1900 were in the history of the Peripatetic University a period of peak achievement. They were, too, the period of maximum development of clandestine teaching in Polish, and of educational work. The Polish intelligentsia, both young and not so young, was working seriously and soundly in conditions of strict conspiracy, with supreme self-sacrifice, in a climate of the noblest idealism.

Henryk joins the ranks of this army, perhaps the most splendid that ever existed in Poland. He enters this environment shyly, with veneration for the cream, the spiritual elite of his country. He soon finds guides and friends, learns principles he will never betray.

All this is not now readily apprehended, deciphered — like the whole of that period, like the old Warsaw.

Let us try to visualize this Warsaw of the year 1900, the capital of a conquered country. The royal castle is the residence of the Tsar's Viceroy, Prince Imeretynski, from the dynasty which once ruled the also conquered Georgia — which probably explains why he is the most humane of all Viceroys so far. Warsaw has some half a million inhabitants. No electricity, no motorcars. A horse tram rides the rails — one horse in summer, two in winter. At the turnpikes at the city boundaries, tolls must be paid by those entering on horseback or in carriages. Here and there are still pools and rivulets, reminding of the seven streams on which Warsaw was built. The great Saxon Park (Ogrod Saski) in the center of the city, beautiful then as never since, with the Mineral Springs Institute—but not beautiful for all; the poorly clad are forbidden entry. There are no cinemas, but there are theaters with top ranking companies, talented actors. First rate restaurants, numerous coffee rooms. A good circus and a racecourse; sport scarcely exists yet, is but in the introductory stage among enlightened and well-to-do circles the Rowing Club, the Cycling Club, led by Count August Potocki. In the afternoons, along avenues shaded by enormous chestnut trees, near the palace of the last king of Poland, near the residences of the industrial magnates and the aristocracy — carriages, landaus, gigs, victorias, and mounted guards officers pass idly to and fro. At noon there arrives in the slums a mobile kitchen, run by philanthropic societies — it is popularly called "Trabizupka" (The Trumpet-Soup). A cook in white apron, chef's hat and sitting beside the driver blows a trumpet, calling the hungry for a plate of cabbage soup or pea soup for three kopecks or even bring your own plate — gratis. The Old City is a lair of poverty, crime and brothels, of homeless children and cutthroats. Here and there a policeman emerges, searches pedestrians and if he finds a knife longer than the breadth of his palm he calls the accompanying Cossacks to whip the offender. But Janusz often walks here — we know that; he roams here freely, has friends here, is loved and respected; nobody will molest this singular student.

One feels that in the years 1899-1902 there are living simultaneously two men — Henryk and Janusz.

Henryk is studying medicine, giving lessons, and writing articles for an illustrated humorous weekly. Sometimes he leaves his cosy room where his mother's love envelops him; and in the Old City appears Janusz, a mysterious student, friend of vagabonds and villains, sharing the life of this dark underworld, teaching children gathered in a cabby's poor shelter, taking care of them — and writing *The Drawing Room Child*.

"Here the years have piled up a dark and sinister potency, there is no peeping in here without mortification" — so thinks Janusz, already understanding how on a pittance "one can keep the family: pay for the room, for food, clothes, washing, paraffin, doctor, druggist, and the priest for burial — and occasionally get drunk and throw a name-day

party. Now I understand why the children have gray skins like prisoners, bow legs, and why of ten born under a roof four survive; what I do not understand is how those four grow up and have strength to work."

In coexistence with them, in work for them, in his first, unhappy love — which he also experiences among them — his "apprehensive and shameful pain of life" is molded into a hot iron of self-criticism, mobilizing his willpower.

"I feel that concentrating in me are unknown powers, which will burst into flame, and this flame will burn in me until my last breath. I feel that I am approaching the moment when I shall excavate from the depths of my soul the aim which will be my happiness."

These words have the ring of an oath strangely sublime and prophetic in view of the further path of his life.

In 1904, a radical social-literary weekly publishes serially *The Drawing Room Child*. The author does not here set out to entertain or to sentimentalize. He is accusing and debunking the social structure, conventions, but above all the bourgeois family. His visions tremble in clouds of hallucination, grotesque, and documentation, all fused together with a guilt complex, and moving by its enormity of suffering.

"His soul became clairvoyant through suffering" —so writes a perceptive critic. "And at the same time, Korczak became a humorist. Nothing is easier than to look at the world and men, at events and judgments with the observant eye of comedy. Nothing is easier —provided one sees with the eye of despair. Against that darkened background, everything stands out with a clownish clarity. Despair cuts across all pathos. What remains is but a form, becoming ridiculous by its perseverance in the face of nothingness...."

The success of the novel attracts publishers —readers want Korczak. But Korczak is absent, has gone abroad, is somewhere in Manchuria where there is a war, working in a field ambulance. So a selection of his articles and short stories published in the Warsaw press and signed only "Henryk" is hurriedly thrown together. In the author's absence, they appear in book form under the superscription — "Janusz Korczak (Henryk)."

Here ends the transformation from Henryk to Janusz. For the last time, those names linked — to part forever. Henceforth, there is only Janusz Korczak, a man at one with himself, mature practitioner in a literary art which is his very own.

Returning from the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, Korczak works in a children's hospital in a sordid Warsaw suburb. He carries his medical skill further, answers every call by day or night, treats the poor gratis, and in cases of real need leaves

money alongside the prescription to pay the druggist. But in well-to-do homes on main streets, where he is called with increasing frequency, he takes top fees. He publishes frightening essays based on his experiences as a doctor in the slums of the great city; he also writes articles and stories for literary periodicals.

With money saved by pinching and scraping, he twice goes abroad, gets a year's practice in Berlin clinics, six months in Paris, and a month in London.

The secret of this skilful doctor, dedicating to the most indigent what he has learned in the best hospitals of Berlin and Paris, begins to intrigue Warsaw society — he becomes a figure suggestive of the aura of the gospels or some lofty social Utopia. The author of *The Drawing Room Child* is welcome in the Warsaw salons. People well placed are trying to make him fashionable, to create an eminent doctor to the rich. But that is not his way; he has only contempt for careerism; he is eccentric, always ironical, a rude plebeian....

And in the very place, in the children's hospital and the clinic where, it seems, he has found eternal sanctuary for his nature, he has periods of doubt and unease. He is increasingly conscious of the helplessness of medicine in the face of appalling social conditions.

He spits out sarcastic, rebellious words:

"When, in the name of all the devils, shall we stop prescribing salicyl against poverty, exploitation, lawlessness, and crime?"

There slowly matures in him the notion of abandoning medicine. From educational problems in his literary work, he passes to direct work. He leaves the hospital for a boarding school. He moves to the Children's Home, built according to his directives in 1911, and to the end of his life he will run this institution.

This is the moment for me to testify personally —and thereby to correct Korczak's own statement in *The Application* to the effect that he knew nothing about management — that I have never met a manager who drove himself so hard, who was so tactful, so penetrating, and so consistent in his relations with his staff. Come what may, he would unquestionably have been successful with the Children's Home, although the writer was overwhelming the educationalist. Even so, a great stroke of luck for Korczak and for the Children's Home was the participation of Stefania Wilczynska who, as soon as she returned from pedagogic studies in Belgium and Switzerland, integrated herself with the institution. In assessing Korczak's educational practice in the Children's Home, it is essential to bear in mind the unflagging energy of Stefania Wilczynska, her organizational talent and profound understanding of psychology, her devotion to the children, to whom she sacrificed thirty years of her work and life,

and with whom and with Korczak she died.

In the years 1911-14, in spite of the vast labor and worries involved in his activity as educator, Korczak writes and publishes four splendid books, forever an integral part of Polish literature. At the same time, he is supplementing his knowledge of pedagogics. He reads and studies a great deal, thinks persistently, and constantly returns to a vision which is to become a complex with him: "A great synthesis of a child, concerning which I had daydreams in the libraries of Paris, while excitedly reading the great and extraordinary French classics of clinical medicine."

The war finds him with an idea — his own, mature, but not yet formulated. Had he been killed then, in 1914, over the heart of this captain of the Russian army would have been found the words: "How to love a child."

With a copybook so inscribed on the cover he goes to war, and writes during the campaign, whenever opportunity presents itself — in field dressing stations, in a chance billet when all is quiet, sometimes on a forest tree stump. Breaking free from the entire, surrounding, bloodstained nightmare, with all his knowledge as doctor and educator, he concentrates on this single — to him paramount — problem: how to love a child. It is love which drives his pen — love informed but divining that there is more to know; love searching with the eye of the psychologist the vast processes of change, from birth to maturity; love illuminating with poetic penetration the mysteries of childhood, or unmasking the ignorance and egoism of grownups with their pseudoscientific subterfuges; and all this with a satiric passion, which Korczak somewhere explains incidentally: "I wrote this book in a field hospital to the accompaniment of the cacophony of gunfire, during the war — there I realized that the path of tolerance would not suffice."

In 1918, Korczak returns to liberated Warsaw, which at long last is once more the capital of an independent Polish state. He brings the MS of *How to Love a Child* ready for printing. He cannot characterize it — a study? a poem? a manifesto? He knows only that this is his synthesis — the synthesis of the child — concerning which he had daydreams in the libraries of Paris. Later he will clarify it, specify the third part, and in *The Child's Right to Respect* he will popularize it in his broadcast *Talks by an Old Doctor*, in "Jocular Pedagogics." There will be further creative artistic achievements in his novels *King Maciuś the First* and *When I Am Small Again*. But to his basic conception of world and child he will add nothing — for to add would be to change.

The first ten years after returning to independent Poland — the years 1918-28 — witness the peak development of the literary creations and educational activity of Janusz Korczak, his greatest achievements in both these fields, and also his maximum

intensity and variety of research, enterprises and works of all kinds.

In this period, he gives definitive, practical form to his educational method, implementing it in two institutions: the Warsaw boarding school for Jewish children — The Children's Home — of which he is the director, and in Our Home at Bielany, near Warsaw, a boarding school for Polish children, managed by Maryna Falska. Korczak plays an active part in the life of these two children's republics, linked in cooperation and friendship. He also lectures at two higher schools, works as an expert in juvenile crime cases at the Warsaw Court, writes and publishes ten works — an average of one a year — including four of the most important in his literary output, and also makes an experiment probably unique in the history of the press: he starts and edits "Maly Przegląd" (The Little Review) — a periodical printing stories, articles, notes and letters exclusively by children and young people. Of these youthful correspondents he has over two thousand. There are also clubs of co-workers in all bigger towns in Poland, together with foreign correspondents (all of school age). With so many activities, Korczak is breathless and short of time; he starts a search for some technical help, a secretary, and thus, in 1926, we meet.

I was then a law student compelled to interrupt my studies and temporarily earn my living as a stenographer. A well-wishing lady, who was also a friend of Korczak, sent me to him, and so I found myself in the recreation hall of the Children's Home, among the youngsters gathering round someone in a doctor's coat — not white, but khaki. I learned that this was "Pandoktor" (Misterdoctor); in the children's mouths the two words "Pan doktor" became one, a nickname — "Pandoktor." The children were laying wagers with him for a candy or two that during the ensuing week they would not have more than two fights, not tell more than one fib, or that they would not tease anyone.... "Pandoktor" was taking these wagers, giving advice, paying out on the bets. He was about fifty, of medium height, thin, and youthfully quick of movement, with a small, fair beard and pinkish bald head. Through nickel-framed glasses, the eyes smiled at me the eyes of King Macius. He shook hands — a hand warm and dry, extremely pleasant to the touch — and invited me to his den. We climbed up and up, until at last we reached an attic. He knocked at the door. From the other side came in answer a chirping, a twittering, and a fluttering.

"It alarms my lodgers if I enter suddenly. Once one of them nearly killed himself so I always give them a warning knock."

He led me into a room large and very light. The sparrows sat nonchalantly on chair arms and window sill, and eyed us, gossiping chirpily. I soon learned that in addition to these lodgers there was also domiciled here a family of mice, and often on a sofa sat some child, playing or looking at a picture book — a child who perhaps after an illness or some grief needed calm and care, so the Doctor took him upstairs to his den.

An iron bedstead, a cupboard, a massive 19th century writing desk once his father's, bookshelves and a few odds and ends needed by a solitary man — nothing but necessities. A Venetian three-part window gave on to a panorama of quadrangle, with children playing far below, a dovecote, and the roofs of Krochmalna Street, a street of workers, craftsmen and shopkeepers. All in all, this room under the roof of the Children's Home had the atmosphere of a student's attic and a lighthousekeeper's lookout.

Below, on the lower floors of the great building, worked, the wise and good, always calm, watchful educator and manager — "Pandoktor." Here upstairs, in the room above the Children's Home, above Krochmalna Street, as it were, above the whole quarrelling and incomprehensible world, another man lived his own profound and troubled intellectual life — Janusz Korczak. He surveyed the world with that "charitable skepticism" of Anatole France, and all the dramas, disappointments, antimonies of the contemporary world presented themselves to his eyes as a "sinister humoresque," as *The Madmen's Senate* which finally he managed to put on the stage. He wrote numerous letters to boy and girl readers of the *"Maly Przegląd"* striving to explain to them as simply as possible the principles of life, to elucidate what is most difficult in man and in the world. On the same theme, he gave radio talks, during which children and grownups alike listened with bated breath to the voice of the Old Doctor. His rather low, warm tone, and the fact that he often paused as if seeking the precise word in just the way one does when talking to oneself or a confidant, created a sense of intimacy, of co-feeling.... Here, at that worn, old-fashioned desk, he wrote *King Macius the First*, the eternal tragedy of every noble reformer. And here on a certain night, while he was playing with the mouse called Penetration, a sigh escaped him, and the mysterious, occult words — "When I am small again." Those words bore him back as on a magic carpet into the lost world of first adventures, first feelings, initial impressions, and were to be used by him as the title of a fascinating story. I am not aware that any writer before him created a hero — or rather a condition — having such a divided ego. Not schizophrenic, but normally and freely living in two ages of man. It was a unique and strange art — to become a child again but to retain full consciousness of his own mature being.

In this room, working together with the most splendid character I have ever had the good fortune to meet, I spent four years. For two years I was also teaching in the Children's Home and in Our Home; as to the Korczak educational method, I might therefore speak from personal observations and impressions. That would present a more plastic picture, but would transcend the bounds of this essay. I must therefore be satisfied with a general and brief explanation of Korczak's basic principles.

As regards the main thesis of Janusz Korczak's educational method, the method of

education within the framework of children's self-government, he was not an innovator. At the beginning of this century, before the First World War, there were numerous pedagogical experiments moving in the direction of liberating youthful initiative and self-reliance. Efforts were made to replace compulsion by agreement, by a treaty with children and young people, to make possible for them an active and responsible participation in their own common life. In England and the United States, there existed for some time "little republics" after the ideas of Homer Lane or William R. George; in Germany there were "free school communities" in Wickersdorf and Odenfeld; in France — Ecole des Roches Moulins; Szacki was experimenting near Moscow with children's self-government in summer camps. All these attempts embraced common principles and aims, which in the course of implementation in different countries assumed slightly different forms, according to local pedagogical traditions, history and cultural climate.

Korczak took over those progressive pedagogical concepts of his age, but realized them in a way that was absolutely new, his very own, not found elsewhere, and created the best organized and most democratic children's society. The pupils of the Children's Home and Our Home had their own Parliament to which they elected members. They had different degrees of citizenship, depending on the assessment of their colleagues as to their study effort, behavior, the degree to which they helped one another, and finally their contribution to the maintenance of general order and cleanliness. There was a newspaper, a legal code, and a Court of Peers.

Here were certain throwbacks to the most splendid Polish pedagogical traditions from the period of the Enlightenment in the years 1775-94, when the science of teaching was rapidly making a career in Poland.

The Polish state, weakened internally by the irresponsible sway of the magnates, found itself threatened by three rapacious neighboring powers. The necessity to reform the state, to educate the nation, to train for good citizenship demanded radical and comparatively modern remedies. Suffice it to recall that the world's first ministry of education was then created in Poland under the name of the National Education Board. There were attempts to secularize the schools; reforms were introduced in the medieval teaching curriculum; methods based on the most advanced ideas of the time were advocated; for the first time in schools, lessons on morality were given, expounding lay ethics; an element of self-government appeared through the pupil's Courts of Peers.

Such a Court of Peers became a fundamental and characteristic feature of the Korczak method of children's self-government. He aimed above all at creating an institution supremely educational, obliging the children to think and reflect, so that in self-criticism they might better understand both themselves and their colleagues in the

light of their respect for the laws of a friendly community. At the same time, Korczak sought to give the Clerk of the Court — a teacher — an additional field of close cooperation and observation, one more opportunity of getting to know children and their problems.

An important educational element was work, freely undertaken by the pupils for the benefit of all. The children cleaned and tidied the house, helped in the kitchen, the dining room, the library, looked after their weaker, younger, or sick colleagues. The idea was to make work a habit and a means of assessing one's own value. A no less important educational element was the *children's public opinion*. This was expressed both in the judgments of the Court of Peers and in the plebiscites, to some extent indisputable and documented. There was a plebiscite, after a trial period, on every new pupil, in order that he might be awarded this or that degree of citizenship; also, when one of them wanted to advance after a three months improvement period during which he was sponsored by an older pupil or by a colleague respected and reliable. Each child voted by handing in one of three pieces of paper: one bore the mark "+" — meaning "Yes, I like and esteem him"; a second, the mark "-" — meaning "No, I dislike him. I don't trust him"; and a third with "0" — meaning "I don't know. He has made no impact on me." After the "votes" had been counted, the proportion of friendliness, dislike and indifference stood out on the blackboard plain for children and teachers to see. Precisely that was the idea — to replace assumptions, clues, suspicions, by overt facts, to measure and record, like a temperature, the actual and real opinion of the children's community. Further, plebiscites were held on young teachers also, after a trial working period.

Finally, it is necessary to take into consideration the *teacher's inspiration* in the direction of awakening and stabilizing the *will to self-education*, in order that the child may see his own shortcomings and failures and try to overcome them.

The credo of education in Our Home is to be found in the words of its directress, Maryna Falska: "Not words, not moralizing — rather such a structure and atmosphere that the children may set a high value on their presence here, may make supreme efforts to correct their failures and to adapt themselves to the expectations and requirements of the community." Thus, making clear on the one hand the results and consequences of every action, and on the other helpful methods of self-control, the whole system was constantly echoing the words of Shakespeare: "Master yourself once — and you will acquire strength for the next victory."

To arm with self-knowledge, to establish the habit of work, of self-control and friendly relationships, to impart a quantum of humanity, later to set them free to decide for themselves — that is what Korczak wanted for the children. Striking here is the complete absorption, so to speak, of the doctor in the educational task.

Korczak does not want to mold the child according to this or that pattern and program in the interest of the state, the church or some particular social class. The welfare of the child himself is for him the great and first commandment. In this respect, Korczak is diametrically opposed to Plato with all his caricatured epigones in the pedagogics of total states.

In the panorama of his century, Korczak stands silhouetted as a solitary wanderer. A stranger to all —everywhere respected as a decent foreigner. Nationalist and clericalist Poles could not forgive him his Jewish origin. Unassimilated Jews saw in him a Polish writer, a representative of Polish culture. The social left wing, active revolutionary youth above all, was repulsed by his skepticism and by his not linking the problem of the child with the struggle for a change in the social structure; conservatives saw him as a leftist, almost a bolshevik in the matter of children. In literary society, he would not join any group or school — he was admired, but with a tinge of regret, as a great talent but an illegitimate offspring of pedagogics which were treated with some contempt. The pedagogues were alarmed by his aspect of an iconoclast, and a tribune acting in the name of an exploited social class for as such he treated children, his proletariat of small feet and the labor of maturing. That troubled the pedagogues — perhaps after all Korczak is only a literary phenomenon?

This may seem to be the tragedy of an innovator born at the wrong time or in the wrong place. Objectively speaking, it indeed has that aspect. But subjectively, Korczak did not consider himself a tragic figure. Of course, he frequently suffered, and not only for personal reasons. But whatever his harassments and spiritual conflicts, he kept them close, with only occasional references in letters to nearest friends, sometimes in his creative work. In everyday life, he remained the personification of self-possession and serenity of mind. Through sixteen years of constant contact with him, I recollected only a few occasions when the Old Doctor blew up, was irritated or depressed. I repeat, in his approach to the world, to people, there was something of the kindly skepticism of Anatole France. The skepticism Korczak flaunted, the charity he tried to hide, camouflaging his lyrical sentiments. He was often moving but also comic when he tried to act the old cynic.

And what a sense of humor! That specific humor gave him in his youth fame as a feuilletonist, floods his novels with serenity, bobs up in essays when among serious and objective reflections he suddenly introduces a thumbnail caricature or a metaphor. He could recount an anecdote marvellously, and was sometimes himself the hero of an amusing incident.

He was able to color work with the charm of play, to draw great inspiration from petty affairs, and he had an idiosyncratic attitude to the three P's — he hated pedants, feared politicians, and was suspicious that pedagogues demoralize children.

He won hearts by his sincerity and forthrightness. He never had reason to feel very lonely, he had friends and devoted admirers.

No, he was not embittered by his situation as stranger among his own people, he was not prostrated by failure. Simply — although it is not so very simple — he was a good man, and his goodness transcended common experience, was above the ordinary human measure. Whatever he did was done in splendid harmony with his nature and he fully "enjoyed being alive" —which, if we can believe Montaigne, "is the highest and almost godlike perfection."

After the siege and fall of Warsaw in 1939, Korczak called me to his room. In the Children's Home as throughout the city the windows were lacking glass. From somewhere the Doctor had managed to acquire a crate of panes, and I had a cutting diamond and was a glazier. Korczak was in high boots, in the uniform of a major of the Polish Army. I expressed my astonishment at seeing him in this uniform, for which formerly he had seemed to have the reverse of liking....

"Yes, formerly. It's all different now...."

"Doctor, that doesn't make sense. You are simply provoking the Nazis, flouting them with this uniform which nobody any longer wears."

"Precisely. Nobody. The uniform of the soldier betrayed." The last word. No further discussion.

Only after a whole year did he give in to the persuasions of his friends, urging on him that he was endangering not only himself but also the children. But when during the removal of the Children's Home to the Ghetto, members of the Gestapo stole a cartload of potatoes, the Old Doctor went in his uniform to the Nazi administration of the city. When they discovered that this man, quarrelling about potatoes destined for Jewish children, was himself a Jew and not wearing the yellow armband because he refused to recognize such a badge of humiliation and dishonor — they promptly put him in prison. The Gestapo put him under interrogation, trying to extract the names of his co-workers and his organization, because they could not believe that this insolent demonstration had not been ordered.

Former pupils managed to gather sufficient funds to buy him out of prison before he was sentenced. He returned to the children — with the Children's Home already in the Ghetto.

I shall not attempt here to sketch this quarter encircled by high walls, this quarter shut like a trap, where half a million people were crushed together in conditions persistently macabre. I should like only to make a few observations about the Memoirs and to reconstruct the last talk I had with Korczak.

The very first pages of the *Memoirs* reveal the intention to rule off the account, to transfer to somebody in the distant future the last testament of his own experiences, dissensions and beliefs. The introductory reflections are examples of the literary craft — sentences beautifully molded, perfect, ready for the printer. But the further he proceeds with the work the more does his initial conception become confused and shattered. Complete psychological detachment from the agony of the *Ghetto* proves to be simply not possible.

Korczak leaves the Children's Home in the morning and goes to the Aid Committee, calls at the houses of the rich, appears even in the offices of known, compromised collaborators. He begs, threatens, quarrels. He cares not who it is who gives or whether sufficient remains for others. He is the father of two hundred children and he must provide for them. This is a different Korczak: exhausted, irritable, suspicious, ready to raise hell over a barrel of cabbage, a sack of flour.

From such rounds he returns in the evening completely worn out, with figures in his notebook representing his day's booty, and behind his eyes the image of the *Ghetto*. At night, he thinks and writes. He writes in the sickroom where lie several of the weakest children and a dying man, father of one of the pupils, approaching the end of a long, serious illness.

In such surroundings, in that state of health, after such a day, he no longer has strength or will to write for publication: he can only talk to himself on paper, making notes in haphazard abbreviations, almost a cypher; something of his chance thoughts, some memories, a fleeting impression. ... The *Memoirs* have become no more than a register of psychological moments. This is neither the legendary Korczak nor the real Korczak. This is a man fragmented into moments, impulses, fibers — a third being, uncoordinated; the writing is more mysterious in its trembling close-up, in its burning sincerity. It long continues to torment with its suffering — and it is astonishing how a great testament and work of art brings home to one human calamities, makes one more human.

In July 1942, when it was becoming obvious that the *Ghetto* was marked for liquidation, Maryna Falska made a last attempt to save Korczak. I repeat ... a last attempt ... because earlier his friends outside the walls had frequently urged him to leave the *Ghetto* and find asylum with them. This time, everything was scrupulously organized — a German identity card in an assumed name, a safe room prepared by Falska near Our Home on the periphery of Warsaw. I went to the *Ghetto* on a pass for a water and sewage system inspector who, on his way back, was to take with him a locksmith working on the *Ghetto* territory.

It is difficult to describe the psychological shock experienced by any normal man in

this sinister quarter of people under sentence of death, the sense of personal humiliation and shame at being a so-called Arian. Only in the Children's Home was it possible to recover, to regain self-control. There it was like an oasis. Everything running according to the normal, long established routine, everything exuding order, calm, good management. Yet the children were quieter, slower in their movements, and "Pandoktor" looked ill, wasted, stooping. At sixty four, his organism was wrecked: at the expense of stupendous daily effort he was finding food, medicines and clothes, was tottering under this terrible responsibility and care for the fate of two hundred children and youngsters from seven to seventeen or eighteen years old — including quite a few former pupils who had sought shelter with him.

I explained that now there was only a single chance to save a few from perishing, that there could be no postponement. If the Doctor would break up the boarding school, some of the children and teachers would perhaps have a chance to escape beyond the walls. Let him order that, and come away at once with me.

He looked at me as though disappointed in me, as though I had proposed a betrayal or an embezzlement. I wilted under his gaze and he turned away, saying quietly but not without reproach in his voice:

"You know, of course, why Zalewski was beaten up...."

Piotr Zalewski, a former grenadier in the Tsarist army, was for twenty years caretaker and in charge of central heating in the Children's Home. When the order for removal came, Zalewski wanted to go to the Ghetto, too. Wolańska, who for many years had run the laundry in the Home, went with a similar application to the Nazi police. Her they merely kicked out, but to Zalewski they administered a bestial reminder that he was an Arian. (During the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, Zalewski met his death in the courtyard of the Children's Home.)

So Korczak recalled Zalewski with an obvious though unformulated reproach — you see, a caretaker would not leave the children because he was attached to them, and you propose that I, their tutor, their father.... Is it thinkable that I should leave the children alone to suffocate in a gas chamber? How could I live after that? He could not. He did not.

By way of farewell, and as a sort of absolution, he said he would send me his Memoirs, which he was writing day by day in the Ghetto. He kept his word — as always. Shortly after 5th of August, I received the Memoirs.¹ On 5th of August, 1942, began the

¹ Envisaging the possibility of arrest and search in my flat, I took the MS to Our Home and Maryna Falska told one of the staff, Mr. Cichosz, to wall it up in the attic. Shortly afterward I was arrested ... Majdanek Oswiecim ... other concentration camps. After the war, I learned that Maryna Falska had died

march of the children and teachers of the Children's Home, led by Janusz Korczak and Stefania Wilczyńska. Neatly clad in their best clothes they marched in fours, steadily, under their flag — the golden four-leaf clover on a field of green, as dreamed by King Macius because green is the symbol of everything that grows — fluttering above their heads. They marched through the hushed streets of Warsaw to the Umschlag-Platz, near the Gdansk Railway Station. Here they were all loaded into chlorinated freight cars. The train set out for the Treblinka extermination camp.

In our country, great numbers deliberately chose death, giving their lives for their motherland, for the people, in executing this or that order. As elsewhere. And the Nazis have on their record more horrible crimes than the murder of a tutor and his two hundred charges. Why is it, then, that this event is etched so sharply in the memories of all, and has become a tormenting legend of humanity?

In man's history on the earth one can find more appalling crimes — but it would be difficult to trace a more dramatic confrontation of the human with the inhuman. It is not the dimension of this crime — but its significance. With the predicament it expresses, it faces the world like an onslaught; it cries out: *"Ecce Homo Sapiens — and Homo Rapax!* Beware! Upon this — upon which of them, the human or the inhuman, will triumph — will depend the fate of you and your children."

Pedagogics and literature, elaborating the heritage of Korczak, will divide it into what is outworn, what is valuable still, or valuable at last, and into impractical although fascinating Utopias. Culture has adopted Korczak whole. For culture not what one can learn from Korczak is important not the question as to what one can take from him and what is open to discussion. What is important is the climate of his works and his life, the regenerating power of thinking in the categories of humanism. It is because of that regenerating power that from a conversation with Korczak one may emerge to put it at its simplest — a slightly better man, slightly more complete.

Igor Newerly

Translated by

Anna and George Bidwell

on 7th of October, 1944, the day on which, on the orders of the Nazis, she was to have led the children out of Warsaw, cutting herself off forever from Our Home. But Mr. Cichosz survived and unbricked the Memoirs. I have published them in Vol. 4 of Janusz Korczak's Selected Works.

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* * *

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THE APPLICATION²

Kind friends urge me to write my last will. I am doing it now in my curriculum *vitae*, to go with the application for a job as teacher in the institution at 39 Dzielna St.³

I am sixty-four. As to health, I received my certificate in jail last year. In spite of the exacting conditions there, not once did I report sick, not once did I go to the doctor, not once did I absent myself from gymnastics, dreaded even by my younger colleagues. I eat like a horse, sleep soundly; recently, after drinking ten shots of strong vodka, I returned home at a brisk pace from Rymarska St. to Sienna St. — late at night. I get up twice in the night, fill my chamber pot.

I smoke, do not overindulge in liquor, mental faculties for everyday purposes — passable.

I am a master in the economy of effort; like Harpagus, I measure out every unit of energy to be expended.

I consider myself initiated into medicine, education, eugenics, politics.

Having established a routine, I possess an appreciable ability for coexisting and collaborating even with criminal characters and with born imbeciles. Ambitious, obstinate fools cut me off their visiting list — though I do not return the compliment. The last examination I passed: toleration of a screwball directress in my institution for well over a year, and acting contrary to the interests of my own convenience and peace, I sought to persuade her to stay; she soon left of her own volition (a principle of mine: better the devil you know...).

I anticipate that the criminal characters among the personnel of the institution at Dzielna St. will — of their own volition — leave the hated place to which they are tied by cowardice and inertia.

I graduated from secondary school and university in Warsaw. My education was complemented in the clinics of Berlin (one year) and Paris (six months). A month's excursion to London helped me to understand on the spot the quintessence of charity work (high earnings).

² OFERTA." Vol. 4, p. 495.

³ A street in Warsaw inhabited mostly by the Jewish population

My masters in medicine were: Professor Przeworski (anatomy and bacteriology), Nasonov (zoologist), Shcherbakov (psychiatry) and pediatricians Finkelsztejn, Baginski, Marfan, Hutinel (Berlin, Paris).

(Recreation — visiting orphanages, reformatories, places of detention for juvenile delinquents).

One month in a school for backward children, one month in Ziehan's neurologic clinic.

My masters in the hospital at Sliska St.: the ironist and nihilist Koral, the jovial Kramsztyk, the serious Gantz, the fine diagnostician Eliasberg, and also assistant surgeon Sliiewski and a selfless nurse, Laja.

I expect to meet more of the kind of Laja in the children's slaughter house (and morgue) at 39 Dzielna St.

Hospital revealed to me how dignified, mature and sensible a child is face to face with death.

Books on statistics deepened my understanding of the medical art (statistics taught me the inexorability of logical thinking and unbiased judgement of fact). Having weighed and measured children for a quarter of a century, I became the owner of a priceless collection of graphs — growth profiles of children at school age and puberty.

With the Jewish child I came in touch for the first time as overseer in the Markiewicz summer vacation camp at MichalOwek.

Several years of unpaid work in a reading library afforded me rich observation material.

I have never been a member of any political party.

My teachers in civic work: Nalkowski, Straszewicz, Dawid, Dygasinski, Prus, Asnyk, Konopnicka.

The initiation into the world of insects and plants, I owe to Maeterlinck, into the life of minerals — Ruskin.

As for writers, I owe most to Chekhov — a great social diagnostician and clinician.

I visited Palestine twice, learned to appreciate its "bitter beauty"; I familiarized myself with the dynamics and technique of life of the Halutz and the settlers from Moshav (Symkhoni, Gurarie, Brawerman).

I became familiar for the second time with the marvelous machinery of a live system in an effort to adjust to a strange climate: first — Manchuria; now — Palestine.

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 should have persisted in my resentment for and disdain of the civilian.

Jobs so far:

1. Seven years, with intervals, as sole house surgeon in the Sliska St. hospital.
2. Nearly a quarter of a century in the Children's Home.
3. Fifteen years in Our Home PruszkOw, Pola
4. About six months in institutions for destitute Ukrainian children.
5. I have served as expert at the District Court for juvenile delinquents.
6. I was a correspondent of German and French periodicals in the field of National Insurance for four years.
7. Wars:
8. Evacuation points at Kharbin and Taoy-jou.
9. A sanitary train (carrying V.D. patients from the revolutionary army from Kharbin to Khabarovsk).
10. Junior ward-head in a divisional field hospital.
11. Epidemic hospital in Led2 (dysentery epidemic).
12. Epidemic hospital at Kamionek.

As citizen and employee, **I** am obedient but not disciplined. I have cheerfully accepted punishment for disobedience (for an unlawful release from hospital of the family of a lieutenant personally unknown to me — result for myself typhus).

I am not ambitious. I have been asked to write my childhood memoirs — and refused.

As an organizer — **I** cannot play the big boss. A handicap here and elsewhere — short sight and complete lack of visual memory. The far-sightedness that comes with increasing age has compensated for the first defect; the second has grown in intensity. There is a good side to this: being unable to recognize men, I concentrate on the problem — do not become prejudiced, do not remember wrongs done to me.

Clumsy, therefore impetuous if upset; tediously developed self-control — has made me able to engage in team work.

The trial period I suggest should be four weeks from my starting — in view of the

urgency, that should be on Wednesday, at the latest on Thursday.

Kindly provide a room and two meals daily.

I make no other conditions, having learned not to do so by unpleasant and painful not for me — experience. By a room, I understand a place to sleep; meals as they come, and if it comes to that — I can do without.

Goldszmit

February 9, 1942.