

Ministry of Education

Tel-Aviv District

Inspector of Art Education

# Janusz Korczak and the Children

**The Memories of a Child - Itzchak Belfer**

**Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures**

**Concept, writing and editing:**

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**Itzchak Belfer**

**English Translation:**

**Marsha Hachmon**

**Music:**

**Elad Cohen- Bonen ©**

**Video:**

**Miki Arian-Kedarya**

Janusz Korczak's educational philosophy, built on the foundations of humanistic values, is relevant and current in many areas that interest children and educators.

Terminology and principles such as: "children's society ", "children's right to respect" and awareness of pupils' differential needs, are a few examples of his pedagogical philosophy and are inspirational sources for implementation of current views on education of values. It is our obligation as educators to continue teaching according to Korczak's principles and values.

Itzchak Belfer, the artist, was educated at Korczak's orphanage for eight years. In his artwork, which is shown in this presentation, he reflects the image of the educator he so loved and admired.

This is a unique form of witnessing which allows the audience a powerful description of the extraordinary experience of that period in history

We will remember and never forget the great educator- Janusz Korczak and his children.

Orly Froman- Director, Tel-Aviv District



**ABRAHAM SHLONSKY**

**THE VOW**

**By the eyes that witnessed bereavement  
and burdened my bowed heart with cries,  
By the compassion that taught me forgiveness  
Until days came that prohibited pardon,  
I contracted the vow to remember all,  
To remember -- and nothing forget.**

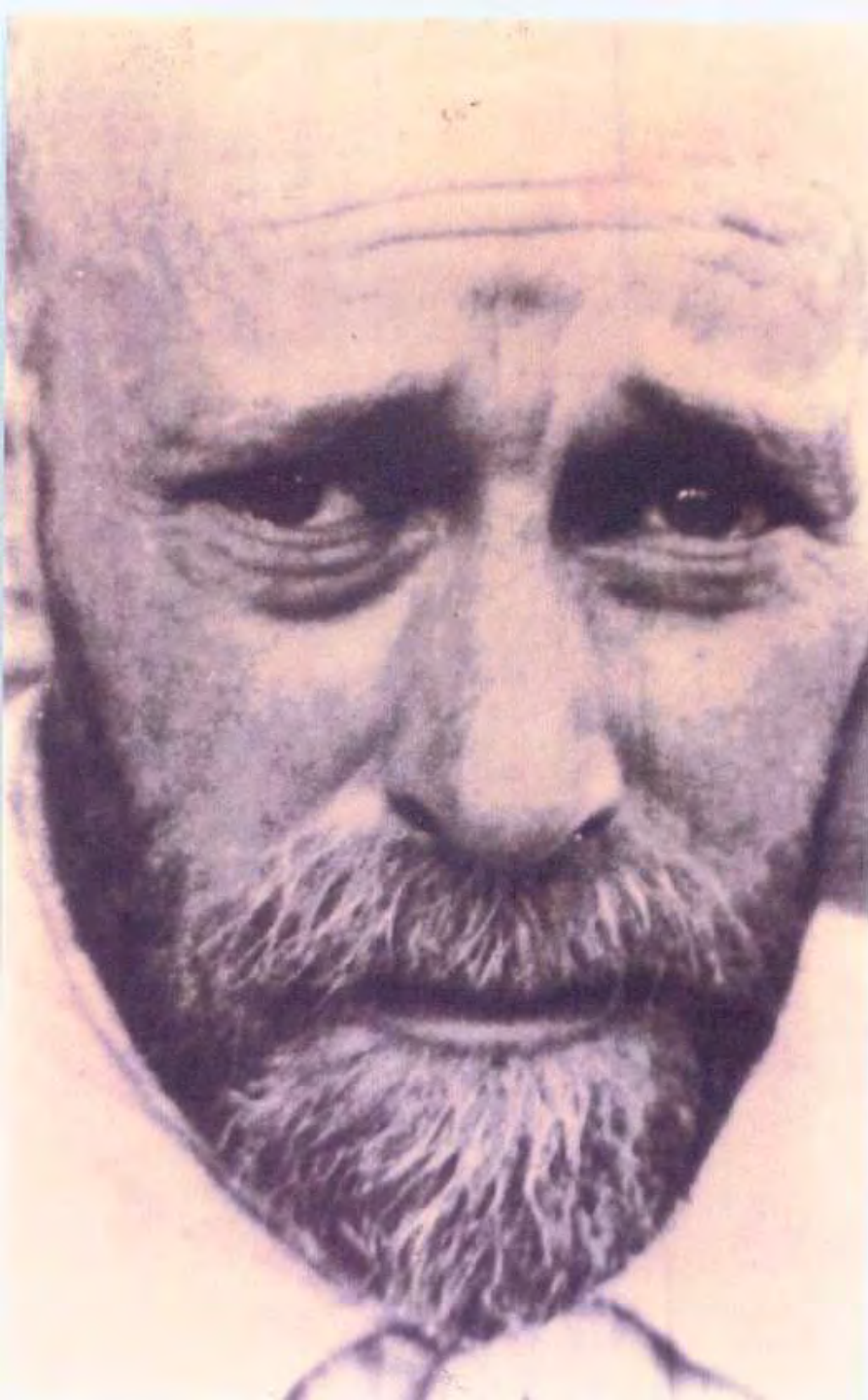
**TRANSLATED BY KAREN ALKALAY-GUT**





# **Janusz Korczak and the Children**

**The Memories of a Child - Itzchak Belfer**  
**Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures**



**Janusz Korczak**

**Dr. Henryk Hirsh Goldszmit- The rare combination of an author, pediatrician, educator and philosopher brought to the world an innovative educational philosophy.**



**“A hundred children, a hundred individuals who are people--not people-to-be, not people of tomorrow, but people of now, right now—today.”**

**Janusz Korczak**





**Janush Korczak and the Children, drawing 25/35 cm, 1990**

## Itzchak Belfer, The Artist

*"I lived with him for eight years and have been enlightened by him my entire life."*

Itzchak Belfer was a child at Korczak's orphanage.

His paintings and drawings, shown in this presentation, describe Korczak and the children during the periods before World War II and during the Holocaust (1939-1945).

Belfer lost his father in 1927. His mother, who had five other children, brought him to the orphanage at the age of seven. He was educated there until the age of fourteen. After that, he was given permission to stay until the age of fifteen.





**In the spring of 1940, a year after the occupation of Warsaw, Belfer received Korczak's blessing and a small amount of money to run away from the city to the forest at the Russian border.**

**After the war, he returned to Poland and he discovered the tragic dimensions of the Holocaust.**

**He tried to immigrate to Israel in 1947 on the famous ship, "Af Al Pi Chen" which was seized with all its passengers and rerouted to Cyprus. In Cyprus, he began to paint and learned sculpture with the sculptor and teacher, Dov Ben-Tzvi.**

**He was finally able to immigrate to Israel in 1949.**

**Belfer's entire family perished in the Holocaust.**

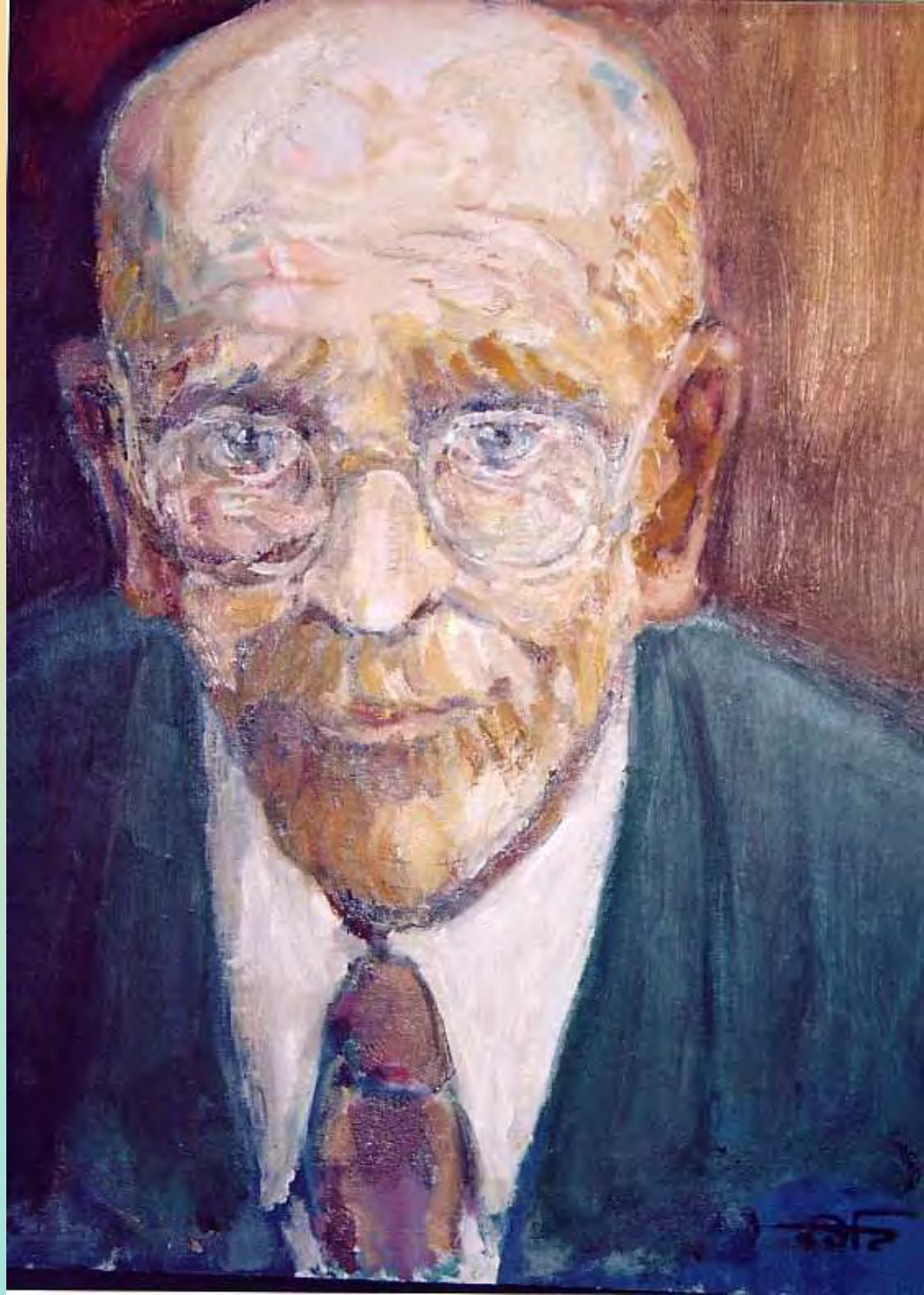




**Janusz Korczak**

**Henryk Hirsch  
Goldszmit  
1878-1942**

Janusz Korczak, Oil on Canvas, 60/45 cm, 2002



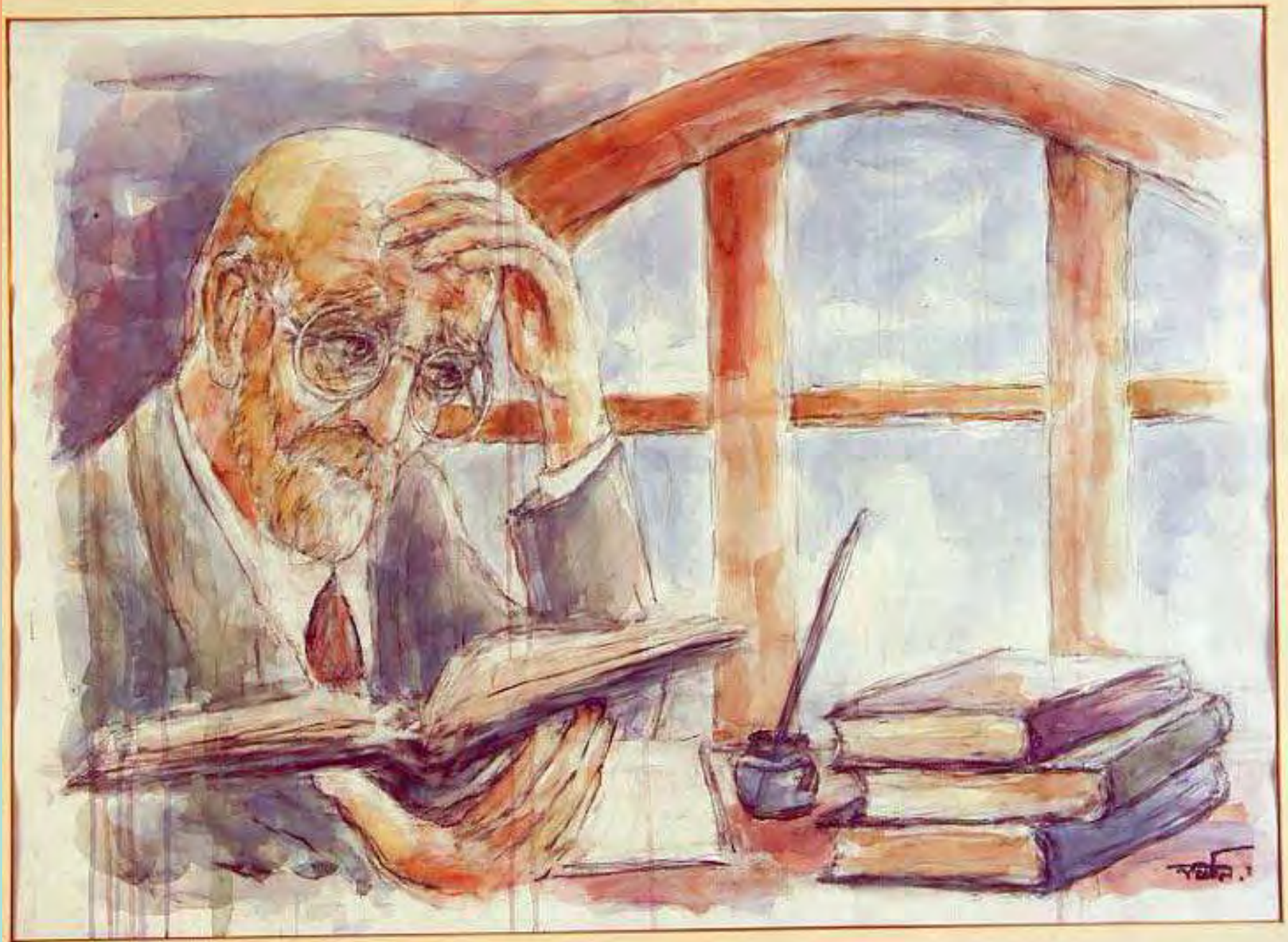
**"It is not enough to love children. You need to understand them and treat them as human beings. Give them the same rules, rights and obligations that adults must abide by."**

**"How much, do we as adults, need to educate ourselves in order to understand children?"**



Korczak Among the Children, Water Color on Paper, 100/70 cm., 2000





Korczak the Philosopher, Watercolor on Paper, 90/70 cm, 2004





Korczak, Bronze Sculpture, 60 cm



Bronze sculpture, 220 cm, In front of the Girls' Gymnasia, Ginzburg, Germany



**"Adults live in the outer realm of children's lives as children live in the outer realm of adults' lives.**

**When will the joyful time come that children and adults will exist in parallel paths?"**



# **Janusz Korczak and the Children**

**In 1908, 80 orphans lived in the Jewish community of Warsaw. The community looked for volunteers to educate these children. The first person to volunteer was Stefania Wilczynska immediately after her, Janusz Korczak, a young pediatrician and author who was interested in education and the world of children.**

**In 1912, Korczak became the director of the new orphanage which was built according to his plans. There were 56 girls and 51 boys in the orphanage. There was a large hall that was used as a dining room, a party area and game room. In addition to two large dormitories, there were "quiet corners" for studying, craft and sewing workshops, etc.**

**Korczak's pedagogical approach was based on love and respect for children. The children governed their lives and decided on the rules.**



**Stefania Wilczynska,  
Administrative director and  
senior educator**



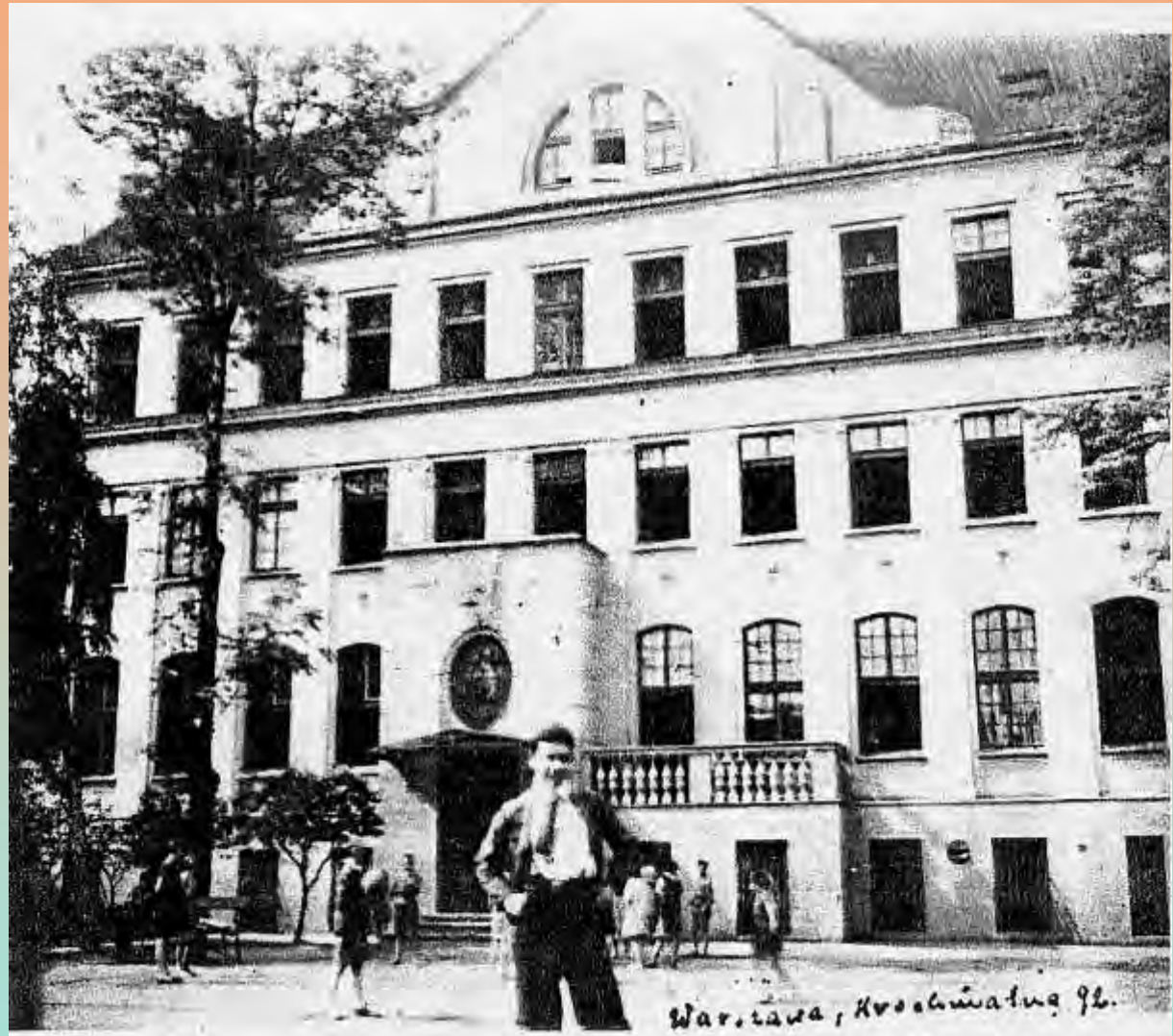
**Stefa was always there. She was a strong and comforting woman. Her deep feelings and warm personality brought about confidence and respect among the children and young counselors.**



**Stefa and the Children, Black Print Color on Paper, 70/100 cm**

**Janusz Korzcak implemented his educational philosophy at his orphanage. With Stefa's help, the orphanage was self-governed by the children.**

**The children's governing council was responsible for the daily routine of life, such as chores.**



**The Orphanage at 92 Krochamelna Street, Warsaw, Poland, 1912**



**A court of peers in which children were judges was implemented in the orphanage. The same constitution governed all residents (including staff).**

In section 6c of the constitution, it is written:

"The children must obey the obligatory rules and not the staff. The staff must know the rules and act accordingly.

In order to receive extraordinary privileges, one needs to make a request to the independent children's governing council. The governing council is allowed to deny staff requests."



The front of the Orphanage. Black marker on paper, 35/25 cm, 1975.

**During World War I, Korczak served as a doctor in the Russian Army. During that period, he wrote his book, "How to Love a Child". Later, he wrote "The Right of a Child to Respect".**



Korczak Speaking with Children, Sketch, 35/25 cm



Korczak Pediatrician, Black Marker, 70/50 cm

**In 1918, Korczak returned to head the orphanage which had been run by Stefa. During his absence, the orphanage functioned according to his philosophy:**

**"Only through education can the world become a better place."**



In 1939, at the beginning of World War II, The orphanage continued its regular activities and studies. At the end of 1940, the Germans transferred all the residents of the orphanage to the Warsaw ghetto. In the ghetto, the conditions were bad, it was very crowded and food was scarce. The number of children increased to 200. There were still "quiet corners", doll corners and various activities. The children felt at home, organized plays and continued their routine.



The Deportation from the Orphanage to the Ghetto, Acrylics on paper, 100/70 cm, 1970.



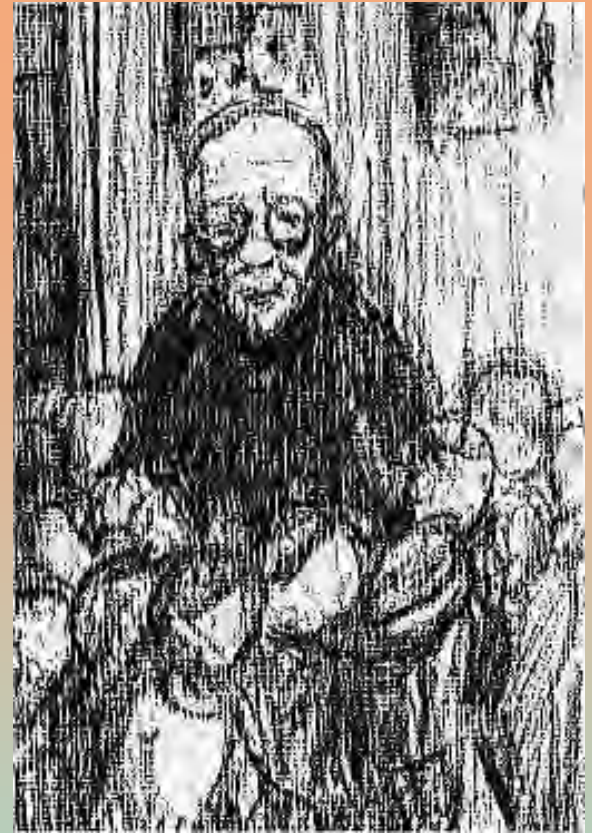
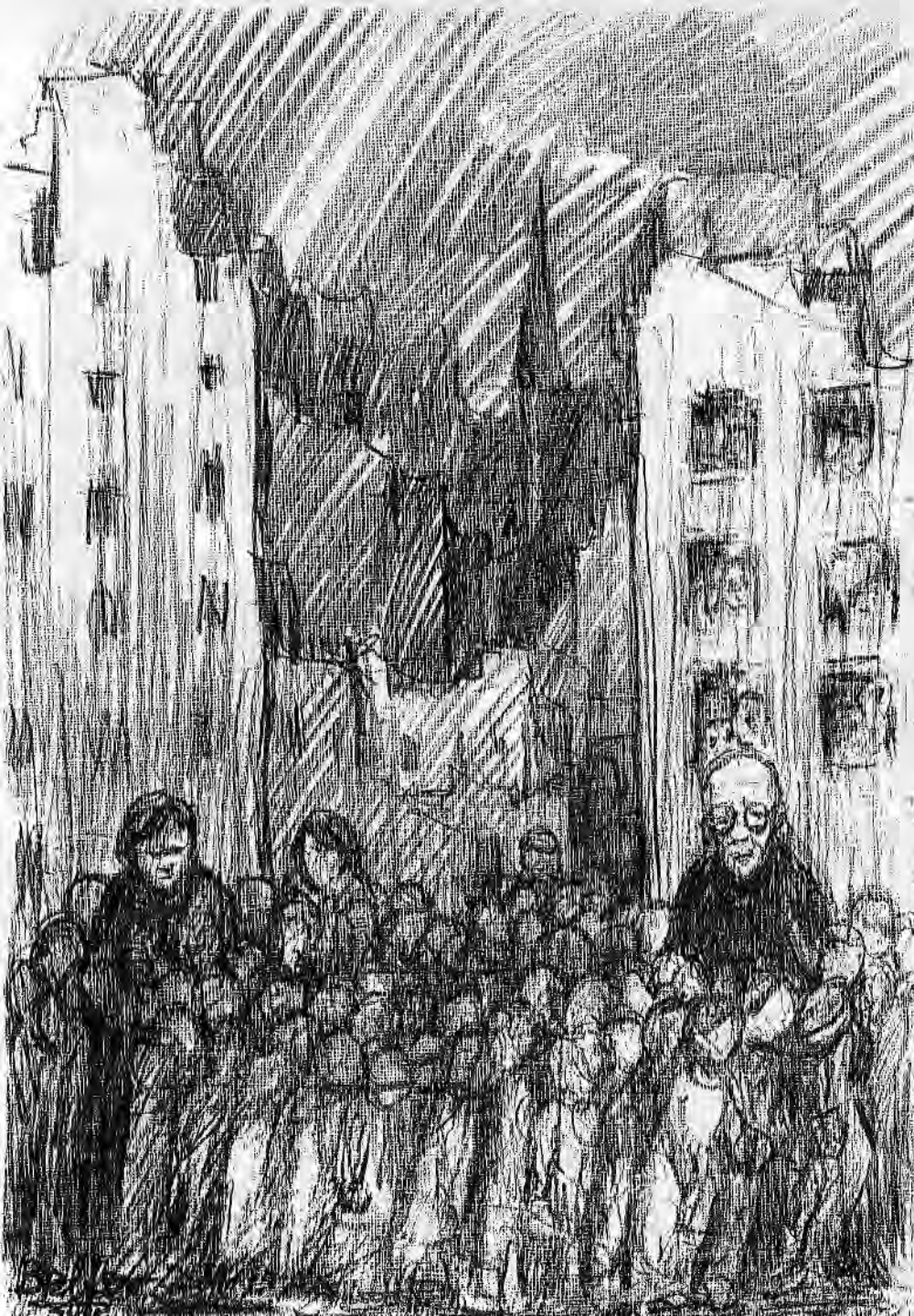


The Exile to the Ghetto, Dry brush on paper, 50/70 cm, 1958



Children in the Ghetto, Black Print Color on paper, 50/70 cm, 1981





**Detail**





Korczak Looks for Food in the Ghetto, Pencil. 35/25 cm, 1990



Korczak Collects Children in the Ghetto, Pencil, 35/25 cm, 1990



## The situation in the ghetto worsens: Hunger, Disease, Death



Korczak and the Children before the Deportation, Acrylics, 100/70 cm 1983



Stefa and the Children before the Deportation, Acrylics, 100/70 cm, 1983



Korbacz with the Children in the Ghetto, Drawing , The middle part of Tripatichon, 100/70 cm



Mother and Child, Acrylics, 100/70 cm, 1997





Warsaw Ghetto fighters, Dry Brush using Black Print Color, 100/70 cm,1985



Stefa Protects the Children, Black Print Color, 50/35 cm, 1976



Stefa, Black Print Color, 50/35 cm, 1975

**During the final days in the ghetto, Stefa prepared everything for the journey. She had no illusions. She dressed the children in their best clothes. They numbered 192 children and 8 adults, in addition to Korczak and Stefa.**



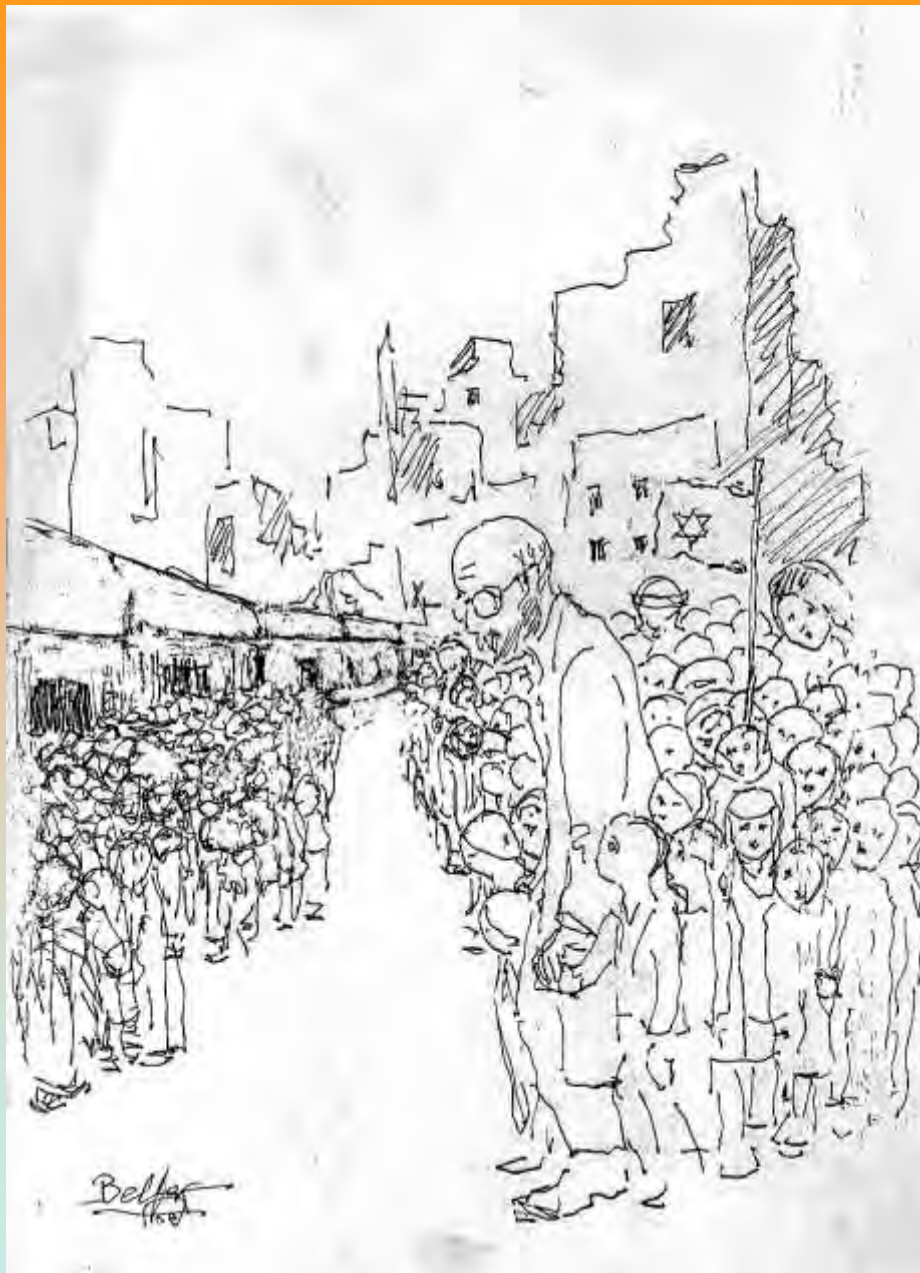
**The deportation to Treblinka Extermination Camp  
occurred on August 5, 1942.**

**SS men and Ukrainians lined the streets.**

**At eight o'clock in the morning, two sharp whistles  
and screams of : " All Jews Outside!"  
were the signs that the deportation had begun.**

**The children came down obediently and organized  
themselves in groups of five.**

**Stefa and Korczak came down with them.**



The Beginning of the March to the Cattle Cars, Sketch on Ripidograph, 50/35 cm, 1986.



A Discussion before The Deportation, Pencil, 50/35 cm, 1986





Going into the Cattle Cars, Sketch on Ripidograph, 50/35 cm, 1990

**The children, led by Korczak, marched in the streets of Warsaw on their way to Treblinka Extermination Camp, Stefa marched further back.**





The Death March, Oil on Canvas, 160/120 cm, 1963





The Kaltza Riots, in 1946, Oil on Canvas, 100/70 cm, 1963



**" They were the first taken to die,  
the first in the wagon.**

**They were flung into the big  
wagons like heaps of dung**

**And were carried off, killed,  
exterminated,**

**Not a trace remained of my  
precious ones! Woe unto me,  
woe."**

From the poem " The Song of the  
Murdered Jewish People"

by Iltzhak Katzenelson, translated  
by N.H. Roseblum

**AND NEVER AGAIN!**



**In Israel, after the Sinai War, Itzchak Belfer completed four years of studies at Avni Institute and two additional years studying the history of art.**

**In 1965, Belfer became a member of the Painters and Sculptors Society of Israel.**

**In 1972, he became a teacher at The Community College in Tel Aviv and became the director of drawing and sketching courses for the Tel Aviv Municipality.**



**The Artist in his  
Studio**

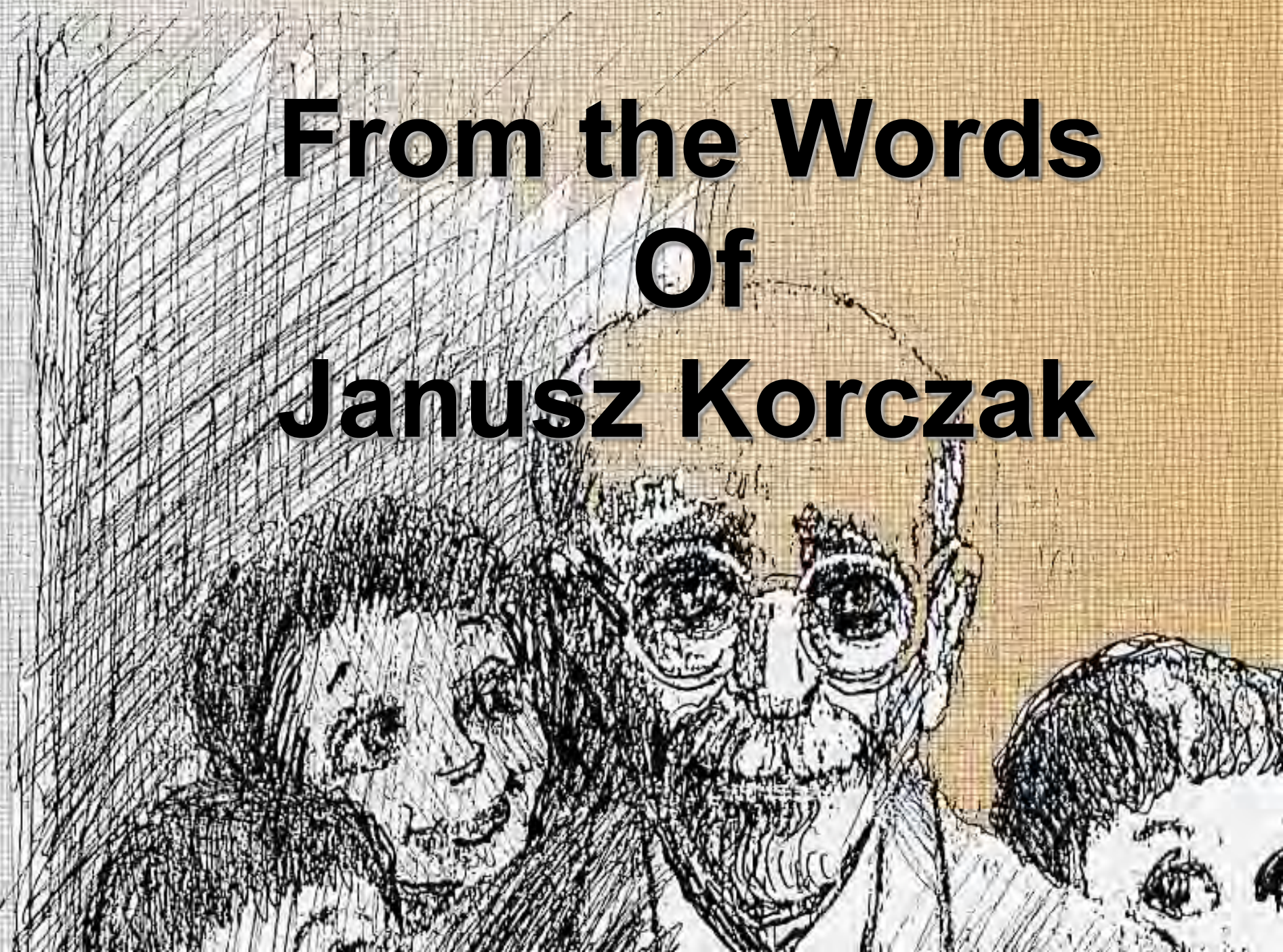


**“With each attempt to put on paper or canvas or to find ways to express the horrors of the Holocaust, I felt doubtful - Is it possible? Can an artist express the horror and fear, the inhuman and incomprehensible reality of persecution and total hatred of that time?”**

**Itzchak Belfer**



# **From the Words Of Janusz Korczak**







**“In your live-**

**How much have you plowed?**

**How many loaves of bread have you baked?**

**How many trees have you planted?**

**How many bricks have you laid before  
collecting for your people?**

**How many buttons have you sewn? How many  
patches have you mended?**

**To whom have you dedicated your war?**

**To whose failure have you supported?**

**To whom have you shown the way without  
demanding gratitude or reward?**

**What contribution have you given?**

**Who have you served?"**

**Janusz Korczak**



**One child – a full and comprehensive world.  
Two children – three worlds: the world of  
each individual and that of both of them  
together. Three children are not only one, a  
second and a third. In addition to the three –  
first and second together, first and third  
together, second and third together is also  
the world of them all. Presently we have  
seven worlds.**

**Lacking in determination, friendship, a  
quarrel, joy, depression, ... - think of how  
many worlds are to be found in ten, twenty,  
thirty kids. Many perplexing worlds. Alone,  
without the assistance of the children you will  
never get to know these worlds and your  
educational tasks will never succeed.**

**Zalman Ackerman (1984), *Landmarks in  
Korczak's Pedagogical Legacy***

***Translated from Hebrew, Dr. Avi Tsur***





## Korzczak's Words of Farewell to the Children

We are bidding farewell to those that have already gone and to those that will soon depart and will not return. We are bidding farewell to them before their journey, far and long and the name of the journey- life.

We have thought often how to say goodbye. What advice should we give. Unfortunately I can give you nothing but these poor words.

I cannot give you God, for you must find him in quiet contemplation in your own soul.

I cannot give you a Homeland, for you must find it in your own heart.

I cannot give you love of Man, for there is no love without forgiveness,

And forgiving is something everyone must learn to do on his own.

I can give you but one thing only-

A longing for a better life; a life of truth and justice; even though it may not exist now, it may come tomorrow.

Perhaps this longing will lead you to God, Homeland and Love.

Goodbye. Do not forget.



**Belfer's dedication:**

**To Janusz Korczak**

I express my thanks, in my soul-searching late in my life, in my name and in the name of my friends- the children of the orphanage. I would like to express my deepest gratitude and humble admiration for your life's work: Educating disadvantaged orphaned children, your deep belief in the struggle for the rights of children, respect and love for children and concern for mankind. You educated us, the children, about: Integrity, justice, work and mutual respect. In your orphanage, we knew what freedom and cooperative democracy were, according to your educational philosophy. "Court of Peers" of the children worked for the good of all (including the staff). The "Children's Council" was a full partner in decision-making and in the daily routine of the orphanage. Your educational philosophy proved itself, without a doubt, in both orphanages (and other institutions, as well) and continued to be followed in the worst times during the war and in the ghetto. I express my gratitude from the bottom of my heart that you gave us a happy childhood, full of meaning and experiences. A childhood full of light and joy. I was privileged to live in your midst, to learn from your wisdom and to enjoy your warmth.



**Thank you!**

**For laying a brick and building a warm home for us.**

**You showed us the way without demanding gratitude or reward.**

**You gave of yourself entirely.**

**You served us, the children, with sensitivity, loyalty and love.**

**You taught us to love Man. There is no love without forgiveness.**

**You planted in us belief in a better life, that did not exist at the time, but would be in the future, a life of truth and justice.**

**You showed us the way to the Land of Israel. Here, we found love for Man and Homeland.**

**We will remember you and cherish your memory forever.**

**Itzhak Belfer-Child from the orphanage**



זא צורע עס קיטא געבן  
„השאלה“ חובבי ארצות,  
דך אלא אתה לא ארצות  
ואם בחרת לארצות ארצות.

יצחק בלפר

**“Any way of expressing memories of the  
Holocaust is positive and worthwhile.  
Just don’t let apathy and forgetfulness  
To overcome us.”**

**Itzhak Belfer**





# Janusz Korczak, the Writer



קיטוש הקוסם

ינוש קורצ'ק

מרגנית - ספרי מופת לילדים ולנוער



LOVING  
EVERY  
CHILD

WISDOM FOR  
PARENTS

JANUSZ KORCZAK

EDITED BY SANDRA JOSEPH

FOREWORD BY ART L. GOLDMAN



KING  
MATT  
THE  
FIRST  
JANUSZ  
KORCZAK

INTRODUCTION BY  
BRIAN WATSON



ינוש קורצ'ק

המלך מתוא הק

חלק ראשון



השומ





# Janush Korczak and the Children

**Concept, writing and editing:**

**Michal Eshel**

**Sarah Cohen- Bonen**

**Yitzchak Belfer**

**English Translation:**

**Marsha Hachmon**

**Music:**

**Elad Cohen- Bonen ©**

**Video:**

**Miki Arian-Kedarya**

