



*International Janusz Korczak
Association*

*Międzynarodowe Stowarzyszenie
im. Janusza Korczaka*



**Minutes of the Janusz Korczak International Seminar
at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland
to the United Nations Office
Geneva, 5 June 2010**

We would like to offer our thanks to Ambassador Z.Rapacki, and his representatives Mr.Cezary Lusiński, Mr.Andrzej Misztal and Mrs. Olga Biernacka and all the staff of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to Geneva, together with Dr.Yanghee Lee, Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, The European Commissioner for Human Rights, Prof. Waltraud Kerber-Ganse, Mrs. Batia Gilad, Chair of the International Janusz Korczak Association.



Thank you to friends from Korczak Associations from around the world and to the members of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child for joining us in the exploration of Korczak's legacy and vision and its significance for today.

The conference included representatives from Janusz Korczak Associations representing Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom together with members of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child including representatives from Algeria, Hungary, Korea, Lithuania, Germany, Mauritius, Slovakia, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia and Uganda,

The conference programme incorporated three panels, each panel exploring a specific theme related to Janusz Korczak and the Right of the Child to Education with reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child with a focus on the Training of Teachers. All of the presentations were delivered by members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and representatives of different Janusz Korczak Associations.



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Panel 1

Panel 1 was moderated by Jean Zermatten, a member of the UNCRC.

Philip D Jaffe, Director of Institut Universitaire Kurt Bosh, University of Fribourg, explored the nature of contemporary education including different perspectives regarding the aims of education with particular reference to the need for institutional respect for education and the role of education as a vehicle for the transmission of values.

Lothar Krappmann, a member of the UNCRC, explored the concept of fundamental freedom



Philip D Jaffe, Waltraud Kerber-Ganse,
Batia Gilad, Jean Zermatten,
Yanghee Lee, Jonathan Levy,
Dainus Puras

and its relationship to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child with particular reference to developments in contemporary education including the affirmation of a culture of learning infused with values which promote human rights and active citizenship.

Dainus Puras, a member of the UNCRC, considered the relationship of Mental Health and Well-Being with reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for education. He

illustrated how paternalistic approaches to mental health and education deny the principles of human rights, dignity and respect.

Jonathan Levy, of the French J.Korczak Association, contextualised the rights of the child with reference to social justice, equality, diversity, peace and conflict, importance of the expression of children's opinions together with the need for humanistic educators to be given powers to train others.

Film: Korczak of the Children

Between Panel 1 and Panel 2 the film *Korczak and the Children* was screened. The film presented testimonies from graduates and teachers of Korczak's Warsaw *Dom Sierot* orphanage reflecting upon their time in the orphanage and sharing their positive memories of J.Korczak. In addition to interviews with the graduates and teachers their memories and reflections were also presented by child actors who played their younger selves.



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Panel 2

Panel 2 was moderated by Sven Hartmann, Chair of the Swedish Korczak Association. The theme of this panel was Teaching Teachers-Taught by Korczak and the Convention – A Challenge for NGO's.

Maria Herczog, a member of the UNCRC, explored the challenges and opportunities which arise from relating Korczak's pedagogical and therapeutic philosophy to contemporary experience, including current policy and practice in Hungary. Maria Herczog also affirmed the memory and legacy of Alice Miller as a champion of children's rights and of the complementarity of Miller's and Korczak's understandings of the child.

Roza Valeyva, Chair of the Russian Korczak Association, explored the concept of authority in education and the pedagogical differences between an authoritarian approach to teaching and the humanistic approach to education. Roza Valeyva showed a film of student teachers from Kazan-Russia who shared their experiences of working with young people together with their thoughts concerning Korczak's inspirational legacy. Roza's presentation concluded with the quotation "Don't be in a hurry to become a grown up".

Tzipi Marhaim, a member of the Korczak Association of Israel and Headteacher of the Avichail Elementary School, explored the theme of training teachers according to Korczak's legacy and illustrated how it is possible to actualise his pedagogical approach into the daily life of the Avichail School. Tzipi Marhaim illustrated the process of raising awareness amongst staff and parents of Korczak's educational philosophy in order for this to be embedded throughout all aspects of teaching and learning. At the heart of this transformative process is the positive partnership between teachers, parents and children.

Kelvin Ravenscroft, of the United Kingdom J.Korczak Association, considered Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child with particular reference to its aim of the development of respect for the natural environment. The role of contemplation in Korczak's educational philosophy was explored with reference to two of the five Korczak Projects developed by Kelvin and circulated to Korczak Associations by e-mail in the autumn of 2009 and their relationship to Article 29 and the potential for the development of Quiet Spaces to promote children's well-being.

Joop Berding of the Dutch J.Korczak Association presented "Teaching Korczak- Learning and working with students and professionals." He explored the problems associated with attempting to teach about Korczak and outlined five key concepts of Korczak's thought:



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respect, justice, participation, dialogue and self-reflection. The concepts were considered with reference to the development of a training course for workers in day care and after school centres.

Panel 3

Panel 3 was moderated by Kamel Filali, a member of the UNCRC and was dedicated to “Challenging Intergenerational Relationship: the School as a Model, a Future Vision”. Panel 3 included contributions from the members of Panels 1 and 2. The key concepts, themes and ideas that were articulated in this session included the following:

The importance of early years interventions; partnerships between teachers, parents and children; the impact of the family on children’s development and well-being; the need for ecological awareness and the nurturing of children’s capacity for contemplation; the importance of spirituality; the ability to accommodate and adapt to change; the need for support in responding to rapid change and the belief in the potential of children.

The Second International Janusz Korczak Seminar was a truly inspirational event which encouraged and inspired us to anticipate continuing dialogue in a further Seminar in 2011 with the continued support of the Polish Mission to the UN and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

We would welcome the opportunity to dialogue with other organisations working in the fields of education and human rights.

Batia Gilad
Batia Gilad
Chairperson

IKA

Malgorzata Kmita
Malgorzata Kmita
Secretary-General

IKA