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THE PEDAGOGY OF JANUSZ KORCZAK IN THE HADERA DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL: EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY REFORM IN MODERN ISRAEL

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University of Wisconsin-Madison
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degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

LIBA HANNAH ENGEL

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THE PEDAGOGY OF JANUSZ KORCZAK IN THE HADERA DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL: EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY REFORM IN MODERN ISRAEL

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Liba Hannah Engel

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

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The Pedagogy of Janusz Korczak in the Hadera Democratic School: Early Twentieth-Century Reform in Modern Israel

Liba H. Engel

Under the supervision of Herbert M. Kliebard, Emeritus Professor

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison

This study first reviews the innovative pedagogy of Janusz Korczak (1878-1942) within the European social milieu and intellectual Zeitgeist in the first half of the twentieth century, but the main part of the study examines the way in which Korczak's pedagogy is implemented in a contemporary Israeli school, the Democratic School, Hadera. The purpose of the study is to document the extent to which his pedagogical ideas survived and evolved at the Democratic School.

To investigate this problem, I conducted an on-site case study combining extended participant observation and interviews with students, faculty, and administrators of the Democratic School. Some insight into the problem may be found in research in schools with similar characteristics. Swidler (1979) studied two alternative high schools that were similar to the Democratic School in several ways. Like the Democratic

School, they grew out of grass-roots organizing by white middle-class parents, students, and teachers. They also promoted student-governance through a structure of committees, meetings, and a school council. In place of the traditional authority structure, the school staff substituted personal charisma. In Swidler's alternative schools as well as in the Democratic School, teachers shared personal and even intimate information with students, dressed and acted very informally, and took a deep interest in the students' personal lives.

Although the schools studied by Swidler voiced no commitment to Korczak's pedagogy in particular, they reflect some of Korczak's principles as well as those of his like-minded contemporaries. By contrast in the Democratic School claims a formal commitment to Korczak ideas, although it is not always clear that the teachers and students consciously see themselves as putting those ideas into practice. It is rather the institutional structures that Korczak devised, such as the Parliament and the Court of Peers, that are the most visible reminders of Korczak's legacy at the Democratic School.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS ORIGINS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

This study examines the way in which Janusz Korczak's pedagogy is reflected in a contemporary Israeli school, the Democratic School, Brandeis Forest, Hadera. The purpose of the study is to explore the extent to which the pedagogical ideas that Korczak developed in the first half of the twentieth century survived Korczak himself and are in fact implemented at the Democratic School. To investigate this question, I conducted an on-site case study, "borrowing ethnographic techniques" (Wolcott, 1982, p. 159-160).

Janusz Korczak was born Henryk Goldszmit in Warsaw, Poland on July 22, 1878. A physician, writer, lecturer, and educator, he spent much of his adult years as the director of two orphanages in Warsaw. In these orphanages, Korczak formulated and cultivated his innovative educational philosophy. When the Nazis overran Poland at the outset of World War II, Korczak relocated his Jewish orphanage within the Warsaw Ghetto where is he continued his education efforts. Korczak is perhaps best known for his final walk with his children through the Warsaw Ghetto on August 6, 1942. Destination: the gas chambers of Treblinka.

Korczak's legacy includes four contemporary schools that

claim to be based on Korczak's pedagogy: Basis Mattiysje, Amsterdam, Holland, Bet Aviv, Brussels, Belgium, The Democratic School, Hadera, Israel and The Janusz Korczak Maternal School, Vercelli, Italy. I chose to investigate Korczak's influence on the Democratic School because it is conducted in a language, Hebrew, that I read, write, and speak.

The study investigates the students' and teachers' meaning of Korczak's pedagogy in a specific contemporary school, the Democratic School. The Democratic School was founded on principles originally expounded by Korczak in the period between the two great wars, but the school exists in a different time and a vastly different social context. What accounts for the survival of Korczak's pedagogy in the Democratic School? What is it that makes an approach to education such as Korczak's thrive in the contemporary setting which appears vastly different from the setting in which Korczak developed, refined, and implemented his pedagogy?

Overview of Dissertation

Conducting a case study, emphasizing participant-observer techniques, at the Democratic School provided an opportunity for me to study Korczak's pedagogy as it went forward actively in a contemporary educational setting. As a participant

inquirer, I became part of the processes by which the actors created, negotiated, sustained and modified meaning. The findings of my inquiry are a re-construction of the processes involved in the actors' construction of meaning. An additional benefit of conducting research at the Democratic School was the accessibility of the Janusz Korczak Archives, Israel which are considered to be an outstanding collection of scholarly material. Permission to conduct the study of the Democratic School was granted by Menachem, the principal, on October 16, 1994.

To examine how Korczak's educational theory was practiced in the Democratic School, two research questions guided my inquiry. First, I examined the social conditions in Israel which could have led educators to create a school based on Korczak's pedagogical principles. In a country half a century old, one might consider Israel as a laboratory-in-democracy wherein education becomes essential for the development of its "a citizen in embryo" (Korczak, 1920/1967, p. 471).

Second, as a participant observer, I sought to discover the cultural ethos of the Democratic School by getting close to the actors as a means of understanding what their school activities mean to them. By becoming a part of the Democratic School's social setting, I learned firsthand from the actors the meanings, norms, and patterns of behavior which

contributed to the Democratic School's cultural ethos. Thus, immersion into the actors' world provided an opportunity for me to grasp what the actors experienced and considered as meaningful and important. In such a process, I attempted to uncover the imbedded meanings of Korczak's pedagogy as expressed in the cultural ethos of the Democratic School.

Like many of his contemporary twentieth century educators such as Maria Montessori, Homer Lane, A.S. Neill, and Anton Semyonovitch Makarenko, Korczak advocated an educational experience based on the child's own nature. Korczak also encouraged full development of the child by having the children become active learners who took initiative and responsibility for their education in a cooperative, self-governed environment. Within Korczak's cooperative learning laboratory, the child presumably became socialized into the democratic process. In this respect, Korczak was pursing a goal similar to some of his European contemporaries. By providing a democratic educational laboratory which fostered the child's independence, like-minded early twentieth-century innovative educators also hoped to effect a type of adult consistent with new democratic thinking, although they tended to differ somewhat in how they interpreted democracy.

Like his contemporary Montessori, Korczak trained as a pediatrician. Korczak attributed his method of educational

inquiry to his medical training. Endless observations, weight curves, development profiles, growth indices, and prognoses of somatic and psychic development provided Korczak with data to refine his innovative educational philosophy, based on his "experience at work, under given conditions, in a given terrain, with children" (Korczak, 1920/1967, p. 324). Scientific research, with the emphasis on the school as laboratory furnished the basis of Korczak's theory and practice as well as encouraged him to further his efforts to unravel the mystery of "the great synthesis of the child" or the natural development of the child and adolescent (Korczak, 1920/1967, p. 318).

Korczak's educational philosophy took shape in a period when Europe was experiencing a profound disillusionment. In many respects, that philosophy was a response to European political, social and cultural changes that were emerging during his lifetime. Like many contemporaries, Korczak hoped that the spread of self-governing schools would lead to the understanding of the democratic process which would in turn make a harmonious society possible (Lawson & Peterson, 1972).

Democracy in the Context of Europe Between the World Wars

Even before the outbreak of World War One, European society was in turmoil. Older authoritarian regimes were

beginning to give way, and a new democratic spirit was emerging. For example, in Central and Eastern Europe, there were revolutionary changes in political and social structures that affected a wide spectrum of the population including landlords, factory owners, clergymen, teachers, or fathers within their own families. In response to the discontent in Europe of the time, participation in social and political movements escalated. Socialism was one of these movements. Most prominent Socialist leaders committed themselves to a new social order while professing an abhorrence of violence, thereby keeping alive the hope of painless transition to a new democratic society. Others sought to democratize social institutions through gradual reform.

The period between 1910 and 1920 was a time of great change. The world was transformed by new industrial technology which had an impact on all sectors of European population by making life safer, cleaner, as well as more comfortable. For example, many deadly diseases had been conquered and new attention to nutrition and hygiene was resulting in increased longevity. With a lengthened life-span, persons became concerned with the quality of life and the potential of education to enhance personal and social life. The economy of such a technological era required mass elementary education or at least literacy (Hobsbawm, 1987,

p. 149). European schools were now expected to teach all children how to be citizens and even how to conduct their lives successfully (Thomson, 1964, p. 54). It was hoped that the era of new technology would help transform the world into a better place. For the most part, the meant democratic participation in the social and political arena on a scale not known heretofore.

Although the threat of war seemed imminent, some European youth did not actively want war; others desperately wanted change and were willing to risk their lives to achieve the transformation of a democratic society (Wohl, 1979). Some advocates for democracy promised changes that were based on releasing human capacities. For example, individuals would be provided with the freedom to develop to their full potential through an education designed for that purpose. Another revolutionary concept involved replacing old hierarchical relations with egalitarian principles. This notion of equality was also actively promoted by innovative educators: through equal educational opportunity, the democratic process would be strengthened. The idea being disseminated was that the better educated the electorate, the better able they would be to participate in the processes of political and social reform.

For a variety of reasons, following the conclusion of the

Great War, disillusionment became widespread in Europe. Many promised reforms such as the abolition of class barriers made by the political and social leaders did not materialize. During World War One, modern technology no longer served presumably peaceful, productive purposes. Instead the industrial might had been used to create a war whose casualties proved to be staggering: 10 million men killed, 20 million maimed or seriously wounded; 5 million widowed, 9 million orphaned, and 10 million refugees. In addition, people became disillusioned by government propaganda promising social reform that never materialized. Further, the imbalance in the European international situation was made worse by World War One. A world economic crisis of unprecedented depth shook the world and led to further discontentment.

The gap between expectation and achievement during World War One and the conclusion of World War Two widened into an abyss. The great causes such as social reform which European youth had fought for were lost. They had come home from the trenches of the Great War determined that there would be no more war, but they lost the peace. Europe's industrial equipment no longer served productive purposes. Europe's technological leadership could no longer be equated with morality or cultural superiority. According to Henry Pachter (1975, p. 263), European civilization was simply bankrupt.

Many now looked to education reform as a way of reviving the democratic dream.

Democracy and Schooling

Calls for a more democratic form of education are once again being heard. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, concern for democratic education once again lies at the core of our commitment to democracy. This new democratic education is built upon the ideal of citizens sharing the responsibility of determining the future of democratic society, a society based on individual initiative and cooperation and where every citizen is supposed to participate in the conduct of affairs of common interest such as education. Equality of education for every citizen supplies the foundations upon which a democratic society, based on civic and political freedom, can function and progress. In this way, education becomes empowering for all students.

Equality of educational opportunity is not to be interpreted as sameness of treatment. Instead, democratic education rests in the belief that every child be provided with learning experiences which strengthen individuality and at the same time build social cohesion. John Dewey, for example, an American contemporary of Korczak's, established the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, based on

the possibility of creating a "miniature community, an embryonic society" (1916/1974, p. 303). Under Dewey's leadership from 1896 to 1904, The Laboratory School, like contemporary experimental schools, functioned as an embryonic democratic society because it elicited a commitment to democratic social values and cultivated prototypically democratic virtues such as cooperation and social renewal. The Laboratory School is an example of an internally democratic school which balanced the participatory and the disciplinary purposes of education. Typically internally democratic schools balance student participation, including much of the planning of their own learning, with authority of the teachers and administrators who determine significant educational decisions such as the content of the curriculum and the standards for promotion.

If, as Dewey (1916/1966) argued, a democratic society requires that citizens have "a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder" (p. 99), then a substantial degree of democratic governance seems necessary to creating democratic citizens. Education as democracy gives students access to social understanding which is developed based on the experience of participation in a pluralistic community, through mutual decision-making. Certain bold

educational experiments in Europe between the wars were designed explicitly to foster some of those democratic ideas, and they provide a backdrop to the work of Korczak.

European Innovative Educators and Their Experimental Schools: Between the World Wars

In the section that follows, the ideas of four contemporaries of Korczak's, Marie Montessori, Homer Lane, Anton Makarenko, and A.S. Neill, are presented as representative of the kind of experimental pedagogy that was taking root in Europe in the period between the wars. The purpose of this section is to link Korczak's pedagogical ideas to his European context and to help situate him in the context of pedagogical reformers of his time. These experimental pedagogues understood education to be an integral part of the construction of a new democratic society and maintained a confidence in the ability of education, properly conceived, to encourage future citizens to take an active, responsible role in the development of the new progressive democratic order. In some respects, the schools they founded differ considerably, but they all sought to encourage in one form or another, the participation of students in their own learning and governance. It was assumed that a measure of self-governance would be critical in instilling a democratic way of

thinking.

All four of these experimental educators, also sought to escape the influence of corrupt social institutions by an appeal to the natural order of development in the child. In this regard, careful observation and recording of children's behavior at different developmental stages, provided the scientific data necessary to create new schools based on child and adolescent development and the nature of learning. Like some American child-centered schools, these European experimental schools were designed to harmonize with the child's interests, needs and learning patterns. In this way the natural powers within the child would be released. While the emphasis on child growth and development differed from the emphasis on democratic self-governance, it was not inconsistent with it.

In addition to providing opportunities that allowed each child to develop his or her innate gifts, the new schools often incorporated a judicial and legislative system wherein the characteristics of initiative, independence, and resourcefulness could be nurtured. Such participation provided an opportunity for the members of the innovative schools to gain the confidence to act and think for themselves. Participation in self-governance was designed to provide a better understanding of the democratic process. In

this way, creative self-expression and participation in democratic governance were blended.

Maria Montessori's Casa Dei Bambini

Like other experimental educators of her generation, Maria Montessori (1870-1952), believed it was necessary radically to change traditional education in order to create the sort of person capable of establishing a new democratic order (Montessori, 1949/1972, p. 23). Montessori's pedagogical ideas evolved into what became known as The Montessori Method which was based on what she thought were the principles of modern science. On January 6, 1907, in the slum-ridden San Lorenzo district of Rome, Montessori opened Casa dei Bambini (The Children's Home) for children between the ages of three and seven. Casa dei Bambini provided an experimental laboratory in which scientific observation allowed her to conclude that children's development, including education, was a gradual and 'natural' process. Montessori defined education as the active interaction by the human individual with a carefully designed environment.

According to Montessori, education needed to develop a child's initiative, independence, individuality, and self-direction; self-determination replaced obedience and dependence. Multi-age grouping, according to Montessori,

provided an opportunity for a child to cooperate and share, thereby fostering responsibility, caring and unselfishness, attributes she considered necessary for the evolution of a self-determined individual. Montessori claimed such attributes were consistent and necessary for the new democratic citizen.

According to Rex Lohmann (1988), there is little research to substantiate Montessori's assertions; however, he believes that the Montessori Method provided "the means for both social growth and individual growth which leads to confident and responsible participation in a democratic culture" (p. 6). For example, the use of specially constructed didactic apparatus materials were designed to lead to confidence and self-control. Confidence and self-control presumably enabled an individual to become an active, creative participant in the democratic process.

According to Jane Roland Martin (1992), the Montessori Method stresses the very essence of democracy. In a home learning environment imbued with "care, concern, and connection" (p. 34), childrens' individuality is recognized and nurtured. Children also feel connected to one another and concerned about their welfare. Individual self-determination replaces obedience in the traditional school. Citizens nurtured in an ideal home environment will do what needs to be

done to maintain, improve, and enhance everyone's lives.

Natural development, according to Montessori, occurred in successive levels or stages of independence and self-regulation known as "sensitive periods." "Sensitive periods" correspond to specific ages when a child's interest and mental capacity are particularly receptive to certain stimuli or didactic approach. Montessori contended that "it is necessary to offer those exercises which correspond to the need of development felt by an organism (1911/1964, p. 358)." Therefore, the educator trained in the Montessori Method observed much in an effort to facilitate the awakening of the child's intellectual life which is dependent on Montessori's didactic apparatus. Repetition of a didactic exercise, according to Montessori, leads to self-development, the external sign of which is self-discipline.

Homer Lane's Little Commonwealth

Democratic self-governance was much more visible in Homer Lane's (1876-1925) educational methods for delinquent youth than in Montessori's. Self-governance, according to Lane, actually defined the educational process. Members of Lane's Little Commonwealth (1913-1918) were delinquent children and adolescents, born and reared in city slums, most of whom were over the age of fourteen and under eighteen; the population

never exceeded forty. The Little Commonwealth, a democratic self-governing community, was based on Lane's (1949) faith in the innate goodness of children as well as their ability to devise creative solutions to their problems. Goodness, according to Lane (1949), was equated with being true to one's inner law which guided a person's progress toward "the perfection of the universe" (p. 196). Lane developed "a living community" (Bazeley, 1928, p. 8), a micro-universe, wherein children initiated the methods that governed their individual and social development. For example, weekly General Meetings provided an opportunity for adult and child to cooperate in the decision-making process concerning academic and social policy; however, voting privileges were extended only to children fourteen years or older. The legislative body ran the weekly General Meetings. Motions were brought up, seconded, and voted on. The approved motions became policy. An example of such a rule is 'one week shall elapse after resignation of an officer before action shall be taken on the resignation' (Wills, 1964, p. 138). Offices were held for six months. The two most important offices were those of Chairman of the Legislative and Judge of the Judicial Meeting; there were also offices of Clerk and of Treasurer. Elections were bi-annual.

Another example of democratic self-governance at the

Little Commonwealth was the Citizens' Court which was presided over by an elected judge. The judge could also use power of contempt of court for anyone declared out of order during a hearing. Lane himself was once ordered out for being in contempt of court. The most severe punishment appears to have been "close bounds" (p. 137) which was automatically inflicted on any person who lost their job. Members on "close bounds" were not allowed beyond the courtyard; during working hours, members were not allowed out of the courtyard.

A third aspect of democratic self-governance at the Little Commonwealth was its working life. Due to economic necessity, work rather than schooling became the basis of the Little Commonwealth's self-governance (Bazeley, 1928, p. 80). In this way, the life of each individual child was inseparably bound up with the work of the community. Each child was responsible for contributing to keeping the community solvent as well as supporting him or herself by paying for food, clothing and recreation.

Like other early twentieth century experimental educators, Lane sought to respect the child's natural pattern of development. In Talks to Parents and Teachers (1949), Lane outlined four stages of child development which included "infancy", the first three years; "the age of imagination", the

third to seventh years; "the age of self-assertion", the seventh to eleventh years; and "the age of loyalty", transition from the eleventh to fourteenth years and then adolescence until about the seventeenth year. Lane looked to the child to initiate the methods that govern his or her development. Thus, Lane's understanding of the natural order of child development, together with his deep belief in the innate goodness of children, worked in tandem to create Little Commonwealth. Most of the members of the Little Commonwealth were, according to Lane's stages of development, in "the age of loyalty", and wherein the social and co-operative instincts are primary. According to Lane, at such a stage, self-governance is an appropriate educational tool to employ, provided that the choices are of interest to the child. Such choices include Lane suggestion that the responsibility for a course syllabus and the allotment of time to the parts of it ought to be a co-operative, group effort which should be discussed and decided on by the student body of a particular class.

In an effort to assist character and personality development of the child reared in the Little Commonwealth, Lane redefined the role of the teacher. The relationship between teacher and student was one of "pure democracy" (Lane, 1949, p. 122). The teacher renounced his or her authoritarian position, replacing it with "being on the side of the child"

(p. 8) which Lane explained to be love or the ability to interact with the child so that the child feels the adult loves him or her and approve of him or her.

Anton Makarenko's Gorky Colony

Democracy for Anton Semyonovitch Makarenko (1888-1939) meant something different from other European experimental educators. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Makarenko expressed the need for shaping the orphan to a particular pattern, "The New Soviet Man", based on the laws of social development of the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. For example, in conformance with Communist doctrine which emphasized the breaking of the influence of the corrupt social institutions associated with the old order, Makarenko transplanted the *besprizorniki* (orphans) into 'educational collectives'.

Makarenko described Maxim Gorky Colony (1920-1928), a 'educational collective', in what has become known as his magnum opus, The Road to Life (1951/1973). Maxim Gorky Colony was created as an autonomous, self-governing educational institution for *besprizorniki* or youth left homeless due to World War I, the Russian Revolution, and Civil War. According to Makarenko, the collective environment provided the necessary conditions which would enable the *besprizorniki* to work at

social self-education, thereby transforming them into contributing members of Communist Soviet society.

In The Road to Life (1951/1973), Makarenko delineated Gorky Colony as the ideal environment for nurturing the "New Soviet Man", a human being imbued with ideals such as mutual responsibility and collective governance. The self-governing Gorky Colony was in effect a mini-society, a model of Communist society wherein the individual *besprizornik* developed his or her personality, qualities, aptitudes, and abilities as well as experienced the relationship between him or herself and the new society (Zilberman, 1988, p. 42). In addition to the classroom, educational activities such as participation in the General Assembly which took place outside of the traditional classroom, contributing to the development of the individual *besprizornik* within the cohesiveness of the group.

Although self-governance was essential to the functioning of the Gorky Colony, its form was Marxist. For example, although each *besprizornik* was given one vote in the General Assembly, at times, in an effort to influence an important vote, propaganda techniques including indoctrination and "programmed guidance" were used (Cohen, 1994, p. 307). Another example of Marxist influence was Makarenko's introduction of challenging situations for Gorky Colony to keep the group moving forward toward an ideal which he had drawn from the

revolutionary movement. The challenges arose from Makarenko's own interpretation of the needs of the group rather than from the group itself (Bowen, 1962, p. 103).

The life of Gorky Colony included relationships and types of activities that were typical of the Marxist version of democratic society (Filonov, 1994, p. 81). For example, the collective fostered communal relationships by granting the individual *besprizornik* rights such as the right of a young and weak *besprizornik* to be protected from the older and stronger *besprizorniki*. Another example of democratic activities included *besprizorniki* participation in the self-governance of Gorky Colony. This included membership in permanent work detachments to which each *besprizornik* belonged. They were presided over by a boy chosen by election, called a commander, mixed detachments or *ad hoc* committees, and the commanders' council which functioned as the main executive body with Makarenko as the ex-officio chairman. The position of commander of the mixed, temporary detachments rotated providing an opportunity to become leaders. In addition, Makarenko created individualized *besprizornik* assignments, "selected with regard to the uniqueness and potentialities of each individual" (Gordon, 1978, p. 79). Thus, the integrity and identity of the individual *besprizornik* was fostered through their democratic

participation in the construction of the communal experience, Gorky Colony.

Work provided a cohesive basis for the Gorky Colony. In conjunction with the teachings of Lenin, Makarenko coordinated classroom teaching with work on behalf of the common work of the people (Monoszon, 1978, p. 18). Socially useful work, according to Makarenko, facilitated the development of a Socialist consciousness as well as the development of joyful respect for and obedience to authoritative leadership. *Besprizorniki* were responsible for their own work activities including the distribution of profits, setting wages, and the organization of consumption. By participating in cooperative activities such as labor, Makarenko believed the *besprizornik* would acquire an appreciation and willingness to enter into the larger society's communist mode of life.

According to Makarenko, discipline was the result of "correct education" (Yarmachenko, 1978, p. 90). In Makarenko's educational system, the virtues of duty and discipline took the place of "interest" of other contemporary experimental educators. The needs of the group were transmitted to the individual members of the group, who in turn took on themselves the responsibility of meeting these needs, thereby disciplining themselves. Thus, "peer pressure" from the collective contributed to discipline processes, the individual acted in accordance with the collective's policy.

Although Gorky Colony was impelled by a different social vision from Lane's Little Commonwealth, both schools sought to mold a model future citizen by providing appropriate experience in self-governance.

A.S. Neill's Summerhill

In 1927, Alexander Sutherland Neill (1883-1973) moved Summerhill to its permanent home in Leiston, Suffolk. Summerhill was a private, co-educational, democratic self-governing boarding school, whose population was multi-national. For the most part, only well-to-do parents could afford to send their children to Summerhill (Stewart, 1968, p. 300). In this respect, Neill's work differed from Montessori, Lane, and Makarenko who drew their populations from the lower rungs of the social order. He also was reluctant to enunciate a specific social idealogy. A.S. Neill (1960) held since the aim of life is to find happiness, "My primary job is not the reformation of the society but the bringing of happiness to some few children" (pp. 23-24).

Summerhill's, student body comprised about forty-five boys and girls, ages four through sixteen. Neill believed that children would be able to resolve most of their difficulties themselves. To Neill, that process of resolution defined education as a continuous process of self-creation. A child's self-creation at Summerhill was bound by Neill's axiom

(1960): he or she could do as they pleased as long as it was neither dangerous to him or herself nor annoying the freedom of others.

Summerhill had a life and purpose of its own (Stewart, 1968, p. 292). Neill accepted Lane's fundamental premise of "being on the side of the child", but Summerhill also was designed to foster a democratic "way of life" (Hemmings, 1972, p. 174), organized around rearing happy children and developing communal relationships. In Summerhill, the rights of the individual child were bound by the demands of the democratic, self-governing society (Neill, 1972). A child's actions in the pursuit of freedom could be interfered with by the community if said actions encroached upon the freedom of others. Thus, if Jason throws rocks which may endanger others, other children have the responsibility to stop him. In doing so, according to Neill, the children undergo a lesson in social education: So long as Jason is interfering with the freedom of others, the crowd is within its rights to restrain him.

Within the democratic context of Summerhill, student participation in activities such as the weekly General Assembly Meeting facilitated their development of characteristics such as acceptance of others, cooperation, justice, and sincerity as well as provided first hand experience with democracy. Neill (1960) claimed that the

educational benefit of "practical civics" (p. 55), known as the weekly General School Meeting, was of more value than a week's curriculum of courses. A genuine democracy, according to Neill, included relationships in which adults and children enjoyed equal status. As equals, adults were available to facilitate the natural development of the child but did not set the standards. In such an environment, Neill believed the child could attain an education whose end result would be a happy, balanced adult.

Summerhill provided self-governance designed to facilitate experience with democracy and justice as well as communal responsibilities. According to Neill (1993), democracy should not wait until the age of voting; self-governance was of 'infinite value'. Like other experimental schools, Summerhill's self-governing community tried to balance the rights of the individual and the community. Each member of the community, whether five or eighty-four, was permitted one vote in the weekly General Assembly Meeting wherein school and social policy was suggested, discussed, and voted on (Neill, 1967, p. 37). Adult and child alike were subject to the rules passed by the General Assembly Meeting. According to Ray Hemmings (1972), the rules made by the children were "sacred to one another" (p. 76). Such high regard for their peers' rules led to greater observance of Summerhill's rules and regulations by the children.

Punishment for breaking the rules resulted in fines. The General Assembly Meeting provided an arena for practical experience for cooperation, justice, public speaking, and personal development and socialization. The General Assembly Meeting helped create a self-governing democratic community spirit whose ultimate test of success was happiness of the individuals.

To Neill (1960), happiness, the aim of life, could be found through "true interest" (p. 24). In an atmosphere of love, joy, and complete approval, Summerhill provided an experience of democratic, self-governance. A happy childhood, suggested Neill, was the basis for a happy adulthood imbued with self-reliance, self-respect, assertiveness, and independence (Neill, 1920). Neill offered no prescription for basic general education. He (1960) maintained that all children are "innately wise and realistic" (p. 4) and therefore, able to accept responsibility for their independence, their actions, as well as their academic and emotional development. Although Summerhill is often associated with the idea that children were simply allowed to do as they please (classes were optional), Neill actually was aiming to create a model community and a model citizen. Like Montessori, Makarenko, and Lane, he tried to provide the basis for self-discipline providing them with the opportunity to govern themselves in a school setting.

European Innovative Educators and Their Experimental Schools

Educational innovators such as Montessori, Lane, Makarenko, and Neill provided an alternative response to authoritarian control as the basis of running a school. They assumed education to be an instrument of progressive change which could bring about a "new world". Their schools sought to imbue the "new man" with characteristics of cooperation, activism, and a tenacious searching and experimenting. Their schools incorporated a miniature community in the interest of building new social and political order. Varying definitions of the new social and political order resulted in an assortment of experimental schools. Montessori envisioned a new social order through the release of human potentialities. A child educated by The Montessori Method would be self-directive as well as possess the vision to shape humanity's destiny. Lane developed "a living community", a micro-universe wherein members gained experience in the methods of democratic self-governance. Makarenko molded his students to meet the needs of the needs of Communism. Neill's cure for the sickness of society was allowing freedom for children to be themselves and to govern themselves. The development of character, suggested Neill, was more important than the ability to learn facts and figures.

Reverence for the child was central to these experimental

educators. In different ways, they all sought to respect the child's natural order of development. The Montessori Method is based on belief in the child's creative potential, his or her drive to learn, and the child's right to be treated as an individual. In The Little Commonwealth, Lane was always "on the side of the child". He respected the child to the point that he looked to him or her to initiate methods in keeping with the child's development. In addition, Lane claimed the children's experience of providing for themselves contributed to a "good society". Makarenko was guided by Gorky's optimistic belief that in all men lies potential good. He refused to view any of the children in Gorky Colony as disturbed or delinquent. The chief feature of Summerhill is self-governance but individual happiness was the ultimate goal. Everyone had equal rights, including had the opportunity to speak as well as vote at the parliament. The students are both ego-conscious and at the same time, community-conscious.

While it is difficult to create sweeping generalizations that apply to all of them, all four of these experimental educators had in common the assumption that education was the key to the attainment of democratic ideals. This would be achieved not so much by instructing them directly in these ideals as by creating a democratic school environment. These experimental educators, in varying degrees, were seeking to

create a lived democracy in a school setting. In part, this entailed respecting each child's distinctive individuality by attending to their natural order of development, but it also meant creating a sense of group solidarity through direct participation in decision-making and governance.

In general, these were also the bases which Korczak built his own experimental schools. While there are obvious differences, Korczak was influenced by the same ideals that lay behind the work of Montessori, Lane, Makarenko, and Neill. In a sense these ideas were part of a European *Zeitgeist* that included a fundamentally optimistic view of human nature and a belief in the power of education to nurture and develop human capacity to the fullest. Out of the disillusionment that followed in the wake of World War One came the belief that a new education could address the failures in the human spirit that the War exposed. Under the right circumstances, a new democratic order would emerge out of a new education.

CHAPTER TWO

JANUSZ KORCZAK'S PEDAGOGY: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It was in the context of growing educational experimentation as well as political and social instability that Janusz Korczak (1878-1942) developed his own distinctive pedagogy. Like his fellow experimental educators who looked to education reform as a way of realizing a democratic society, Korczak advocated experimental schools wherein students were engaged in educational activities of interest and which also promoted democratic participation. While Korczak's educational philosophy has its own unique identity, it is in significant ways consistent with other experimental educators such as Maria Montessori, Homer Lane, Anton Makarenko, and A.S. Neill. He was part of a new wave of pedagogical reform that was sweeping Europe in the period between the two World Wars.

Biographical Sketch

Like other early twentieth century experimental educators, Korczak encouraged independent decision-making in the child. Orphans Home (1912-1942) and Our Home (1919-1942) were created as co-operative, self-governed environments where children actively participated in the Code of the Court of

Peers, the Court of Peers, the Children's Parliament, work, and the children's newspaper. The children in Korczak's Orphans Home and Our Home were Jewish orphans and orphans of Polish workers, respectively, who were admitted at the age of seven, staying until the completion of seventh grade.

A pediatrician by training, Korczak (1920/1967) believed that he could integrate his interests of pedagogy and medicine. "What a fever, cough, or nausea is for the physician," he once said, "so a smile, a tear, or a blush should be for the educator" (p. 3). Pedagogy provided an opportunity to nurture the whole child whereas medicine was limited to curing the concerned sick child. Based on the medical model, Korczak's "science of teaching" (ibid.) included observation in the classroom which was transformed into a research center as well as an educational institution. Solutions for pedagogical problems, according to Korczak, could be derived from a variety of disciplines including psychology, medicine, physiology, nutrition, sociology, ethnology, history, poetry, and criminology (p. 481).

Korczak's war experiences influenced his choice of career. As a field physician in World War One and the Polish-Soviet War in 1920, Korczak gravitated toward abandoned war orphans. In addition, he began to formulate a key element of his

philosophy: no matter what the cause, no war was worth the disruption of the lives of innocent children (Lifton, 1988, p. 42). From 1909 to 1915, Korczak was associated with the Flying University which later became known as the Polish Free University, an underground college dedicated to keeping alive Polish culture and history then being threatened by Imperial Russia.

In 1934, Korczak initiated a radio program called "The Old Doctor" in which he told stories to children and had conversations with callers, both children and adults, concerning a variety of topics. Due to the acceleration of anti-Semitism in 1939, "The Old Doctor" was discontinued.

The evolution of Korczak's pedagogical philosophy was paved with effort, pain, research, and study. While in medical school, he volunteered his services to the Summer Camps Society, where for the first time he observed children outside of the hospital environment. The experience of working at the Markiewicz summer camp for poor boys, Michalowka, located eighty miles from Warsaw, provided Korczak with the opportunity to observe children in a natural children's laboratory. His (1910) humorous and moving book about his experiences, <u>Moshki, Josjki, and Srule</u> (diminutives of typical Jewish names), describes his preliminary introduction to what he refers to as "the mystery of the

collective soul of a children's community" (Korczak 1920/1967, p. 341). Despite Korczak's years of tutoring and textbook knowledge of child psychology, within four weeks, he was baffled by the ability of his thirty campers to create a cooperative community. The children's community initiated Korczak (1920/1967) into "the alphabet of educational practice" (p. 331), including the need to collaborate and deal with the individual child as well as with a group of children and the development of supervisory skills. Dialogue between adult and child, according to Binczycka (1997), would enable "the fulfillment of one of the most important rights - the right of the child to respect . . . 'to be what he is'" (p. 132).

In Jozki, Jaski, and Franki (1911), Korczak further explored his pedagogical innovations such as a children's newspaper, peer mentoring, and a children's court in a Catholic summer camp for boys, Wilhelmowka in Szczawin village. Korczak used easy words in the summer camp newspaper, for example, because he knew the children of the Jewish Poor had difficulty in mastering the Polish language (Cohen, 1994, p. 263). Peer mentoring included the boys' assessing their own as well as each other's behavior in an effort to help monitor behavior. Once a week, the boys were asked to grade their own and each other's behavior, rather

than be monitored by their counselor. Setting up a children's court proved to be more of a challenge. While Korczak expected the campers to be enthusiastic about their court of peers, the opposite occurred. The children could not grasp that suing someone in court was more effective than punching or hitting. After Korczak sued some rule breakers, the concept of the peer court caught on. He carefully recorded the trials and the children's responses. As Korczak helped the Jozkis work through their struggles, he was reminded of the struggles of his Moshkis and looked for the similarities among children rather than the differences.

Orphans Home and Our Home were founded on the radical principle that orphanages could serve as truly educative institutions, as "schools of life" (Falkowska, 1997, p. 183). From 1912-1942, while directing the Orphans Home, Korczak sought to refine his pedagogy. Prior to this time, orphanages were merely warehouses for the unwanted children. In such an institution, a child could, at best, learn a trade. In contrast, Korczak's orphanages provided a varied and extensive educational environment including proper nutrition. He also observed that it is impossible to educate a hungry child. Nutritious food, he insisted, must also be palatable.

On November 29, 1940, due to a Nazi edict, Orphans Home relocated inside the Warsaw Ghetto where Korczak held

pedagogic seminars for the teachers and directors of the Ghetto's new schools. Orphans Home served two hundred of the Ghetto's fifty thousand elementary-school age children. Children's Republic, (the name given to Korczak's pedagogical experiments) continued to thrive as an inventive educational experiment. On July 18, 1942, for example, Korczak's children performed *The Post Office*, a play by the Indian poet and innovative educator, Rabindranath Tagore. In the play, Amal, a dying child, orphaned and adopted by a poor couple, is confined to his room due to a serious illness. Longing to go to a land which no one knows, Amal believes the Village Headman when he pretends to read the letter from the King, who promises to arrive soon. The King's doctor arrives, demanding that all of the windows and doors in Amal's room be opened. Consequently, Amal declares that his pain has vanished, whereupon he falls asleep while waiting for the King to arrive. Sudah, the flower girl and Amal's friend, stops by to ask when Amal will awaken. The doctor replies, "As soon as the King comes and calls him." The curtain falls. It is likely that Korczak chose Tagore's play as a means of helping the children accept death.

On August 6, 1942, together with 200 orphans under his care and staff, Korczak walked with quiet dignity to the Umschlagplatz, to the trains which took them to the gas

chambers of Treblinka. So ended Janusz Korczak's nearly 30 years of pedagogical experiments at Children's Republic. He perished without fully expounding his pedagogy which remains scattered in a wide range of writings.

Interpretations of Korczak's Pedagogy

Despite Korczak's premature death and the difficulty of encapsulating his educational philosophy, interest in Korczak's education philosophy has intensified in recent years (Lewin, 1997, p. 16).

Reading Korczak is no easy matter. Joseph Arnon (1973), an educator in Orphans Home, contends Korczak's writings are, "both in content and form, suffused with a surrealistic atmosphere that combined the most realistic regard for exactitude and detail with the most dreamlike, imaginative and suggestive states" (p. 32). In <u>When I am Little Again</u> (1925/1992), for example, Korczak reveals the world of children when he is a grown-up. He returns to and describes the prison-like conditions of a traditional elementary school where teacners punished a student by pulling his or her ears, "I was very small then, I remember . . . . And I feel everything anew" (Korczak, 1925/1992, p. 27). Lifton (1988) suggests that he "speaks mystically" (p. 80), comparing the child to a piece of parchment filled with hieroglyphs, only

some of which the adult decipher. Edwin Kulawiec (1979) refers to Korczak as a poet whose writings leave much to the interpretation and imagination of the reader. In particular, Kulawiec notes that How To Love A Child (Korczak, 1920/1967), a study of child growth and development from birth through adolescence, was not written in a scientific, analytical manner but more as a poetic essay, with Korczak's poetic subtle nuances involved in the process of human change. Sven Hartman (1994) contends that Korczak's education theory lends itself to several different interpretations. Hartman characterizes himself as an educator who reads Korczak's texts as a possibility of gaining new insights in his own empirical work. In Recollections and Reflections, Bettelheim (1990) maintains that Korczak's writings are "aphoristic in nature (p. 198)". Korczak believed that any systematic treatment of subjects such as how an adult ought to relate to and come to understand children; how an adult ought to treat and educate them; and most important of all, how an adult ought to respect and love children tends to become abstract, thereby doing injustice to the ever-changing expressions of children's vitality.

Essential to understanding the interpretation of Korczak's pedagogy is the fact that his life story and pedagogy are

intertwined. As Lifton (1988) observes, one key aspect of Korczak's pedagogy involves making moral decisions. Making moral decisions was an integral part of Korczak's life history beginning with his first moral decision at the age of five when he confided to his grandmother his bold scheme to remake the world by throwing away with all money; how and what to do next, Korczak had no idea. The goal was clear: to fix things so that there would be no more dirty or hungry children. Korczak's most well-known moral decision, to remain with his 200 children, allowed him to step into legend as he prepared his two hundred orphans for their final walk. For Korczak, moral decisions are important in the process of creating a world where children will no longer be oppressed and without rights. The child will be treated seriously; his or her advice sought after by adults.

Tadeusz Lewowicki (1987), the current director of Orphans Home, and Aleksander Lewin (1997) explain that Korczak chose to work as an educator rather than a physician because as an educator, he felt he had greater opportunities for influencing individuals as well as acting upon the Jewish concept of 'Tikun Olum', fixing the world in an effort make it a better place to live in. While medicine might be able to prevent and cure illnesses, Korczak believed medicine could not turn people

into better individuals. Therefore, he chose to work as an educator which would allow him more opportunities for positively influencing individuals, and consequently for better and advancing world citizenry (Lewowicki, 1987, p. 145). Adir Cohen (1994, p. 31) agrees with Lewowicki's assessment. Educational reform based on an individual's physical, social, and mental development whose consequence could result in the bettering of society-at-large. An example of such educational reform would be the student's active participation in determining his or her own educational path. According to Larry Brendtro and Denise Hinders (1990), When I Am Little Again (Korczak, 1925/1992) contains the germ of Korczak's pedagogical philosophy: educational reform will transform society into democracy. For example, oppressive schools where children were given severe corporal punishment would be replaced by experimental schools where adults would be sensitive to children's complexities as well as treated them as people of worth.

As an educator, Korczak was skeptical of educational "recipes" and prescriptions. Alicia Szlazakow (1978) maintains that Korczak "only indicated the general directions of action, general principles which should be adapted (p. 64)". In other words, Korczak regarded education as an individual, creative,

and dynamic process which is also dependent on place, time, and environmental conditions. Regarding Korczak's educational "system", in Mister Doctor, Hannah Mortkowicz-Olczakowa (1965) writes that Korczak said, "we give no prescription" (p. 111). Cohen (1994) also portrays Korczak's "system" as a dynamic process, one in which no hard and fast fixed rules should be formulated. Korczak, according to Cohen, viewed the educational process as experimental, changing as the situation merited. Continual scientific experimentation provided the basis for Korczak's "system".

Studies of Korczak vary in their interpretation of Korczak's educational philosophy. According to Cohen, the aim of Korczak's pedagogy was to develop fully the emotional and intellectual side of the child. In contrast, in an essay published on the occasion of the International Year of the Child 1979, Rhea Magnes (1979, p. 10) claims that Korczak's entire theory of education was an attempt to develop the child's independence. Such autonomy would free the child from being dependent on others. In an essay "The Implementation of a Philosophy in Education", Reiter et al. (1990) agree with Magnes' interpretation of the aim of Korczak's pedagogy: to provide meaningful personal and interpersonal educational experiences within an appropriate environment, so that every

child is enabled to express his or her competencies and interests while simultaneously developing his or her autonomy. Jadwiga Binczycka (1997) maintains that the essence of Korczak's method was the creation of a prototype of co-existence between adults and children based on equal rights for children. He writes "the most valuable component in Korczak's work is the description of relations between adults and children, and the accent placed on the rights of the child envisaged as a person" (p. 129). Jeanne Hersch and Volker Edlinger (1997) maintain that Korczak's foremost influence is his aspiration for individuals to recognize their humanity rather than to aspire to become angelic. They (1997) maintain that a kind of "angelicalness" leads to an illusion of innocence that anything is possible. In King Matt the First (Korczak, 1922/1986), Little Matt wanted to be king before he could read. In other words, persons must be modest and realistic in their expectations of self, others, and society.

Joseph Arnon's (1983) term for the basic premise of Korczak's "system" is pedagogical love. Pedagogical love, continues Arnon (1983), is entirely different from romantic and sentimental love of an child that "generally stems from attraction/rejection ambivalence" (p. 27). Arnon contends that Korczak understood both approaches to be inappropriate.

Consequently, Korczak developed pedagogical love which Arnon understands to be a particular kind of reliable dependence a child has on an adult. Pedagogical love is attained when the child respects and trusts the adult-educator because the adult-educator creates a "happy atmosphere and refrains from the compulsive use of authority" (ibid.). In other words, the relationship between adult-educator and child is a product of mutual understanding, trust, and caring. As adult-educator, Korczak promoted and provided an atmosphere of equality where he strove to be detached rather than emotional in his or her interaction with children. "Goodwill," he felt, "should point the way to tactful collaboration (Korczak, 1920/1967, p. 348)." Arnon (1983) maintains "love should be an accompaniment to the educator's activities but it must always be expressed concretely and through personal example (p. 27)." Thus, the good educator continually seeks to preserve and improve his or her relationship with the child. In an essay entitled, "Janusz Korczak The Extraordinary Educator-Humanist", Kulawiec (1980a) asserts that Korczak's final act of remaining with his children even in the hour of death suggests Korczak's commitment and caring that embodies Korczak's understanding of pedagogical love.

Love is indeed a major theme in Korczak's work. In The

Gate of Light, Cohen (1994) expresses Korczak's pedagogical love to be a gift. Pedagogical love may be defined as the educator's attitude and behavior toward the child which should be that of a knowledgeable adult friend to a younger companion. At all times, the educator must respect and appreciate the efforts and work of the child. In addition, the educator creates pedagogical love by involving himself or herself in the fate of the child. Thus, the educator acts as advisor, mentor, and facilitator. A dialogue develops, and a bond of trust results. Despite their differences in their understanding of pedagogical love, Cohen (1994) and Kulawiec (1995) agree that pedagogical love is based on mutual respect and cooperation between the educator and child. Cohen (1994) writes "the educator is obliged to respect . . . each child" (p. 123). Korczak envisions the child, according to Cohen, as an equal partner in the educational process characterized by cooperation and trust. In an essay "Janusz Korczak: Educator-Martyr", Kulawiec (1974) notes "the basis of his method was the unalterable right of the child to respect, . . . mutual trust and cooperation" (p. 513).

Another important aspect of Korczak's (1919/1967) "system" was freedom which he claimed was necessary for the child's

"harmonious development" (p. 250). Like Montessori, Korczak understood the child's need to have freedom of movement. In an essay "The Human Spirit as Orphan", Henryk Grynberg (1979) interprets Korczak's freedom as entailing choice and the expression of Western-type parliamentary democracy within the Children's Republic. Grynberg (1979) represents Korczak as "a fighter against any physical or psychological child abuse, and particularly against molding children in accordance with any state, religious or social class interests (p. 39)." To Korczak (1919/1967), a child was "a person born to be free (p. 250)." Similarly, Cohen (1994) believes that Korczak's definition of freedom was "derived from the basic right of the child's to respect (p. 84)." The outcome of an organized, self-governed institution such as Children's Republic facilitated individual inner freedom. Mutually agreed upon rules protected a child's rights as well as preventing anarchy. Like Cohen's interpretation of Korczak's concept of freedom (1994), Mortkowica-Olczakowa's (1965) concept of freedom describes an organized environment with rules and procedures that provide the child with an opportunity to realize his or her inner freedom, Even the physical structure of Children's Republic was designed in such a manner to "leave room for equality and freedom" (Cohen, 1994, p. 89). According to Cohen

(1994), an atmosphere of freedom permeated Children's Republic which might foster the development of a child's personality with the ability to cope with new and different situations (p. 324). Despite the differences in definition, Cohen (1994) and Grynberg (1979) are in agreement that Korczak understood individual freedom as not infringing on the rights of others.

Korczak's Methodology

Observations of children in various situations, such as performing work related tasks, followed by analysis led Korczak continually to modify his pedagogical practice (Rotem, 1997). Often Korczak's "method" began with a minor detail observed or a child's question from which he extrapolated to diversified and general problems. In the essay entitled "Helcia", Korczak (1919/1967) described his observation of Helcia, a 3 ½ year-old, in a kindergarten equipped with Montessori didactic apparatus. Based on observation and shared activities with Helcia, Korczak surmised that she was an ambitious child, accustomed to being admired and impressing others with her intelligence and allure. One morning, he observed Helcia at a task which involved matching like interchangeable letters. To Korczak, it appeared that instead of doing the work, Helcia tried to bluff her way through, insisting angrily that others

confirm that she had put the letters together correctly. Helcia did not want or seek instruction or help. He inferred from this behavior that when Helcia scribbled on paper at home, announcing she had written a word, adults simply confirmed her declaration. She was, therefore, unable to deal with adult correction.

Kulawiec (1989b) writes in an essay entitled "Yanoosh Who-o-o?": On the Discovery of Greatness" that Korczak's chief research method relied heavily on ethnographic data collection: fine, detailed descriptive data based on direct observation of children at work, at play, at chores, while they slept and so on, as well as measurements, weights, and statistical records of the development of hundreds of children, in an effort to better understand the child (p. 364). Ethnographic methodology, postulates Alicja Szlazakow (1978), was the basis for Korczak's incomplete attempt to unravel what he called the "Great Synthesis of the Child" (Korczak, n.d./1967).

Szlazakow (1978) refers to Korczak's method of data collection as the study of the "whole psychophysical phenomena", where biological, medical, psychological and pedagogical data was integrated (p. 12). An example of Korczak's research which integrated a variety of data includes a follow-up study of the 455 children who had graduated from

his home in its first twenty years, 1912-1932 (Arnon, 1973, p. 44). Findings included the fields of employment which included two 'graduates' who had become beggars, two prostitutes and three who had been convicted of theft. This example of Korczak's study emphasized his conviction as to the limitations of education. He (1920/1967, p. 309) once said,

> . . . I shall not be able to make any of the children other than what they are. A birch will stay a birch, an oak an oak, and a thistle a thistle. I may be able to rouse what is dormant in the soul but I cannot create anything.

Korczak understood the influence of a particular environment on modifying but not altering a child's basic nature.

Korczak and Social Reform

The theme of educational reform as an avenue for social change is a common thread throughout Korczak's literary works as well as his educational writings. According to Brendtro and Hinders (1990), the cornerstone of Korczak's philosophy of social education was "youth participation in self-government (p. 242)." In the epilogue entitled "Education for Justice: The Vocation of Janusz Korczak", Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) referred to Korczak's Children's Republic as the prototype of his own concept of the "just community school (p. 403)." The

Children's Republic was organized as a just society governed by the children themselves. Of particular interest to Kohlberg was the children's court which meted disciplinary action based on "understanding and on communicating the spirit of the rules and the community (p. 404)." According to Szlazakow (1978), involvement of children in the decision-making matters which concern them elevates the child's status to a person with equal rights who needed to be taken seriously. She claims that Korczak's concept of equal rights for children was consistent with social movements aimed at liberating the oppressed classes such as women and peasants. Szlazakow maintains that the ultimate goal of Korczak's pedagogy was to provide a type of education which facilitated the self-development of all children. Such development occurred within a self-governing group of children as well as during interactions with his or her teachers. In the Children's Republic, for example, children determined the citizenship rating for a new child. Each newcomer was voted on after having lived in the orphanage for a month. The children were also empowered to vote also on their adult caretakers. Both opportunities were precursors for autonomy within their own community. Voting on each newcomer provided an opportunity for community cohesion. Rather than being subject to adult judgment, the children learned to see

themselves through the eyes of their peers.

According to David Rosenthal (1978, p. 11), Korczak's pedagogy provides the child with the tools necessary for creating a society based on democratic principles. Children's Republic functioned as a community based on the principle of equality of rights, opportunity, and treatment. Problems of cooperative living, for example, were solved by children's participation in the Court of Peers, based on the Code. Active community life would fine tune processes such as cooperation and justice, creating a miniature, embryonic democratic society. Similarly, Jadwiga Kopczynska-Sikorska (1993) asserts that social conditions could be ameliorated if children were provided with conditions for a joyful childhood education. According to Kopczynska-Sikorska, Korczak understood "joyful childhood education" as a process of mutual interaction and cooperation between the educator, a highly experienced person, and the student, a lesser experienced person; however, the educator and student were of equal status. He interprets Korczak's pedagogy as based on "the child is already a man (Kopczynska-Sikorska, 1993, p. 64)" wherein the child is recognized as a equal person with rights.

In his essay "The Child in the Family", Korczak (n.d./1967) stated the fundamental assumption of his pedagogy: a child is

a complete human being, of intrinsic worth, although on a different level from that of adult. In another essay "The Boarding School", he (n.d./1967) further elaborated that there are no children, only people with different conceptual scales, different ranges of experiences, and different emotional reactions. Hence, children must be treated in a fair and responsible manner. Further, the child is not just something to be molded into an adult (Grynberg, 1979, p. 39). Korczak understood the child to be a seed complete with a genetic code. The image of a child as a seed emphasizes the spontaneous, inner values that a human being brings with him or her into this world (Bereday, 1979). Because the child comes with such inner values, it is impossible for the educator to expect nor would it be appropriate to desire total submission from the student. According to Magnes (1979), children were thought to be rational and creative beings, capable of achieving self-control and making decisions.

Janusz Korczak's Major Works

Among his 1000 publications, Korczak's major works include How to Love a Child (Part I: 1919/1967; Part II: 1920/1967), King Matt the First (1922/1986), When I Am Little Again (1926/1992), The Child's Right to Respect (1925/1992), and The

Ghetto Diary (1957/1978). An analysis of his works helps bring his pedagogy into focus.

Korczak formulated his pedagogy at a time that corresponded to burgeoning interest in child development. Prior to this time, childhood was believed to be preparation for adulthood. In his essay "The Child in the Family", Korczak (n.d./1967) explained that children were not seen "just as we were unable to see the woman, the peasant, the oppressed social strata and oppressed peoples (p. 165)." Children were not recognized by adults because their earnings were inconsequential. Consequently, children had to yield to the demands of adults on whom they were dependent. In contrast, Korczak advocates the importance of the child and childhood, demanding indelible rights for the child such as the child's right to the present and the right of the child to be what he is. He maintains that children possess not only common sense but human volition which merit serious consideration. In "The Boarding School", Korczak (n.d./1967) states "there are no child, just people, but with different conceptual scale, different range of experience, different urges, different emotional reactions" (p. 248).

Korczak sought to avoid a reputation as "a witch doctor" (Korczak, 1924/1967, p. 532) that is, someone who could perform miracles. Rather, as an educator, he maintained that he was

incapable of removing earlier childhood scars and wounds and therefore understood the limitations of education (Korczak, n.d./1967, 1924/1967, 1926/1967). In his essay entitled, "The Little Brigand", Korczak (1924/1967) articulated the conditions, "light and warmth, freedom and joy of life (p. 532)" which he hypothesized would enable the child to begin the self-improvement process.

Governing Structures in Korczak's Orphanages

Of particular importance in realizing Korczak's pedagogy were the governing structures that he devised. The process of self-improvement was centered in Children's Republic, wherein children experienced the conditions and laws of social relationships necessary to create a democratic, self-governed community. Korczak and the children wrote and agreed upon the rules governing the internal life of Children's Republic. Self-governance provided the organization and rules regulating Children's Republic consisted of: the Children's Parliament, the Judicial Board, the Court of Peers guided by the Code, and work.

The Children's Parliament was composed of twenty elected deputies (Korczak, 1920/1967, p. 458). All were entitled to vote but candidacy was restricted to those who had not been

tried for dishonesty; however the dishonest were granted the right to rehabilitation thereby providing motivation for the child to modify his or her inappropriate behavior. Five votes were considered a constituency; any candidate receiving four votes was elected.

The Children's Parliament concerned itself with the general, educational, and ethical issues of running of Children's Republic. Important tasks such as the admission of new children and the release of older children as well as staff members depended on the vote of the Children's Parliament. In addition, it declared special holidays such as the first day of snow "Tobogganing Day" and granted the right to issue memorial cards such as a farewell "forget-me-not" card (See Chapter Five) which is the last issue card bearing the signatures of all the children and teachers. Delegates also confirmed or rejected laws drafted by the Judicial Board.

The Children's Parliament as instrument of self-governance is further developed in the parable, King Matt the First (1922/1986). Following the death of both his parents, King Matt, a child-king struggles to create a utopian society with just laws for children as well as adults. King Matt originates reforms by creating two parliaments, one for adults and the other for children. The Children's Parliament was identical to

the Adults' Parliament except that the door handles were lower, enabling the littlest delegates to open the doors themselves; the chairs were low, so their legs would not dangle in the air and the windows were lower, too, so the children could look outside if a meeting was not too interesting. Delegates to the Children's Parliament, which served as a children's forum to voice their concerns, were elected by children.

In King Matt the First (1922/1986), a principal concern of the elected children's delegates was educational reform. In an effort to help adults appreciate the unfairness of the educational process, such as being sent to the cloakroom or standing in the corner, delegates of the Children's' Parliament voted to send grown-ups to school while children went to work. In an effort to formulate an educational system which adult and child deemed fair, a subcommittee was formed which studied the school experiences of children and grown-ups alike.

In the Children's Republic, the Judicial Board gathered once a week and provided the children with the opportunity to learn what conditions and rules were needed for living together peacefully. The Judicial Board consisted of one instructor and two judges elected by secret ballot for a period of three months. The purpose of the Board was to mediate the most difficult cases as well as propose legislation.

Like the Judicial Board in the Children's Republic, the Court of Peers met once a week. Judges were appointed by lottery. All lots drawn were of those who did not have a case brought against them. Five judges were appointed to try fifty cases. Korczak deemed the Court of Peers to be the nucleus of emancipation for children as it provided a forum in which they could be taken seriously and fairly judged by peers. Until the creation of the courts, the child was dependent on the teacher's discretion. In "The Children's Home", Korczak (1920/1967), defined the Court of Peers as that branch of the self-governing infrastructure that defended the timid, the conscientious and hard working in an effort to maintain order "because disorder does the most harm to the good, the quiet and the conscientious" (p. 405).

Guided by the Code of the Court of Peers, the Court strove to create an environment of truth and justice based on the model of due process. Court cases involved staff, including Korczak, and students. The Code consisted of 1000 articles which were to be abided by adult and child alike. The articles were divided according to infraction and punishment. Articles 1 to 99 covered minor infractions; the defendant was pardoned outright. Article 100 was the dividing line between forgiveness and censure. An example of such an offense would

be locking someone out in the courtyard for fun. Articles 200 to 800 covered infractions in which the guilty child's name was published in the orphanage newspaper or posted on the bulletin board, or the child was deprived of privileges for a week and the family was summoned. Article 900 required the accused to find a supporter who would vouch for him or her as The Court of Peers had found him or her incorrigible. Thus, the child was expelled unless s/he could find a "guardian" among the other children or teachers who will then be obligated to the Court of Peers for the defendant's behavior. Article 1000 meant expulsion; however, the guilty party could apply for readmission after three months. Thus, the children became familiar with a judicial system with graded punishments according to the infraction of the Code of the Court of Peers.

Judgments based on the Code were registered, read aloud, and posted on the bulletin board of the Court of Peers by the Clerk of the Court. Defendants wishing to appeal a judgment had the opportunity to do so in a month. Reading aloud the judgments enabled all children to learn from each others mistakes or violations; in addition, corrections to the judgments could be made. Posting judgments could remind everyone, both adult and child, of the Courts' proceedings.

In How to Love a Child (1920/1978) and Ghetto Diary (1957/1978), Korczak emphasized work as another essential educational reform. All work was important; there was no preferred work. Manual and intellectual work were equally respected. In an essay entitled "Why I Clear the Table", Korczak (1957/1978) wished to instill the attitude that all work is honorable. He, himself, often cleared the table after meals. How a child performed work, according to Korczak, expressed his or her personality. In the Children's Republic, the broom was a symbol of dignity. Each child worked according to his or her ability, thereby contributing to the operation of the Children's Republic.

The orphanage newspaper also influenced the operation of the Children's Republic. Published weekly, the newspaper served to link one week to the next and provided a medium of communication, thereby binding the children together. The merits of the orphanage newspaper, the "Little Review", a children's supplement to "Our Review", a Zionist Polish-language paper, and "Progress Gazette", a newspaper produced by children and for children created King Matt of King Matt the First (1922/1986) were many. In The School Newspaper, Korczak (n.d./1967) articulated that a children's newspaper served as a strong motivator for children who did not know how to read or

write. Children wanted to learn to read so they could read the gazette; similarly, children wanted to learn to write to their newspaper their suggestions and concerns. In King Matt the First (1922/1986), the newspaper served to inform King Matt of his citizens' demands. Korczak suggested that the children's newspaper provided an opportunity for the child to learn that it takes much courage to voice one's opinion. Another benefit of student involvement in the school newspaper was that it taught the student how to conduct a controversy based on argumentation rather than bickering. And for those who were unable to express themselves in a verbal debate, the newspaper provided an open for discussion, grievances, thereby facilitating public opinion, binding the class or school. According to Wernik, Korczak referred to the "Little Review" as "an ABC of life" because it introduced the children to socio-political problems such as the need to improve the educational system. "Little Review" also contained advice for children on how to solve conflicts at home and on the playground or how to make friends. Radziewicz (1982) states that on December 8, 1933, on the occasion of its 25 year jubilee, Orphans Home issued a special "Little Review" which included descriptions of Korczak's system as implemented in Orphans Home.

The children's newspaper is an example of an educational

activity where Korczak's educator functioned as facilitator. Such an educator frees, uplifts, and instructs the child thereby enabling harmonious development of the child. Confident of the child's ability, the educator actively sought the child's recommendations (Korczak, 1920/1967, p. 222-223). Aware of his or her own shortcomings and deficiencies, the educator was more likely to "see the child as he happens to be (Korczak, 1919/1967, p. 293)," an individual person with similar attributes and therefore more realistic in his or her expectations of the child.

Korczak as Educational Reformer

Korczak was a major contributor to the growing educational experimentation in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. The basis of such educational reform was faith in the child was capable of achieving self-control and making critical decisions. This was especially reflected in educational practices such as self-governance, designed to develop the child's intellectual as well as emotional growth and development. In addition, self-rule and arbitration by peers provided the child with an opportunity to learn the rudiments of the democratic process within an embryonic social community.

In an era when children were expected to be seen and not

heard and when their worth was calculated by market value, Korczak demanded all children be treated as intelligent and resourceful decision-makers. According to Korczak, today's child was endowed with free will and existed as a rational and creative being, capable of achieving self-control and engaging in morally defensible relationships. Human rights, which included the right to an appropriate education, extended to every child (Korczak, 1920/1967). Each child possessed value as an individual, today, and therefore deserved full human rights previously extended to adults only. Some of these ideas were also reflected in the work of Korczak's contemporaries. Lane (1949), for example, declared himself "on the side of the child" and Makarenko believed in the ability of the *besprizorniki* to transform themselves into productive members of Soviet society.

Democratic reform through education was a common theme in Europe between the great wars. Korczak along with Makarenko, Lane, and Neill sought to provide the child with the kind of environment that would not only develop children's natural capacities but form the basis of a more enlightened social democracy. In Children's Republic, a child played his or her role in the educational process by participating in numerous activities such as the Court of Peers, Parliament, and

childrens' newspaper as well as being involved with running the day-to-day operation of the institution. Such activities promoted self-development, cooperation between child and teacher as well as child and child. In addition, participation in such activities provided opportunity for a child to acquire decision-making skills and develop his or her altruistic impulses. Members of Little Commonwealth, initiated methods that governed their individual and social development by cooperating in the decision-making process of General Meetings, participated in the Citizens' Court, and worked to keep the community solvent. These activities, therefore, were also aimed at creating an idealized social community. In Korczak's pedagogy, self-development was not an end in itself. It was part and parcel of his efforts to remake social relations and recast institutional structures.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

I undertook a case study at the Democratic School as a way of explaining how a school committed to Korczak's pedagogy functions through its operating norms and implicit rules. As much as possible, I sought to understand how it operates from the informants' point of view (Spindler & Spindler, 1987, p. 20). An informant is defined as a native speaker who serves as a teacher for the investigator, the learner (Spradley, 1979, p. 25). My data collection drew upon multiple sources of information. The information was analyzed to develop "a case report - a case study" which would serve as an interpretative instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 189).

Case Study Research

Case study inquiry, one of the five traditions of qualitative research, uses multiple sources, including observations, interviews, and documents, to explore and document the informants' point of view (Creswell, 1998, p. 9). According to Robert Stake (1994), "Case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied" (p. 236). In other words, it is the qualitative researcher who

chooses to study a particular case. The case itself could be studied in many ways. Robert Yin (1984/1989) defines case study method as an empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context . . . and uses multiple sources of evidence" (p. 23). The method, according to Yin, does not imply any particular form of data collection. The important aspect of case study is the use of multiple sources of evidence.

The single most defining characteristic of case study research, according to Sharan Merriam (1998, p. 27), is delimiting the object of study, the case. In other words, the case is a unit with boundaries. Case study research, according to Yvonne Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985, p. 189), must be carried out in a "natural" setting because phenomena of study take their meaning as much from their contexts as from themselves. John Creswell (1998) states that a bounded system is limited by time and place. As they say in the Democratic School, "Yesh Gevul Le-chol D'var" - "There are boundaries for choices." The Democratic School provided a common sense bounded system.

The uniqueness of a case study depends not so much on the methods employed as on the questions asked and their relationship to the end product (Merriam, 1988, pp. 31-32). Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 189) claim that the end product of

naturalistic inquiry, whose goal is to understand the informants' complex world from the point of view of those who live it, is a case study.

Expectations for producing a case study, according to Harry Wolcott (1982), are considerably less clear than for producing an ethnography (p. 157). Due to the absence of structure in producing a case study, what to look for and subsequently how to describe it , he recommends citing particular references as models as models for what one has in mind in both the research process and the research product. The case study product, states Robert Stake (1981) is "more concrete, . . . more contextual, . . . more developed by reader interpretation" (pp. 35-36). It is more concrete because the text provides details that are vivid and sensory. It is more contextual because our experiences are rooted in context.

My study at the Democratic School is one instance of case study research. My approach was that of a participant observer. Participant observation combines the two approaches of "going native" and purely behavioristic studies (Kluckhohn, 1940, p. 343). In going native, says Florence Kluckhohn, the investigator completely identifies with the society, thereby loosing all objectivity. Purely behavioristic studies, on the other hand, lack emotional life. Participant observation,

suggests Kluckhohn, "forces" the investigator to become more aware of his or her role, and therefore his or her biases as well as subjectivity.

The important aspect of case study collection is multiple sources of evidence which converge on the same set of issue. Sources may include interviews, observations, documents, nonverbal cues, or any other qualitative or quantitative information pools (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202). Inductive data analysis may be defined as a process for "making sense" of data (ibid.). The process of inductive data analysis enables the researcher to identify the multiple realities found in the data. Raw data was coded and then organized into categories that provide descriptive or inferential information about the context or setting from which the coded units were derived.

There is no agreement among persons working in nonstandard paradigms, such as case study research, for reporting techniques (p. 357). The expectations for producing ethnography are "considerably clearer than for persons intending to produce a 'case study'" (Wolcott, 1982, p. 157). Harry Wolcott contends approaches that are basically methodological provide structure for the researcher and lead to more explicit expectations for the final write-up. Case study, he says, is descriptive research and lacks the "how one

proceeds approach" (ibid.).

Theoretical Background

I began my case study at the Democratic School by framing the research problem: What are the cultural meanings the social actors use to organize their behavior and interpret their experience? "Culture," according to Margaret Mead (1956/1975), is "a learned way of life" (p. 436). Hence, culture may be understood as the dynamic process of behavior through which persons create their living environment (Mead, 1964, p. 36). The process is considered dynamic because people are continually responding to and modifying the culture of previous forbearers. Teaching and learning, borrowing innovations made by other groups, and making innovations all define the cultural process. Culture, according to Mead (1964), describes this process of "man's species-wide culture-binding behavior" (p. 36). Culture is abstracted from our observations of particular acts performed by informants or by artifacts in which results of previous acts have been preserved. Cultural behavior refers to behavior which is learned and can be transmitted. Cultural transmission, according to Mead (1964), includes "the capacity to learn, the capacity to teach, as well as the capacity to embody knowledge

in forms which make it transmissible at a distance in space or time" (pp. 38-39). Imitation, whether unintentional or intentional, engages members in the cultural process. Over time, by innovating and borrowing, new items are added to the cultural store. Culture is a human construct.

Clifford Geertz (1973) espouses a concept of culture that is "essentially a semiotic one" (p. 5). In concurrence with Max Weber's theory that a human is suspended in webs of significance which he or she has spun, Geertz understands culture to be the analysis of those webs. Analysis of data provides a written means of conveying what the researcher observed as well as sensory details. Hence, the data I collected at the Democratic School enabled me to reconstruct the actors' construction of meaning. Included in the written case study report are basic scenes, settings, objects, people, and action. In other words, a society's culture consists of whatever it is an individual has to know or believe in order to function in a manner acceptable to other members. The researcher's task is to interpret what goes on out "in the field."

For Norman Denzin (1988), the interpretive analyst's task is two-fold: (1) to uncover the conceptual structures that inform the informants' acts and (2), to construct a system of analysis

that defines generic structures (p. 39). The aim is to draw large conclusions from small but very densely textured facts. Complex specifics support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life. At best, the procedure is incomplete guesswork, "guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses" (p. 14). As an investigator of the Democratic School, I was not an actor with direct access; rather, my knowledge was based upon the small part of the culture which the informants led me to understand. Thus, analysis of culture is interpretive and, therefore, incomplete. Put simply, it is impossible to see, hear, or represent the world of others in a manner which is "absolutely universally valid or correct" (Van Maanen, 1988, pp. 4-6). Therefore, multiple knowledges may be produced.

Culture, in terms of the meanings humans hold for their experiences, provides a mechanism for constructing knowledge of the world. The construction and reconstruction of knowledge may be understood as being "culturally and historically bound" (Graue, 1993, p. 21). What it means to know something, what counts as data, and how such data are communicated vary from community to community and from time to time. Succinctly, what we know is bound to where and when we know it. Like culture,

knowledge is dynamic and may not be observed directly. Interpretations, based on constructions and reconstructions, enable multiple "knowledges" to coexist (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 83-87). All multiple knowledges, even those that are inconsistent with one another are considered meaningful. Such multiple knowledges can be attributed to a host of social, political, economic, ethnic, and gender differentiating factors among the social actors. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 295-296), it is the investigator's responsibility to represent the multiple constructions of the informants in such a manner that their experiences can be understood.

As a participant observer at the Democratic School, I sought to develop a case study that was open-ended and allowed for the reconstruction of multiple voices. Administrative staff, teachers, students, and parents provided the multiple voices. By becoming part of the Democratic School's community, I would add my voice to the mix. Morris Schwartz and Charlotte Schwartz (1969) maintain that the researcher is part of the context being observed and, therefore, both modifies and is influenced by this context (p. 91). In other words, my case study research was shaped by interaction of my personal history, biography, social class, education, race, and ethnicity with those of the informants. Objective reality

cannot be captured (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). As a participant observer, for example, I could not eliminate completely the impact of my person on the setting even though I purposely alternated my location and the informants with whom I engaged so as not to seem to prefer the company of any group or individual. As an investigator I was never able to shake off entirely my role of outsider. Shoshana, a ninth grader, for example, always introduced me as "the American with the computer which had fun games on it."

In order to work with my subjectivity, I employed the strategy of triangulation. According to Sara Delamont (1992), triangulation means "having two or more 'fixed' or 'sightings' of a finding from different angles" (p. 159). By combining multiple methods, triangulation adds rigor, breadth, and depth to qualitative research. Scrutinizing the data can be done out in the field. An idea which emerges as the investigator codes field notes may be cross-referenced against other sources of information, such as official documents or transcripts of interviews. Triangulation (Janesick, 1994, p. 214) at the Democratic School included participant observation, interviews, and document collection. For example, field notes indicated the importance of governance as a key concept at the Democratic School, and my notes from interviews of members of the school

community verified this perception (see Chapter Four). According to Corrine Glesne and Alan Peshkin (1992, p. 24), such multiple-data collection methods contribute to the trustworthiness of data. The use of multiple methods reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. In addition, triangulation reduces the likelihood of misinterpretations. My early observations of Parliament sessions, for example, left me wondering about the rules of entering and leaving parliamentary sessions. Upon consulting The Democratic School Handbook, I learned that "anyone who is late cannot enter the meeting. . . . A person can leave the Parliament only at breaks between subjects" (p. 2). The multi-method approach served as an alternative to validation since no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable.

By nature, case study research is empirical. Simply put, if it were not empirical it would not merit bothering to go into the field. Some events are "factual," such as the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, during my research stay. In such an instance, the researcher's professional and moral obligation includes reporting the "facts" (Soltis, 1989, p. 123). Not all such events are clear cut. All facts are "selected and interpreted from the moment we decide to count

one thing and ignore another" (Scheper-Hughes, 1992, p. 23). Therefore, the subject-object distinction becomes blurred. In studies of culture, the relation between the knower and the known is problematic. Compounding the issue, there is no way of seeing, hearing, or representing the world of others that is absolutely, universally valid or correct (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 35). Consequently, cultural studies are subject to multiple interpretations. They are never beyond debate.

As a "student" of culture at the Democratic School (Lofland, 1971, pp. 100-101), I investigated and experienced first-hand an educational environment that claimed to be based on Korczak's pedagogy. I assumed the role of one who is be taught by the informants. As a learner, I tried to be interested, supportive, and nonthreatening. In order to appear inconspicuous, I dressed as informally as others at the school, in jeans and a t-shirt, and sported a large straw hat to protect myself from the strong Israeli sun.

I practiced the methodology of naturalistic inquiry, which relies upon purposeful rather than representative sampling as well as emergent design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 102). I learned by doing, adjusting, and readjusting my methodology as the situation demanded. In short, I continuously interacted with my informants, interpreting my data. A naturalistic study

is virtually impossible until the study is underway; rather, the design unfolds or emerges (pp. 208-209).

Naturalistic inquiry is consistent with Korczak's understanding of knowledge, which should be linked to the child's everyday life experiences (1920/1967, pp. 199-202). Theoretical knowledge, according to Korczak, should be verifiable. Knowledge which is practical is easier for the student to accept. Internalization of knowledge is promoted by observation followed by experimentation. There is no standard prescription for the creative process of acquiring knowledge; rather, one must listen to his or her spontaneous thoughts (p. 241). Each situation is unique to each person, requiring observation, reflection, and experimentation.

Throughout my case study research, my main responsibility was to safeguard the informant's rights, interests, and sensitivities as well as his or her privacy (American Anthropological Association, 1971). All informants had the right to say things "off the record."

Participant Observation

During my case study at the Democratic School, I used a variety of procedures to collect data (Emerson et al., 1995). Chief among these was regular, sustained observation with

myself as a participant observer/researcher. Raymond Gold (McCall & Simmons, 1969, pp. 30-39) says four theoretically possible roles exist for the researcher conducting field work. They range from the "complete participant" at one extreme to the "complete observer" at the other. Corrine Glesne and Alan Peshkin (1992, pp. 40-41) say that the four roles exist on a participant-observation continuum, ranging from mostly participation to mostly observation. Such roles are important in establishing the researcher-researched relationship. In each role, the researcher interacts with the informants in their natural environment. The first role on the continuum is complete participant. The complete participant's identity, according to Gold (pp. 33-34), is not known to the informants. He or she is pretending to be a colleague or member of the community being investigated. This role has been referred to as "going native" (Kluckhohn, 1940, p. 343), where the researcher has more or less completely identified emotionally with the society being studied. Wolcott (1975) suggests implementing Arthur Vidich's pragmatic advice guide to "go as native as necessary to get the information you want" (p. 119). The "full participant" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 40) must sometimes manage the two roles of researcher and participant. The second role, "participant-as-observer," though similar to

the complete observer, differs significantly in that the informants are aware of the researcher's (pp. 35-36); there is no role pretending. This researcher may, however, risk losing the eye of the uninvolved (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 40). The third role, "observer-as-participant," calls for the researcher to remain primarily an observer with some interaction with study participants (Gold, 1969, p. 36). The fourth role, "complete observer," removes the researcher entirely from social interaction with the informants (pp. 36-37) and attempts to observe the informants without interfering with their activities.

The strategy of participant observer offers the opportunity to acquire the status of "trusted person" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 39). Schwartz and Schwartz (McCall & Simmons, 1969, pp. 94-95) contend that when the informants become convinced that the observer has respect for them as human beings, as well as interest in them as research subjects, they will be less likely to hold back or distort data. They sense that the researcher is trustworthy. As a participant observer, I attempted to integrate into the community of the Democratic School by assisting whenever possible. During the secretary's absence, for example, I frequently answered the telephone. During the school-wide Chanukah celebration, I

substituted for an art teacher who was ill. Such involvement demonstrated my concern for, as well as immersion into the warp and the woof of school community.

My involvement in the activities of the Democratic School led to the informants' acceptance of my role. According to Florence Kluckhohn (1940, pp. 331-32), community members must regard the investigator as a participant. In other words, the researcher must achieve status within the community organization. As a participant observer, I tried to establish a level of involvement and trustworthiness that would motivate the informants to express things they might not otherwise have felt comfortable sharing. During a Parliament discussion of sensitive information, for example, all visitors were asked to leave. No longer considered an outsider, I was allowed to remain for the session.

By becoming a part of the Democratic School's community, I learned firsthand the extent to which the actions of the informants corresponded with their words. On the participant-observation continuum, for the most part, I was a "participant as observer." According to Buford Junker (1960, pp. 36-37), in the role of participant as observer, the field worker has a responsibility to his or her informants, safeguarding their confidentiality. Data whose reporting could

have been possibly harmed participants or the professional community were not reported (Soltis, 1989, pp. 123-129).

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992, pp. 39-45), a paradox develops as the researcher becomes more of a participant and less of an observer. Description is not neutral. The more one functions as a member of the everyday world of the researched, the more the researcher loses the eye of the uninvolved outsider; yet, the more one participates, the greater the opportunity to learn. During a field trip to the special exhibit of Gerhard Richter's paintings at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, for example, I chaperoned, which limited my ability to observe how the teachers explained Richter's exhibit and responded to the students questions.

The process of participant observation allowed me to gather data by participating in the daily life of the students and teachers. As a participant observer, I was able to interact with many of the informants and gain insight into their interpretations of events. As a learner of the daily activities of the Democratic School, sustained, daily observations provided the opportunity for me to attempt "*to make the strange familiar* (original italics) and interesting again" (Erickson, 1973, p. 121). The strange becomes familiar in the process of understanding it. Throughout the research

process, I continually questioned my own assumptions and perceptions.

Often, the experience of learning as participant observer precedes interviewing and provides the basis for forming interview questions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 65). By first becoming acquainted with the informants through my participation at school, I learned what questions to ask. My experiential foundation could be enhanced by constructing questions that could then be asked of other knowledgeable informants. Questions ideally provide the researcher with a better understanding, shed light on the unseen, and offer insight. Questions should elicit the most comprehensive response. For example, the open-ended interview question "Why did you choose to attend the Democratic School?" brought a variety of rich descriptions from a group interview with four students. Yasmin, a female Sephardi Jew, and fifth grader who came to the school in fourth grade, responded, "because my brother was here. I was bored in the usual school." Osnat, also a fifth grader of European Jewish descent, came to the school as a first grader, "because I was nervous (in the traditional school)." Shalvah, a third grader, also of European Jewish descent, arrived at the Democratic School in first grade "because my girlfriend was here." Shoshana, a

ninth grader and Russian immigrant, said, "I came here in the beginning of seventh grade. My father wanted to give me the opportunity to choose course work which I wanted." The focus of such open-ended interviews was to gain an understanding of the school's pedagogy as well as to get a feel for the school as a whole.

From the beginning, I had to learn the delicate role of being a participant observer, of knowing when to question, when to be silent, and what questions to ask (Whyte, 1943/1981). To gain acceptance by the social informants, I applied Whyte's methodology of "hanging around." As Doc, Whyte's "gatekeeper," explains, "Go easy on that 'who', 'what', 'why', 'when', 'where' stuff, Bill. If people accept you, you can just hang around, and you'll learn the answers in the long run without even having to ask the questions" (Whyte, 1994, p. 75). In other words, instead of bothering the informants with structured questions, the same information can emerge naturally. Hanging around guided me as participant observer at the Democratic School by allowing me to observe the social actors in their normal environment without setting up any artificial boundaries that could have resulted in unnatural responses. I worked hard to establish rapport as well as a sense of trust and, in the end, was accepted by the social informants of the Democratic

School. As I became accepted, I tried to be affable and friendly enough so that the social informants would be glad to have me hang around. At the same time, I tried to avoid unduly influencing the educational environment. In return, my interest in the social actors was rewarded in terms of daily interactions and participation in community life. By hanging around, I gleaned answers to questions that I would not have thought to ask in a formal interview setting. Conversations with a wide variety of social actors were recorded in field notes. Few formal open-ended interviews took place, and those that did were used principally as a technique to clarify and elaborate.

As I became more accepted into the community of the Democratic School, I found myself at times becoming almost a nonobserving participant. I befriended, for example, five-year-old Sarah. When she and I played games such as Chutes and Ladders or Memory, I did not observe others in her kindergarten class. Sarah told her mother, a teacher at the Democratic School, "She (Liba) is my best friend." Hanging around also permitted me to choose sites of observation in much the same manner that students of the Democratic School choose their course work and manage their academic day. The Democratic School community was dynamic, continually undergoing

transformation.

While hanging around, I also engaged in "networking" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 27), a stratification technique that involves making contact with one participant and following through that person's recommendations of other students and staff to interview. Group interviews emboldened four young students and friends to talk about their educational experiences at the Democratic School. Thus, group interviewing, as a method of triangulation, complemented the participant-observation method. Such single and group interviews were open-ended and either formal or informal. Recorded interviews were transcribed for analysis.

Throughout my case study research, I collected artifacts. I noted classroom communications, collected documents, and took photographs. Like field notes, the photographs enriched my perceptions and allowed for reinterpretation after leaving "the field." I acquired a copy of the by-laws of the Democratic School. Such artifacts provided historical, demographic, and sometimes personal information that seemed to be unavailable from other sources. I also kept a research log for personal use.

Analysis of the data began with initial interviews and continued throughout the study. Transcripts and field notes

were read and re-read in order to establish theme codes, such as participation, choice, democracy, and student-*mechanech* (teacher) relationship. Interviews and classroom observations as well as my research log provided the codes. Emerging themes were verified by the participants' actions and words (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In addition, vignettes (Erickson, 1986) were developed from the coded data which illustrated themes regarding the meaning of Korczak's pedagogy. The coding and vignettes provided a detailed description of the construction of the participants' meaning of Korczak's pedagogy. The final stage of data analysis included feedback from participants.

Description of the Design

To learn how the pedagogy of Janusz Korczak was implemented at the Democratic School, I conducted on-site research. On September 12, 1995, the day after I arrived at the school, I met with the principal and was given a tour of the school. From then until mid-February 1996, I was part of the school community.

I arrived with the idea of spending most of my time in one or two classrooms. I spent the first two weeks visiting various classrooms as well familiarizing myself the other activities, such as the Parliament and the court. I also

spoke, both informally and formally, with members of the Democratic School community. Upon reviewing my data, I concluded that the school's purpose was to create a democratic learning environment, enabling the individual student to grow and develop at his or her own pace and desire, and that fulfillment of such a goal was taking place in activities outside of the traditional classroom. Therefore, I began hanging around at The Tree, in the administration office, Parliament, Court, and various committee meetings and activities.

Very few formal interviews took place. The atmosphere in the school was not conducive to structured interviews using open-ended prepared questions. I felt that the informants would speak more freely if approached in a more natural way, during activities or in casual conversation.

"Open-ended" questions allowed the informants to 'tell their stories'. The prepared questions were asked of all those members of the Democratic School's community who participated in formal, semi-structured interviews. Thus, respondents were encouraged to raise issues and questions as the interview progressed. In closing the interview, I asked the interviewees if they had any questions of me or final comments. Often they did. Shlomo, a fourth year teacher, for example, said, "This

is a closing remark. Sometimes, I walk around here thinking, 'I get paid for this [teaching here]!' To enjoy your work is a blessing, it really is."

I also contacted the Janusz Korczak Association in Israel, an international organization for Korczak's orphans and teachers at Our Home in Poland, and Korczak followers. I hoped to get a list of activities and to learn how the Democratic School and the association were connected. I received a list of activities and a roster of Korczakians living in Israel. Few Korczak orphans and teachers were interviewed due to their advanced age, poor health, or great distance from the school. To my surprise, when I interviewed the president of the Janusz Korczak Association, I learned that neither the founders nor the school administrators were in touch with the association. I found this to be a puzzlement, as it would seem to be an obvious source of information, especially since its members include many Korczak orphans and teachers. The vice principal of the Democratic School, Eliza, stated succinctly, "Old-timers . . . what do they know?" Her attitude is typical of the Sabra, or native-born Israeli.

While in Israel, I visited the Janusz Korczak Archives, housed in the Ghetto Fighters House, Kibbutz LoHamei HaGhetaot, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, and interviewed surviving Korczakians,

persons who had known Korczak personally. I also conducted interviews with three Korczak scholars: Ada Hagari-Poznanski, author of Janusz Korczak and Stefa Wilczynska and Their Pedagogy (1982) and Within Close Circles: With Janusz Korczak (1989) and Korczak's apprentice-teacher in Our Home; Shimon Sachs and Jehuda Kahana (1989) Korczak Memories and Thoughts and apprentice-teacher of Korczak in Our Home. All of the aforementioned books, found in the Archive collection, were recommended by another interviewee, Prof. Shevach Eden, president of the Janusz Korczak Association in Israel. I also saw artifacts, such as a photograph of Korczak taken in 1925 by Edward Poznanski, brother of Ada, and other archival material supplemented my research.

Data collection sources also included documents, such as The Democratic School Handbook, The Democratic School, Hadera, Israel: Background, and a copy of the newspaper tribute to Prime Minister Rabin. I also contacted Israel's Ministry of Education, and visited Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, a national Holocaust museum. Photo documentation took place as well.

Data analysis began with the description of the case and moved to an explanation of the case study research. While reading and re-reading my field notes, I looked for general themes in the data. The actual process was more visceral than

calculated or plotted. In short, I sifted and winnowed, trying to discover what the data were about, why, and what they implied.

I read and re-read data, both off-site data such as interviews with Korczak orphans and teachers-in-training, and on-site data such as field notes, in search of emergent themes. I compared emergent themes of on-site data analysis, such as the participation of the child in matters concerning him or her. Such accounts are incomplete.

While on-site, I continuously analyzed the collected data in an effort to produce analysis and explanation as well as to drive the data forward. Data analysis began with reading and re-reading field notes and other materials in order to detect a pattern of topics. Codes included:

*choice
*creating community
*democracy/democratic process
*equality
*future of the Democratic School
*Korczak's philosophy
*the legal system
*Parliament
*participation
*role of education at the Democratic School
*special days
*student body
*student-*mechanech* relationship
*support facilities/personnel
*teaching
*uses of the main courtyard
*work

These codes are not inclusive; however, they cover much of the materials contained in the field notes, interviews, and collected assorted documents. The general units of meaning were then compared to and contrasted with the research focus.

Four themes emerged:

*Fostering a sense of community with cooperative activities
-telephone support in absence of secretary
-preparation for mayors' visit
-school newspaper
-memorial services for Prime Minister Rabin
-The Tree where informal gatherings of students and teachers take place

*Governance: four democratic authorities
-legislative
-judicial
-executive
-controlling

*Student-*mechanech* relationships
-*mechanech's* role as mentor
-enhanced cooperative spirit

*Role of the administrators and the teachers
-provide institutional culture designed to foster a democratic educational community
-teachers promote democratic principles

My case study research at the Democratic School lasted six months. During that time, I gathered various types of data at the school six days a week. On a day-to-day basis, I was involved in the school community on various levels as a participant observer. In addition, I visited the homes of

Korczakians, the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, and the Janusz Korczak Archives at Kibbutz LoHamei Hagetaot.

From my immersion in school activities and interaction with members of the school community, the research design emerged. A typical school day began outside the administration office as students or teachers were signing in on the central bulletin board. In addition to checking the central bulletin board for announcements, I checked in with members of the community to gather the latest news of school happenings. From such information, I determined where to spend my time. Some days, for example, I would sit at The Tree; other days, I would observe in the kindergarten, Parliament, or Court of Peers. I also sat in on classes for democratic teacher-training and participated in the school's special events, including holiday celebrations and the planning sessions for the mayors' visit. From time to time, I tape-recorded interviews with various members of the school community.

I took field notes which I later coded, in search of emergent themes. Analysis generated four themes: fostering a sense of community with co-operative activities, governance under four democratic authorities, student-*mechanech* relationships, and the role of the administrators and teachers.

Chapter Four will expand the four emergent themes and

include examples and informants' interpretation of the school community.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL: OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

I chose the Democratic School for my on-site case study in order to examine the extent to which Korczak's pedagogy, developed and practiced during the first half of the twentieth century, was actually being carried forward in a contemporary school setting in Israel. It remains problematic as to whether those ideas and principles that he developed in one social setting and in one historic period can retain their identity in entirely different ones. At the close of the twentieth century, the Democratic School, presented a set of circumstances considerably different from the one that gave rise to Korczak's ideas. Not only has a long time elapsed, but the social setting for the Democratic School differs dramatically from the pre-World War II orphanages in which his ideas were first brought to fruition.

The Founding of the Democratic School

As a result of the collaborative efforts of a group of educators and parents, the Democratic School, grades kindergarten through eighth grade, opened in the fall of 1987. Menachem Kaplan assumed the role of principal, and the

curriculum met the requirements of the Ministry of Education. Menachem had long admired Korczak's ideas and founded the school in order to implement them. According to Menachem, the founders chose to base the school's operation on Korczak's educational philosophy for several reasons. First, Korczak provided general pedagogical principles rather than a precise prescription or recipe, and the founders felt that they could adapt Korczak's principles to an entirely different setting and school population. Korczak (1920/1967) himself propounded such adaptation of his principles: "No book, physician, can replace one's own keen thought, own attentive perception" (p. 84). He put a great deal of reliance on the insights and judgment of the educators on the scene.

Accordingly, beginning in 1985 and continuing for a year, Menachem and the founders of the Democratic School met once a week to study the writings of Korczak and adapt the elements of his pedagogy that they deemed most appropriate to Israeli society. As Menachem said,

> I was drawn to Korczak's ideology because of the importance he placed on childhood. . . . Korczak understood children as rational beings, whose participation was essential in matters concerning them, such as education. . . . Within the framework of Israeli democratic society, the founders chose to emphasize Korczak's concept of the Court of Peers

> because it embodied his recognition of children as persons of individual worth, deserving fair treatment. Also, Korczak recognized the powerful effect that social censure can have in a caring community. The Court is critical because it draws in the community to arbitrate between individuals of equal power. The Court's goal is justice through equality and fairness. The school would be a model of democratic justice.

Like Korczak, Menachem considers the Court of Peers to be the cornerstone of his system. The legal system is imperfect, just as the persons it serves. In the Democratic School, it is intended to replace a system of external authority with deliberative thinking and shared power.

A second reason, according to Menachem, for choosing Korczak's pedagogy is that Korczak is well known in Israel, a country whose population includes the greatest number of Holocaust survivors. He is considered a Holocaust hero because he did not abandon his children even in the face of death, despite opportunities to save himself. The whole experience of the Holocaust was perceived and articulated as a fundamental aspect of the legitimization of Zionism and of the State of Israel.

Menachem, a native-born Israeli, first learned of Korczak's heroism in elementary school, as do many other young Israelis. As an elementary student, Menachem read <u>King Matt</u>

the First (Korczak 1922/1986), a parable about a boy-king, King Matt. At the age of eleven, Matt ascends the throne after the death of his parents. What follows is a series of adventures and misadventures as Matt attempts to create a utopian society wherein children govern themselves. The boy-king attempts to eliminate hunger, disease, and the practice of abandoning children; to be fair and just to his subjects; and to make life happier for children. Matt's good intentions are undone by adults. In the end, he is dethroned and banished to a desert island.

In addition, Menachem attended a play about Korczak that created "a strong impact . . . about the possibilities of freedom and education as exemplified by Korczak's Court of Peers." (Menachem does not recall the name of the play; it could have been one of several, for Korczak is a popular figure in Israeli literature.) According to Korczak (1920/1967), the Court "may become the nucleus of emancipation, pave the way to constitution, make unavoidable the promulgation of the Declaration of Children's Rights" (pp. 404-405). Based on the Code of the Court of Peers which stresses forgiveness, the Court of Peers, according to Korczak, was designed to instill truth and justice. By teaching his orphans to respect the law and individual rights as played out in the Court of Peers,

Korczak hoped to impart the idea of justice to his orphans. Menachem felt that the Court of Peers is particularly important because it embodies Korczak's conviction that the child be taken seriously and allowed to participate in important decisions. In conventional schools, a child's status depends on the teacher's goodwill or mood. The child has little right to protest unfair treatment. The Court of Peers was designed to end such arbitrary treatment. Thus, for Menachem, Korczak served as an educational role model, a pedagogist who believed in children's right to participate in school governance.

Third, the founders of the Democratic School, according to Menachem, sought to create a democratic alternative to the European model on which the Israeli school system is based. The Israeli educational system, according to Eisenstadt (1985), reinforces "social differentiation on one hand and, on the other, stresses egalitarianism" (p. 276). The European model, for example, begins tracking early in a child's academic career. By contrast, the Democratic School does not prescribe coursework or track students; with the help of a *mechanech*, each student chooses his or her own classes, thereby designing his or her course of study (See Appendix for course listing). Teachers provide expertise in subject matter as well as facilitate the intellectual and social development of students.

According to Tali Lidar of the Department of Democratic Studies of the Ministry of Education, the Democratic School received the prestigious Education Award for its "innovative and special initiatives." The Democratic School was the first Israeli school to be based on Korczak's principles. In 1996, the Ministry of Education cited the Democratic School as a model of democratic education. As a result of this recognition, some elements of the Democratic School's structure have spread to other Israeli schools. Since then, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Menachem has been instrumental in setting up Korczak's Court of Peers in 100 schools. Menachem describes democratic education as "equal to Janusz Korczak." In 1998, approximately 80 Israeli schools participated in a Ministry of Education program that sends representatives of other schools to observe the Democratic School.

By 1995 when I undertook my field work, 325 students, ages four through nineteen were enrolled in the Democratic School. In 1992, the Democratic School had expanded to include a high school, thereby providing all Israeli mandatory grades. In addition, students from the Institute for Training Democratic Teachers study at the Democratic School. The school population is drawn from largely from middle- to upper-middle-class Jewish

families, the students commute from all parts of Israel. In 1995-1996, according to Statistical Abstract of Israel (1996, p. 88), the population of Israel was composed of 81% Jews, 14.5% Moslems, 2.9% Christians, and 1.7% Druze. The Democratic School student population was Jewish except for a few Moslems. Like most Israeli schools, the Democratic School is maintained by the local municipality, Hadera. Because students are involved in extra activities not offered at other schools supported by the Israeli government, each student pays a monthly tuition of 300 Israeli shekels (approximately $100). Scholarships are available.

The Physical Layout of the Democratic School

The design of physical space, facades, and building, contends Edgar Schein (1985, p. 237), is one of the most important secondary mechanisms for embedding culture. When the design is consistent with the primary mechanisms for culture embedding and reinforcement, such as deliberate role modeling and what leaders pay attention to, it begins to build organizational ideologies, formalizing much of what is informally learned at the outset (pp. 240-241). The operating cultural assumptions are first manifested in what the leader models. The Democratic School's layout, for example,

particularly the lack of a principal's office, reflects an emphasis on widespread participation, ease of communication, and importance of relationships. Visually, the visitor experiences the openness of the physical structure of the school, in particular the multi-purpose courtyard, which contributes to the open communication of the Democratic School.

Like Korczak's Children's Republic, the Democratic School's campus is light and airy. In general, space is not designated for a specific purpose. For example, the main courtyard is used variously as a soccer field, a baseball field, an outdoor classroom, or a setting for special occasions. (See Appendix for a floor plan of the school.)

Since the Democratic School is located on the outskirts of Hadera and surrounded by fields, it is necessary to monitor the comings and goings of persons to ensure the safety of the members of the school community. The school pays a guard to perform this function. During my on-site study, the guard was a male of retirement age who dressed in street clothes. He was responsible for security, which consisted mainly of patrolling the main entrance and the campus. Such protective measures are routine in Israel where security is a top priority.

At the beginning and end of each school day, a parent volunteer helps the hired guard by watching the school's

secondary entrance. Parents unable to serve are required to help pay for a professional guard to fulfill the security obligation. Having parents share guard duty is one example of parent involvement in the Democratic School. It is seen as an opportunity for parents to learn about the workings of the school.

Although the Democratic School has scheduled class periods, students wander over the campus throughout the day. Often barefoot, they crisis-cross the courtyard from bungalow to bungalow. During such strolls across campus, students may be seen conversing with others and snacking on food brought from home or purchased from the small mom and pop grocery located behind the school. Both in setting and informality, the campus resembles a summer camp.

Several bungalows encircle the courtyard. They house the classrooms and administrative offices. Menachem does not have an office or desk except for a picnic table located behind the administrative offices. There is no faculty or student lounge, although future building plans include such facilities. The students seem to have independently claimed for themselves a place out-of-doors commonly known as The Tree. Like the village well of yesteryear, The Tree - a very large tree, to the left of the main entrance and past the first two bungalows

- is a place to meet and chat. The students' bulletin board is attached to The Tree, and several picnic tables stand in its shade. There, throughout the day, students play a variety of board games, including Shesh Besh or Backgammon, chess, and checkers, or just hang out.

The library at the Democratic School has approximately 500 books (mostly in Hebrew but some in English, French, and German), a copy machine, and a computer center consisting of five computers and one printer. Throughout the day, classes meet in the library, with the students and teachers gathered around one of the several tables. The library also has oversized chairs that provide an informal student gathering place. Tzurit, the female librarian, whose daughter attends second grade in the Democratic School, is assisted by student volunteers who work at the circulation desk.

The school's basement functions as the music room as well as the air raid shelter. An air raid drill on November 19, 1995, which was announced in advance on the central bulletin board, began with a shrill siren. With seriousness and dispatch, students and teachers entered the basement. Simultaneously, the other members of the school community as well as visitors gathered near the eastern wall, behind the playground. Another siren concluded the air raid drill.

Fostering a Sense of Community

Various cooperative activities foster community at the Democratic School. If the secretary is absent, for example, others at the school provide telephone support. The central bulletin board frequently provides an occasion for a nonreader to seek assistance in reading an announcement. Working together for a common goal also creates community. To prepare for a visit from sixty-five mayors, students, parents, teachers, and administrative staff worked side by side for two days, painting, planting, and picking up trash.

The Democratic School newspaper offers another opportunity for community building. According to Korczak (1920/1967), a newspaper binds the members of the school, "the students, the professional staff, and the service staff into an integral whole" (p. 404). It serves as the conscience of the school community by reflecting the inner organization of the school: every reform, improvement, complaint, and shortcoming. Strangers become acquainted through their newspaper writing experience. the newspaper, according to Korczak (n.d./1967, p. 511), should aspire to provide prospective as well as balanced opinion on all issues, and serve to benefit the teaching staff as well.

At the Democratic School, a committee of reporters, photographers, and a chairperson publish the paper once a semester. Like the other committees, the school newspaper staff is a voluntary activity. Members of the newspaper committee learn participatory and procedural as well as technical writing and organizational skills. The editorial board is involved in the ways and means of presentation. As Korczak said in his pamphlet A School Newspaper (n.d./1967), learn, for example, how to overcome difficulties, short-term setbacks, and meet with unpleasant people. Newspaper committee members are encouraged to voice their opinions. Whether bold or shy, contributors can express their opinions. The chairperson provides constructive criticism and encouragement (pp. 503-533).

A sense of community was apparent when the entire school participated in two memorial services for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The central bulletin board was covered in black fabric (instead of the usual announcements) to which were attached articles and photographs from various Israeli newspapers describing Rabin's assassination on November 4, 1995. Traditional memorial candles flickered on a small table directly in front of the central bulletin board.

Both school-wide memorial services were organized and led by

students. Two male teachers helped a small group of high school students prepare the multi-purpose courtyard for the first service. Two flag poles were erected; the Israeli flag flew from one pole and a black flag of mourning flew from the other. Over the loudspeaker system, Menachem invited everyone to the courtyard for the memorial service. The service began with two high school students reading two poems. A teacher lit a memorial candle, and an elementary student led the group in "Hatikvah," Israel's national anthem. Menachem concluded the service by inviting persons interested in discussing the assassination of Rabin to the Parliament bungalow and another classroom.[5]

The discussion in the Parliament bungalow began with ten students, one parent, nine teachers, and two administrative staff. Throughout the discussion, students streamed in and out. Topics of discussion were intensely emotional and included "my identity as a Jew" and "Israel as a democratic

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[5]Adjusting to "the sensitivity of the moment" (Whyte, 1994, p. 75), I put my notebook and pen aside during the Rabin memorial service. On the observation-participation continuum, which ranges from mostly observation to mostly participation, I was a "full participant" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, pp. 40-41). I chose the role of functioning as a member of the Democratic School's community rather than researcher. Therefore, I did not record the names of the poems or Menachem's words.

country," the latter voiced by the female Arabic teacher, Gamel, herself an Israeli-born Palestinian Moslem. The purpose of this session was to provide a safe forum in which persons could begin to come to terms with Rabin's violent death.

A second memorial service took place a week later. Once again, Menachem made the announcement over the loudspeaker system. Explaining the need for a second service, he said, "A week ago [he pauses], amazing a week went by. We're still in shock, others in tears. I couldn't talk. This week was longer than a week [he pauses] for introspection. Today, a week later, we decided to do a more ordered ceremony."

Again everyone gathered in the courtyard. Two female high school students read a poem. The Israeli flag, which is usually not present in the school, was lowered to half mast. A third female high school student read an original poem that asked, "What does it mean to be a Jew?" Four female high school students dressed in black performed a modern dance piece, complete with music, which, one of them explained, expressed hurt and fear of the future, a theme common among the citizens of the Democratic School as well as Israel at large. A male elementary student lit a memorial candle and a male teacher read an original poem whose themes included love, Rabin, and children. Two female high school students read the

poem "Walk to Caesarea" by Hannah Senesh (1942/1972, p. 254), a twenty-three-year-old Holocaust heroine who parachuted into European Nazi-held territory in an effort to save Jewish youth, only to be captured herself and subsequently killed. The tone of the poem is very positive:

> God--may there be no end
> to sea, to sand,
> water's splash,
> lightning's flash,
> the prayer of man.

Senesh (1966/1972) writes in her diary that, sitting by the sea, "one thinks of the world's past and contemplates its future" (p. 122). By doing so, Senesh claims, one's scope expands, thereby strengthening one's determination to achieve. Her message is clear: perspective as well as hope for the future is gained at the seashore.

After the service, a female high school student announced over the loudspeaker system an invitation for all students, parents, teachers, and administrative staff to teacher Barak's room to write or draw a letter of condolence to the Rabin family. The letters would supplement the Democratic School's notice of condolence published in the Israeli daily newspaper Yedeot Achronot. It read: "Dear Rabin Family, During this mourning period, we feel your sorrow and pain. The Family of the Democratic School in Hadera."

Both of the memorial services provided opportunities for members of the school community to express their emotions concerning the assassination of Rabin. In particular, the sharing of feelings provided a forum in which they often mirrored each other's concerns. Thus, the discussion groups provided another arena in which students and adults contributed as equals. In addition, such discussions provided a means of intergenerational understanding.

The informality of the exchange that transpires under The Tree between students and others provides an unusual opportunity for whatever divisions of rank that may exist to begin to dissipate. As Rivka, a female high school student, said, "The strength of the school . . . is sitting by The Tree." To Rivka, being outside, sitting under The Tree, epitomizes independence and responsibility. At The Tree, the students do homework and engage with others in banter as well as serious discussion. There are no bells to announce classes; students are responsible for getting to class on time. No one reminds the students of their class schedule. At the Democratic School, according to Rivka, a student is free to choose one's own path. A student takes responsibility for choosing coursework, as well as how much he or she will engage in the life of the school. Students elect committee members,

for example, and choose whether to attend Parliament sessions. Students choose to play, sit under The Tree and hang out, or attend or cancel classes. At one point, they voted to cancel classes for two days, for example, to prepare for the mayors' visit. There exist a wide range of alternatives rather than prescribed dictates.

The informal gatherings at The Tree epitomize the Democratic School's unusual authority structure. Teachers and administrative staff are highly visible and interact freely with the students on a casual basis, such as at The Tree or walking across the multi-purpose courtyard. Concerns of students and parents are voiced to the principal, listened to, and acted upon. Students, for example, were dissatisfied with the instruction of Nadav, a first-year English teacher, and presented their concerns to Menachem. They reported that Nadav was unprepared for class and did not cover the material they would need to pass the university entrance exam. In response, Barbara was hired to take over Nadav's teaching responsibilities. Barbara is an American emigrant attending the Democratic School's Institute for Training Democratic Teachers. The principal also acted upon the request by kindergarten students and their parents who sought the creation of a kindergarten-level English course.

School Governance

The Democratic School's system of self-governance as presented in The Democratic School Handbook (p. 3) consists of four "authorities": the legislative authority, the judicial authority, the executive authority, and the controlling authority. In effect, these four authorities represent the real governing structure of the school - at least the formal one.

The legislative authority of the school is represented by the Parliament. It is led by an elected three-person team, and all members of the school community may attend sessions and vote. One person, one vote. It meets on Friday to take up an agenda posted on the central bulletin board a week earlier. At a typical parliamentary meeting, thirty-eight students and twelve teachers assembled in the parliamentary bungalow. On the agenda was "working on enhancing the school's property." The principal began by stating that the forthcoming visit of sixty-five mayors prompted the need for refurbishing the Democratic School. The members debated how best to use 12,000 Israeli shekels (approximately $4,000) for that purpose and voted to take off two days of classes to do the work. According to Menachem, if the students feel from this kind of

involvement that the school belongs to them, they will regularly participate in the Parliament.

The three persons on the Parliament team are a chairperson, an adviser of discipline, and a secretary, all of whom are elected for three-month terms. Following the first elections, Dov, a male tenth grader, functioned as the chairperson; Yaffa, the female home economics teacher, served as the secretary; and Yaer, a male eighth grader, maintained discipline with a gavel. As the parliamentary session unfolds before the chairperson, the secretary records the minutes while the discipline adviser maintains order.

Subjects discussed during a parliamentary session include issues that affect the governing of the Democratic School and the general welfare of the student body, teachers, and administrative staff. One discussion at a parliamentary session, for example, concerned an incident that occurred when a male elementary student put money in the Coke machine located outside the Parliament and received several "free" cans. When he told his friends about the "free" Coke, bedlam broke out and was stopped only when Shlomo, a high school teacher, stood in front of the machine, blocking the students' way. The Coke machine problem was brought before the Parliament. A discussion ensued. Because no person or group would take

responsibility for the maintenance of the machine, by a majority vote, present members of the school community decided to return the Coke machine to the Coke company. Attendance at Parliament varies according to the topics discussed. Persons attending a session may leave only during breaks.

The judicial authority consists of the discipline and the appellate committees. Every member of the school community who comes before the discipline committee is considered innocent until proven guilty and is entitled to a fair and just hearing. Further, the accused is judged according to the rules and expectations as delineated in The Democratic School Handbook. The discipline committee functions as a court of law and provides a forum for complaints to be heard and judged fairly, objectively, and without discrimination.

At least three persons elected in the general election sit on the discipline committee. The chairperson organizes the caseload, posts results of hearings on the central bulletin board, and records the results of the hearing in both the plaintiff's and defendant's file. Plaintiff and defendant are given an opportunity to present their side. A case involving Yitz, for example, a male kindergartner, and Geshem, a male seventh grader, illustrates the committee's commitment to help each party understand the other's point of view. This was

Geshem's second time before the committee for roughhousing. Although Yitz was not hurt in this particular incident, committee members expressed concern with Geshem's pattern of behavior. A warning was issued, demonstrating the committee's commitment to using words rather than harsh punishment and its message that certain language and behaviors can impinge on the rights of others. In addition, Tzurit, who is the school's librarian, a member of the committee, and the parent of a kindergarten student at the Democratic School, suggested to Geshem that he become more responsible and also seek forgiveness from Yitz.

The appellate committee functions as a supreme court. Decisions from the lower court, the discipline court, may be reviewed and, if deemed appropriate, overturned. In addition, the appellate committee interprets the rules passed by the Parliament. According to Yaffa, a member of the discipline committee, clarification of the rules is necessary because every member of the school community must abide by same. Hearings are held behind closed doors. Eight elected members comprise the committee. Five members must be present to review a decision of the lower court. Responsibilities of the chair of the appellate committee include notifying the chair of the lower court of its decisions, convening the appellate committee

as warranted, and updating the personal files of persons involved in appellate court hearings. Prosecutor, defendant, and committee members have the right to call witnesses, who then must appear.

The executive authority consists of the following committees: budget committee, teachers committee, student acceptance committee, special events committee, justice and constitution committee, school trips committee, as well as such ad hoc committees as the building committee.

Any member of the Democratic School can be a candidate for any committee. At one parliamentary session, candidates appeared and formally announced their qualifications. On the chosen day, votes were cast in the ballot box in the home economics room. The parliamentary team counted the ballots and Yaffa, the secretary, announced the newly elected committee members and posted their names on the central bulletin board. Candidates for all four authorities were elected that day.

The student acceptance committee handles admissions. It explains the Democratic School's application procedures, including the date when all documents are due, the fee for processing the application, and the date of the applicant's interview. At least three committee members must be present at the interview, which is closed to the public. An application

decision is based on written documents as well as the personal interview. Members of the student acceptance committee vote on whether to accept or reject the candidate. A student who has been expelled must go through the application process of a new student to be reinstated.

Like the student acceptance committee, the teachers acceptance committee is responsible for accepting new teachers. The committee comprises six persons; any member of the Democratic School community may run for office. The process to select a teacher is analogous to the process of admitting a student except that a teacher who has been denied a position at the school may reapply only twice.

The visitors committee coordinates visits of various groups who come to observe at the Democratic School. During my fieldwork, guests included an orthodox teaching seminary from Jerusalem, a group of Israeli soldiers, representatives of Amnesty International, educational staff from other Israeli schools, and a group of sixty-five mayors. The visitors committee consists of five members plus a chairperson, whose role is to manage, organize, and be responsible for the conduct of visitors. Groups should not exceed thirty-five persons or stay more than three hours (but the chair may bend the rules).

The director of foreign affairs is responsible for contact

between the Democratic School and other schools around the world. For example, the director of foreign affairs was involved in planning and coordinating the Fourth International Conference of Democratic Schools which the Democratic School hosted, April 14-19, 1996 (after my study concluded). Participants included Zoe Neill, daughter of A.S. Neill and principal of Summerhill, and Leah Rabin, widow of Prime Minister Rabin. Democratic schools participating included Al Amal, Bethlehem; Sands School, United Kingdom; and Summerhill, England. Discussion and workshop topics included "The Values of Democracy in the Doctrine of Yanosh Korczak" by Professor Adir Cohen, University of Haifa; "How Can We Encourage Personal Development in School/The Supporting Attitude?" by Varda Yaari, the Democratic School; and "Conflict Resolution" team-taught by Sean Bellamy, Sands School, and Omri Gefen, the Democratic School.

The Democratic School's controlling authority coordinates checks and balance for the executive authority. It investigates undemocratic procedures. Upon conclusion of an investigation, the controlling authority writes a detailed report.

The Student-*Mechanech* Relationship

In a speech before student teachers of the Institute for Training Democratic Teachers, Professor Moshe Caspi, School of Education, Hebrew University, asserted that the student-*mechanech* relationship is the most important characteristic of the Democratic School. *Mechanech* is a Hebrew word which connotes a teacher whose professional educational responsibilities include the social, physical, and academic development of the child. Such a relationship, Professor Caspi continued, serves as the foundation for developing democratic citizenship. Through this relationship, even the youngest students learn that they have a voice in the workings of the Democratic School and that the governing thereof belongs to them.

Beginning in the third grade and continuing throughout high school, each student chooses his or her own *mechanech*. According to Barak, who is a *mechanech*, the parent of a kindergarten student attending the Democratic School, and director of the Institute for Training Democratic Teachers, the student-*mechanech* relationship distinguishes the Democratic School from most schools. This special partnership provides a two-way street; the teacher gets to know and understand the

student, and the student seeks advice from the teacher. The student-*mechanech* relationship is based on the mutual respect of two unique persons for one another.

The primary function of the *mechanech* is to serve as a mentor, according to Rachel, a kindergarten teacher and a 1993 graduate of the Democratic School's Institute for Training Democratic Teachers as well as a *mechanech* for student teachers attending the Institute. At times, Rachel explained, that meant assisting the student to find his or her place in the Democratic School. Within the school's framework of freedom, Rachel stated, the *mechanech* enables his or her students to become self-aware, which in turn facilitates the student's independence and self-reliance.

In addition, the student-*mechanech* relationship fosters a cooperative spirit. Shoshana, a fourteen-year-old ninth grader and a Russian emigrant, concurred with Professor Caspi's assessment of the student-*mechanech* relationship: "It is the best thing about the Democratic School. *Mechanchem* [plural of mechanech] care for you." Shoshana elaborated that when she first came to the school, she felt awkward and out of place. It was her mechanech who introduced her to students, teachers, and administrative staff and ensured a smoother orientation.

Shlomo, a third-year *mechanech* and a fifth-year English high school teacher, echoed the sentiments of Professor Caspi and Shoshana. He reiterated that caring and cooperation nurture the student-*mechanech* relationship, which culminates in a mutually agreed upon, individualized educational plan. "The most positive thing about being in this school," said Shlomo, "is the dynamic relationship between students and teachers. . . . We are all equals before the [Democratic School's] law. . . . It goes beyond the four fences or walls of the school." Shlomo described the *mechanech* as an adult who "wears many hats," those of counselor, teacher, psychologist, and friend as well as supervisor. The *mechanech* functions as a bridge between the school and the student, he continued. Often, the *mechanech* helps to resolve problems concerning course selection and schedule. Sometimes students came to Shlomo "just to talk [about] music, friends, relationships."

Role of Administrators and Teachers

Together, the teachers and administrators provide the institutional culture that is designed to foster a democratic educational community. The administrators, supported by the teachers, help to provide the institutional culture, which is

visible in the organizational structure and procedure, of the Democratic School. Barak stated, "Each student is perceived as a reasonable human being capable of making sound decisions and possessing human rights, including the right to an education." He added, "Like Korczak's Children's Republic, the Democratic School has no 'children' as such; rather, it has individuals, highly diversified with a wide range of experiences, aptitudes, and emotional makeups."

Menachem, the founding principal, is an engaging person, with an abundance of will, determination, and drive. He is often the first to arrive on campus and one of the last to leave. Menachem shares his knowledge and understanding of Korczak's educational principles. He lectured on Korczak's connection to the Democratic School when the group of sixty-five mayors visited, and to students attending the Institute for Training Democratic Teachers. With Menachem's leadership, the Democratic School models at least some of Korczak's principles and pedagogy, the bulletin board, the mailbox, the Parliament, the newspaper, the Court of Peers, and the Code. In doing so, Menachem continues to promote and transmit the founders' interpretation of Korczak's pedagogy as democracy through the legislative authority, judicial authority, executive authority, and controlling authority. In the context

of the Democratic School, Korczak the World War Two martyr and hero is de-emphasized.

Menachem promotes the democratic values in part by making a concerted effort to downplay status and hierarchy. He dresses informally and roams the campus, taking time to get to know individual students, parents, teachers, administrative staff, and visitors. In addition, he participates in the Parliament sessions by engaging in lively discussion and voting, and he is a member of other committees, such as the building committee. His participation demonstrates his commitment to the values of involvement, cooperation, and responsibility.

According to Clive Dimmock (Chapman et al., 1995, p. 171), democratic culture is enhanced when a principal models behaviors and values. He (p. 158) clarifies the concept of democracy to include:

> prevalence of the will of the majority;
> respect for the rights and values of others;
> participation and/or representation in decision-making process;
> delegation of responsibilities and powers with accompanying accountability;
> checks and balances to prevent use of power
> sharing and dissemination of knowledge and information to empower people to make informed decisions; and
> concern for equality and equity in decision-making.

The principal, in particular, through leadership, management,

and organization of schools can substantially influence the way to which the school is functions; for example, he or she can delegate the responsibilities of decision-making. In the Democratic School, Menachem demonstrates his faith in the decision-making process by participating in the Parliament and abiding by the decisions. Leadership qualities include the ability to delegate to others as well as to involve staff members in planning and managing the school. By involving others, the effective principal gains their commitment and motivation toward commonly agreed upon goals. Dimmock maintains that the principal enhances school culture when he or she models democratic values and behavior and then displays overtly and explicitly to members of the school community the codes of behavior expected by the school and by the leaders. Menachem, for example, helps with the maintenance of the Democratic School by cleaning the bathrooms, while other community members are responsible for maintaining classrooms, the Parliament, and the grounds.

At the Democratic School, faculty members provide the link between the democratic principles of Korczak's pedagogy and the students. Interestingly, many of them express confusion concerning Korczak. Yaffa, for example, the home economics teacher, said, "From you [the researcher], we'll hear about

Janusz Korczak. . . . Interesting, as we don't know anything about his educational philosophy." Gedalyah, the newly appointed male physics teacher, asked me, "What are the pedagogies of Janusz Korczak?" Both Yaffa, a senior teacher, and Gedalyah, a freshman teacher, stated they recognized Korczak's name and wanted to learn about his pedagogy.

Despite her apparent ignorance of Korczak's ideas, Yaffa exemplifies the teachers who promote his principles. Basic democratic principles include majority rule, the rule of law, freedom and responsibility, justice, fairness, the rights of the minority, and the worth of all persons. During the academic year 1995-1996, in addition to her teaching responsibilities, Yaffa was actively involved in the Parliament. There she often spearheaded discussions concerning justice, fairness, and orderly dissent. As its elected recording secretary, she produced and was accountable for the minutes of every Parliament session. Before every session, she cleaned the parliamentary bungalow and readied it for use.

Yaffa is intelligent and dynamic, as well as experienced as a teacher. Her classroom displays students' work and includes a variety of learning activities and books. Students choose their sewing or handcraft projects. Often, before and after class, the students gather in Yaffa's room to converse.

Yaffa helped to plan and participate in the Fourth International Conference of Democratic Schools. She initiated and carried out the publication of the Democratic School's notice of condolence to the Rabin family in the Israeli daily newspaper Yedeot Achronot. When Mayan, a high school student, was in need of housing, Yaffa opened her home to the visiting American for several weeks. In such ways, Yaffa emulated and promoted such principles of democracy as initiative, accountability, and equality within the school community.

In the classroom, teachers at the Democratic School establish their authority by imparting their command of the subject matter and interacting freely with students. They are more concerned with learning and establishing relationships than with controlling the students. Admonishing a student occurs rarely and is likely to take the form of a friendly chat. Teachers do not control the students' coming and going from the classroom; rather, the students are free to leave the classroom at anytime. Typical reasons for leaving include going to the bathroom, getting something to eat, or going to an appointment off campus. Students are not required to attend classes; they are required only to sign in on the central bulletin board when they arrive in the morning. According to Rachel, a kindergarten teacher,

> They can wander the school. We begin instructions in math, reading, and writing when the children ask. . . . What the students are interested in we study. . . . It isn't the job of the teacher to look for students. No students present means no class.

Most of the time, however, students are present and teachers observe the curriculum guidelines established by the Ministry of Education.

In kindergarten, play and the arts are essential, including drawing, painting, singing, music, clay-modeling, movement, and creative drama. Stories are used to help students learn to solve problems. Art students display their works. Hands-on experimenting is often used to explain a phenomenon, such as production of olive oil. In addition, small group activities, field trips such as a trip to the Israel Museum to view the works of Gerhard Richter, and lectures were typical of the instruction that takes place. According to Shlomo, a high school English teacher, "They [the students] are like kids in a regular school, they are dependent on their teachers for learning. . . . I would, I think, change the curriculum here . . . to increase student participation." The classroom environment is developed by the interaction of teacher with students, textbooks, modern audio-visual equipment, and assignments.

In her beginning Arabic class, Gamel began with a conversation that reviewed last week's lesson. She distributed photocopied handouts and read from one aloud. Then, each of the four students read aloud in Arabic. Pronunciation and expression were emphasized. Gamel assigned homework: "Write the masculine paragraph on the handout as feminine." At other times, Gamel used video tapes and educational programs to supplement her presentation.

In the classroom, teachers such as Yaffa, Rachel, and Shlomo stress critical thinking as well as cognitive and behavioral skills necessary for effectiveness in debate in the Parliament. According to Menachem, the principles of democratic debate led to the development of the Parliament. At one session, the subject of graffiti on the school walls was deliberated. With eighteen persons present, a special three-member committee was established and its members elected. The committee would investigate the matter further and report back to the Parliament. The atmosphere was purposive and academic as well as informal.

Imaginative teachers who actively participate in the democracy of the school become exemplars to the students. In one particularly innovative class, Deborah involved two female students and nine male students in a lively discussion based on

the biblical story of the Murder of Ishbaal (2 Sam. 4:1-12). Baanah and Rechov, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, murdered Ishbaal, son of Saul, while he lay sleeping. Thinking that Ishbaal was an enemy of David, they cut off Ishbaal's head and gave it to David in Hebron. Instead of rewarding them, David instructed his soldiers to put the brothers to death for having killing an innocent man. Deborah compared and contrasted events of antiquity and present-day Israel, the planning of the assassination by the two Amir brothers, Yigal and Haggai, and the murder of Rabin, which, like Ishbaal's, was a "murder of politics." Deborah concluded class by writing the assignment on the board: "Elaborate on the timeliness of King David."

How Are Korczak's Principles Sustained?

The Democratic School visibly reflects Korczak's pedagogy using many of the same structures such as the Court of Peers, the Parliament, and participation in the self-governance of the school. The founders of the Democratic School consciously sought to incorporate Korczak's principles in setting up the parliament, the court system, and the relationship between student and teacher. It is, therefore, these features of the organization structure of the school rather than conscious allegiance to Korczak's pedagogical principles that is central

to the school's functioning. Menachem, the founding principal, and Eliza, the founding vice principal, consciously try to exemplify the democratic principles of Korczak's pedagogy through such activities as voting, participating in various committees, and attending parliamentary sessions.

By contrast, the teachers at the Democratic School appear to have little knowledge of Korczak's pedagogy. Just a few recognize his name, although some express an interest in learning more about Korczak the man as well as Korczak the pedagogist. And yet the school exhibits evidence of Korczak's pedagogy: the central bulletin board, the numerous committees, the school newspaper, and the community involvement in the caretaking of the school and its grounds all reflect Korczak's principles of educating for children. This is most likely a reflection of the leadership in the school and their ability to reflect Korczak's philosophy in the governing structures of the school.

It is clear that the Democratic School exhibits at least some elements of Korczak's pedagogy. What accounts for the survival of some aspects of his pedagogy in the Democratic School, an educational setting far different from the pre-World War II orphanages? In the concluding chapter, I will try to provide a four-pronged answer.

Chapter Five

Vintage Wine in a New Decanter: Korczak's Pedagogy in the Democratic School

Janusz Korczak's pedagogy developed in the context of growing educational experimentation in Europe, from the turn of the twentieth century until the outbreak of World War Two. His pedagogical peers included Maria Montessori, Homer Lane, Anton Makarenko, and A.S. Neill. Although these reform educators' philosophies varied, as did the methods of implementing of them, almost all these innovative educators agreed that schools should provide an opportunity for a child to develop his or her own individuality insofar as possible. Beyond individual self-development, however, all of these experimental educators saw their pedagogies as contributing to a more just society.

Given the many contrasts between the time period and setting in which Korczak developed, refined, and implemented his educational philosophy in Poland's Orphans Home and Our Home, and its implementation in the Democratic School in Israel, one could ask: What accounts for the survival of Korczak's pedagogy in the Democratic School? What is it that makes an approach to education such as Korczak's thrive in what appear to be two vastly different educational settings? I will approach these questions first by looking at the

Democratic School within the context of the Israeli public school system. This will serve to highlight the way in which the Democratic School differs from typical Israeli schools. Secondly, I will discuss the sources of appeal that the Democratic School has to a segment of Israeli population. Thirdly, I will examine how the Democratic School manages to survive without traditional forms of authority. And finally, I will try briefly to assess the Democratic School and other schools like it are likely to survive.

The Democratic School in the Context of Israel's Educational System

The Democratic School is clearly different from the typical Israeli school. It nevertheless exists within the overall framework of Israeli public education. Although tuition is charged, it is not strictly speaking a private school in the American sense. To establish how the Democratic School functions in relation to Israeli schools generally and how it departs from standard practice, therefore, some comparison and contrast is provided.

The present-day education system in Israel is based on the Compulsory Education Law (1949), the State Education Law (1953), certain provisions passed by Israel's parliament, and

amendments to existing laws. The 1949 Compulsory Education Law provided free educational opportunities to all children, ages five to thirteen years old, or kindergarten through eighth grade. By amendment the law now makes education compulsory between the ages of five and sixteen. According to the 1953 State Education Law,

> education in Israel is based on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of Homeland and loyalty to the State and the Jewish people, on practice in agricultural work and handicraft, on pioneer training, and on striving for a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual assistance, and love of mankind.

One goal of Israeli education policy is to abolish class and community barriers. A prescribed core curriculum is provided in order to equip all children, immigrants as well as native-born Israelis, with a common language as well as a common basis of knowledge, of values and ideals (Bentwich, 1965, p. 65). In part, this is accomplished by providing supplementary lessons, smaller classes, appointing mentor teachers to guide and advise beginning teachers, providing books as well as supplementary teaching aids and materials and instituting extra-curricular activities including club and recreational activities.

Like all other public schools, the Democratic School observes an academic year that begins in September and concludes at the end of June and a standard six-day academic week of thirty to thirty-five hours. Instruction in the lower grades at the Democratic School, like other Israeli public schools, takes place in homeroom classes where the homeroom teacher teaches most of subjects. Unlike public secondary schools, however, the high school curriculum in the Democratic School is not differentiated according to Israel's tripartite tracking system: academic, vocational, and agricultural (Kleinberger, 1969, p. 191). In contrast to Israeli high schools, students at the Democratic high school choose their courses, which are taught by teachers who are specialists in various subject matter areas.

The Ministry of Education provides a basic curriculum for all state-run schools, *mamlachti* (state-secular) and *mamlachti-dati* (state-religious). The state educational system also supports separate schools for Arab and Druze students. The main differences are in the language of instruction, Arabic, and in the curriculum, which is designed to reflect the culture and history of the various Arab populations, Muslim, Christian, and Druze (Al-Hag, in Iram & Schmida, 1998, p. 6). Parents choose freely between the options. *Mamlachti* schools are co-

educational while *mamlachti-dati* may be either mixed or separate.

In recent years, Israel has seen the growth of a movement involving greater parental involvement which has resulted in the establishment of state-supported schools such as the Democratic School and TALI schools. TALI is a type of alternative school that emphasizes Jewish culture more than Jewish religion. Like the Democratic School classes, the students and parents in TALI schools are middle- and upper-middle class. TALI schools were created in response to public demand for an alternative to the *mamlachti* and *mamlachti-dati* schools.

The Ministry establishes a core curriculum for all state-supported school that defines the number of lesson-periods per week for each subject in each grade and the material in each subject. In *mamlachti-dati* schools, more time (60%) is assigned to Jewish subjects such as the Bible, the Talmud, and Hebrew Literature than to secular studies (40%). In contrast, schools affiliated with the Labor Movement assign 70% of the time to secular studies and 30% to Jewish studies. Based on the State Education Law, the core curriculum strives to provide education with an emphasis on Hebrew language and Jewish culture, in addition to the development of secular studies

(Iram & Schmida, 1998, p. 17). In sixth grade through eighth grade, for example, subjects studied include Bible, oral law, Hebrew language and literature, history, geography, science, mathematics, English, and physical education. With respect to the emphasis on Jewish studies, the Democratic School much more closely follows the pattern in secular schools.

The Democratic School abides by the attendance law which mandates compulsory education between the ages of five and sixteen. The Democratic School functions as a state-run *mamlachti* school. According to Yaacov Iram and Mirjam Schmida (1998, p. 6), Israel's educational system performs a two-pronged function:

> First, it fulfills the social mission of providing equal educational opportunities to disadvantaged children, mainly of Oriental origin.[6] Second, in recent years it performs the national mission of integrating the various groups of immigrants (i.e. Russians and Ethiopians) into the fabric of Israeli society.

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[6]Oriental is equivalent to Sephardi. Sephardi (plural: Sephardim) is the term used to refer to a Jew whose ancestors came from Spain and Portugal. Today, most persons known as Sephardim are from Moslem countries, North Africa, and the Middle East. Ashkenazi (plural: Ashkenazim) is the term used when referring to a Jew of Central or Eastern European ancestry. Today, most Ashkenazim are of European or American origin.

The Ministry of Education strives to accomplish its social mission by providing academic support, training teachers, and encouraging parental involvement. By teaching Hebrew and Israeli culture to new immigrants, the educational system assists in their integration into Israeli society. In order to make it possible for children of some immigrants to attend schools such as TALI or the Democratic School, tuition may be reduced or scholarships provided.

After completing the eight years of primary school, students in traditional schools - but not at the Democratic School -advance to a tripartite tracking system: academic, vocational, and agricultural. Separate high schools exist for each track. The academic track prepares students for matriculation exams and diploma. Students are chosen on the basis of their academic performance. The matriculation diploma constitutes a prerequisite for admission into institutes of higher education. Any person can take the exams independently of his or her school experience. In practice, the probability for passing the exam is much higher for those who have successfully completed the academic school. According to Iram and Schmida (1998), academic high schools remain the most prestigious type of postprimary education, and the students who earn the matriculation certificate are considered to be the

future elite of Israeli society (p. 41). Half of the graduating seniors at the Democratic School take the exam necessary to be admitted into Israeli institutes of higher education.

Vocational and agricultural high schools are less selective than academic high schools in their admission policies. The vocational curriculum accommodates various learning abilities and trains workers for skilled trades. Since the 1960s, vocational schools have been expanded to provide secondary education to youth of lower economic status, mainly new Sephardic immigrants, in order to minimize economic, cultural, and educational inequalities; however, vocational schools in Israel do not facilitate upward mobility. Instead, they serve as "holding frameworks" for students (pp. 57-58). Many of the agricultural schools are boarding schools and cater to students from broken homes (Shavit-Streifler, 1983, p. 9).

The Democratic School As An Alternative School

As a state-run *mamlachti* school, the Democratic School is obligated to abide by federal and municipal laws. Therefore, the curriculum mandated by the Ministry is presumably in force; however, the format is much less structured than in the traditional school. During my research, to my knowledge, the

Democratic School was not inspected by the Ministry of Educational officials nor did any informants speak of any supervisory visits from the Ministry of Education.

Like experimental schools in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, the curriculum at the Democratic School is based to some extent on principles of developmental psychology. For example, in kindergarten, students learn writing and math when they are ready. Readiness can be shown, for example, when the child approaches the teacher asking to be taught topics of interest. Unlike most regular schools in Israel, children assume important responsibilities with respect both to governance and their own learning. As the child advances from grade to grade, the child is responsible together with the child's *mechanech* for developing an individual education plan.

Unlike the set curriculum of the traditional state-run *mamlachti* schools, the curriculum at the Democratic School is designed by the students in conjunction with their *mechanech* and revolves to a large extent around their life experiences and interests. Course offerings include "Shop", "The Complexities of Contemporary Cinema", and "Myself, My Body, My Soul". Kindergarten students plant a vegetable garden and learn how to make tea from the lemon grass they plant.

Informal socialization is highly valued and takes place while hanging out under The Tree, making trips to the local grocery store, playing a variety of team sports, as well as chatting in the library or using the computers as already indicated. Much of what is actually learned comes from out-of-classroom experiences rather than through the formal curriculum. Students at the Democratic School are expected to learn the values of participation and openness, cooperation, and group sharing in the parliament, the court system, and the various committees. These organizational features of the school reflect those of Korczak's schools in Poland. To some extent, the Democratic School creates an educational experience which redefines the traditional relationship between teacher and student as it seeks to make education student-relevant.

Principal Menachem explains his concern for the students' personal growth and development:

> Shortly after I got married, my wife and I began to think about how to raise children. Although Malkah [my wife] and I are products of the Israeli public school, we did not want to send our kids to the local [state] schools. Instead, we imagined another kind of school, one which promoted individual rights and responsibility, within a democratic framework. Kids would feel free to express themselves. Kids would experience democracy first-hand.

In the course of creating a different kind of learning environment, the school rejects the traditional relationship between teachers and students. For example, students relate to teachers on a first-name basis and frequently form close relationships. Often, students return to their former teachers' rooms to chat. Students and teachers meet to discuss a variety of topics from sports to politics. Off school grounds, students babysit for their teacher's children. In a supportive and informal atmosphere, the teachers encourage the students' to find themselves and their place within the school community. Students and teachers participate equally in one-person-one-vote for parliamentary decisions as well as votes in various committees. At the parliamentary meetings, students have an equal right to speak, and they are encouraged to do so. To develop a sense of autonomy and self-direction, students are given important decision-making responsibilities.

To some extent, the Democratic School serves an atypical student population. According to a graduating senior, Tirzah,

> I came to this school three years ago. . . . My parents placed me in a very religious [high school] environment. I rebelled against it and left everything [the practice of traditional Judaism]. I was looking for something new. On my own, I found the [Democratic] school. The best thing I like about the school is the freedom [stated emphatically]! I like

the freedom to choose.

In response to her educational experience in a traditional orthodox high school, Tirzah, a Sephardic Jewess, chose the Democratic School as she explained, "I was looking for something new." She often wore jeans and a sleeveless top with her shoulder length curly black hair tied back with a bandana. Tirzah spent a lot of time nurturing her creative instincts in classes such as photography and painting, as well as taking the courses required for entrance requirements to the Technion, Israel's MIT, where she planned to study art or architecture.

Many Democratic School students have rejected traditional schooling. The importance of outward signs of self-expression was emphasized by Shlomo, a high school teacher:

> The [Democratic] school has a reputation of being a freak school - kids with long hair, guys with pony tails, torn jeans. . . . It [the Democratic School] is another chance [for some students]. . . . Kids here live democracy. . . . Democracy is in the air.

Such "freak" students are mostly of middle- to upper-middle class. They appear to be products of an Israeli counter-culture, similar to the familiar counter-culture of the 1960s in the United States. In the relaxed atmosphere of the Democratic School, students use the freedom provided by the school's informal framework to learn about themselves. Classes

such as "Who am I?" provided an opportunity for students to explore and develop their identity. Teachers do not consider torn jeans and long hair rebellious or disrespectful; rather, they seem to take pleasure in the students' self-expression, viewing it as an integral part of their personal growth and development.

To parents, the opportunity at the Democratic School to develop creativity, self-confidence, self-discovery, and personal autonomy was important in their decision to enroll their children. Gelah, an American Ashkenazi immigrant and stay-at-home mother of a kindergarten student, explained, "It is open here . . . We [my Israeli husband and I] are eccentric - we do what we want. We think the [Democratic] School is right. We moved into the neighborhood so our daughter could walk to school [kindergarten]." Although she recognized Korczak's name, his influence on the Democratic School, had little or no effect on the decision of her and her husband (a Ph.D. in economics from Boston University) to enroll their daughter there.

Although the Democratic School exists with a state-supported school system, it has clearly embarked on an independent path, based in part on certain basic principles that Korczak developed and implemented in his orphanages.

These ideas, however, seem to be flourishing in an entirely different context and with a vastly different student population. What remains to be addressed is what accounts for the apparent success of his pedagogy in such a different social milieu?

Group High and the Democratic School

Part of the answer to this question may be found in research in schools with similar characteristics. In particular, Ann Swidler (1979) studied two alternative high schools or free schools which she describes as "two nonhierarchical, antibureaucratic organizations" (p. 2). The schools were similar to the Democratic School in several ways. Like the Democratic School, they grew out of grass-roots organizing by white middle class parents, students, and teachers. Like the Democratic School, they promoted self-governance through a nontraditional structure of committees, meetings, and a school council. Student-teacher relationships were informal. Like the Democratic School, these free schools are based on the idea that children can learn best in an atmosphere free from artificial restraint. Swidler makes the case that the 1960s ushered in a whole new era spurred by innovative educators and animated by a rebellion against

authority. Early school reformers such as A.S. Neil (see Chapter Two) were rediscovered. In contrast to the bleak traditional schools, innovative or alternative schools offering a cheerful image of children blossoming in a learning environment based on the students' life experiences and offered a new student-teacher relationship.

Swidler's research on Group High and Ethnic High in Berkeley, California, and my research at the Democratic School, Hadera, Israel, took place at different time periods, the late 1960s and 1995-1996, respectively. There are also notable differences in culture and governing structure. Group High and Ethnic High are alternative high schools; the Democratic School is kindergarten through high school. Despite the differences, there are remarkable similarities in terms of general outlook, pedagogical approach, and social class.

Of the two alternative high schools that Swidler studied, Group High is the one that is more similar to the Democratic School. She maintains that Group High "lived out the free school ideal" (p. 8). Like students at the Democratic School, students of Group High were concerned with the importance of finding their own identity. In an effort to provide an opportunity to facilitate the students' search for their identity, the curriculum at both schools reflected both student

interests and social issues. Group High's courses included "Crime in the Streets" or "What is White?" or "Feminism". The Democratic School's course offerings included courses as "Cinema and Television", "Yoga", and "Feminism". The goal was to provide students with opportunities to facilitate their finding themselves, developing self-esteem, and identifying with the school community.

Students at Group High saw themselves as part of a new social movement, "committed, self-directed, creative participants" (p. 9). Students at the Democratic School also see themselves as self-directed, motivated, and creative participants in the school's community. For the most part, students at both alternative schools were mostly persons who would have been moderately successful students in traditional schools, but they seemed to thrive in an alternative setting. Members of both alternative school communities were academically skilled, intellectually motivated, and cooperative students.

Much of this similarity in outlook and pedagogy can be seen as a function of social class. The majority of Group High's two hundred high school students were white, middle or upper-middle class, and from well-educated liberal families. Similarly, the majority of the Democratic School's three

hundred and twenty-five students are Ashkenazi (European) Jews, middle or upper-middle class. Though the evidence concerning the academic effects of alternative schools is not conclusive, the hidden curriculum of free schools seems to serve the cultural interests of a segment of the educated middle class (p. 147). Many of the parents in both Group High and the Democratic School are professional, technical, or intellectual persons who value the creativity, freedom, and autonomy compatible with the academic values of the respective alternative schools. As Swidler points out, the independence, autonomy, and intellectual curiosity that are facilitated in alternative schools are the same values that many high-status colleges seek in their students (p. 159). Hence, despite their unorthodox behavior, students at Group High and the Democratic School acquire the kind of education that makes for success in institutions of higher learning and professions which require knowledge, innovation, and flexible organizational styles. This seems to be the case even though they are not pursuing a standard curriculum. In this sense, then, these middle-class parents were not sacrificing their aspirations for their children in terms of higher education. Although many of the graduates of Group High rejected the idea of going to university right away, those who wanted to go found receptive

colleges. Similarly, many, both men and women, of the graduating seniors of the Democratic School elect to fulfill their military obligation or travel rather than pursue further education immediately after high school. Many graduates, explained Menachem, later study law and related fields of social justice.

In the case of Israel, ethnic origin has always been a basis of social cleavage (Ben-Porat, 1992, p. 227). Thus, the student population at the Democratic School may be understood as reflecting Israeli class structure. Since Israel's statehood, the bourgeoisie was and continues to be Ashkenazi Jews while Sephardic Jews constitute the majority in the proletariat (p. 231). Bourgeois Ashkenazi Jews have more disposable income for education which they feel is more in tune with their values. It is this latter group that is first of all attracted to the kind of alternative education that the Democratic School provides and can afford the $100 a month tuition that the school charges.

There is a certain irony in the fact that the pedagogy that Korczak developed in his two orphanages with predominantly lower class children now finds expression in the Israeli middle class. But Korczak, after all, was himself a product of a middle-class upbringing and this, along with the influence of

his fellow experimental educators, shaped his pedagogy. Although his pedagogy was revolutionary in many respects, it appeals particularly to a segment of the Israeli middle-class and rests to some extent on a promise of conferring certain advantages to the children being served. It also serves as an alternative for students who, for one reason or another, reject traditional authority structures and see outlets for expressing their individuality. The interests of both parents and students in the Democratic School are therefore served by a kind of education that on one hand breaks with traditional patterns of authority while on the other does not impede - and perhaps even enhances - the chances of higher education and high social standing.

Rejection of Traditional Authority in Alternative Schools

Swidler (p. 16) maintains that the traditional right to authority depends on an institutionalized status office. Authority is invested in certain people because of the positions they hold. Ultimately the commands of authority figures can be backed up with appropriate sanctions. In traditional schools, says Swidler, teachers assert their authority for its own sake, and do so in large part by regulating symbolic aspects of student conduct, demanding

classroom order including attentiveness, and deference to the teacher's status. For the traditional teacher, class management becomes a top priority.

By contrast, teachers in alternative schools are not preoccupied with regulating symbolic aspects of student action. Swidler's alternative schools essentially abolished this form of authority, but teachers were able to establish a kind of authority by virtue of their membership in the school community. In her chapter, "Renouncing Authority," Swidler (1979, p. 31) states

> Group High and Ethnic High abolished authority in the sense that they systematically dismantled the specialized sphere and the distinctive roles upon which authority depends. Although they recognized teachers and students as separate groups, they denied that any special rights or obligations attached to these statuses. Teachers could lead group activities, give advice, or make suggestions, but they could not lay claim to special rights in doing so. Teachers, like students, had to base their claims on others upon their needs as individuals or their interests as members of the school, not on their roles as teachers. If they had functional superiority, they could use it to gain leverage or control. But they could not claim influence because of their status.

During classes, students at the Democratic School and Group High talk to their friends, eat, wander in and out of the room,

work on assignments for other classes, occasionally sleep or play cards without interference from the teacher. There are no assigned seating arrangements; students stretch out wherever they are comfortable. Thus, in these alternative schools, control of the classroom, traditional territory governed by teachers is replaced by the personal influence of "friendship, intimacy, charm, prestige" (p. 72). Teachers at Group High and the Democratic School effectively give up the right to punish or reward students. The "ultimate" sanctions employed by traditional schools, grades and diplomas, have been abandoned as mechanisms for regulating day-to-day relations between students and teachers. In their place, the teachers at the alternative schools substituted a kind of personal charisma as the source of authority. Swidler reports, for example, that "the teachers at Group High and Ethnic High tried to nurture a charismatic aspect to their personal style. They did what they could to make themselves mysterious, unpredictable, and appealing (p. 73)." These charismatic personal qualities serve as a surrogate for traditional authority.

Teachers in alternative schools, according to Swidler, believe that the traditional teacher-student relationship a relationship of dominance and subordination prevents effective teaching and learning (p. 110). In traditional schools, the

teachers' superior mastery of the curriculum justifies the subordination of students to them. The redefinition of authority at the Democratic School and Group High serves to replace traditional educational goals with an emphasis on enhancing student self-esteem and self-realization. In both Group High and the Democratic School, the students become partners in creating a curriculum that affirms students' worth by endorsing self-expression, self-discovery, and personal autonomy as valued education goals. Student life experiences become the focus of the curriculum. It is hoped that with greater relevance of the curriculum to students lives, a heightened involvement of students' in their respective schools would result.

Teachers at both alternative schools reject traditional authority. In doing so, they do not need to protect a special status - a special sphere of rights and obligations within which the right to command rested. With teachers relinquishing the traditional teacher-student relationship, a basis for a new relationship between students and teachers needed to be established. Students treat teachers like pals and call them by their first names. In both schools, the atmosphere is casual; students and teachers dress alike in blue jeans and t-shirts, women occasionally wear long, peasant-style skirts.

Swidler (p. 9) maintains that on its good days, Group High resembles a scout camp or Quaker camp. Sincere young people eagerly tried to do the "right thing" for themselves and the school. A visiting instructor to the Democratic School remarked that school seemed like a summer camp and asked, "When do they [the students] learn?"

In the Democratic School and Group High, "casual egalitarianism" also influences relations between students. In both schools, for example, students are expected to listen to one another with attentiveness in structured situations. In the Democratic School, for example, parliamentary sessions, often began by either a teacher or student reminding all persons present to give their utmost attention to the responses of their fellow participants, the majority being classmates. Simcoe, an immigrant from the Netherlands, started his physical education class for kindergarten children by suggesting that they pay attention to their classmates and that each person needed to participate.

Being a student at the Democratic School included expectations concerning the treatment of others the way: one should treat others as he or she would like to be treated in an ideal home situation. The authority to enforce this behavior is vested in the self-governing structures that Korczak devised

rather than in the exercise of traditional teacher authority. Examples of inappropriate behavior between students off-campus often are referred to the Court of Peers. One case involved throwing food on the school bus. The defendant, a kindergarten student, received a verbal reprimand from the Court of Peers. Another case before the Court of Peers involved two male high school students who picked on an elementary student as he waited for a public bus. The high school students' parents were notified and the students and were expelled for a day. In both cases, students were tried by their peers. Punishment was meted out according to the severity of the crime, the number of previous cases brought against the defendant, the age of the defendant, and school policy as outlined in The Democratic School Handbook. For the most part, the Court of Peers provides a forum for students to be listened to in a manner that would facilitate understanding and forgiveness. It is hoped that such a forum would be a factor in developing peer relations.

In Group High, the commitment to self-governance is expressed in three major institutional forms: the "collectives," the intercollective council, and all-school meetings (p. 26). Each collective is organized around a group of like interests. Each student chooses a collective based on

friendships with other students or teachers affiliated with the collective, or the subject of the collective. There are four (later five) large collectives. The largest collective, Riots and Roses, blends the interests of politics and ecology; Free Fall's emphasizes individual development and group process. Each collective runs its own affairs, plans activities, and discussed school issues in collective meetings. In the Democratic School, the committees serve the same purpose as the collective. They include the Parliamentary committee, student acceptance committee, and the teacher acceptance committee (see Chapter Four). The average committee consists of five members; the chairperson reported directly to the Parliament. Each committee functions as outlined in The Democratic School Handbook. General elections of committee members takes place one month after school begins.

In Group High, the intercollective council is a coordinating body composed of a teacher and a student from each collective and several students elected at large. Functions included making recommendations, writing reports, coordinating the collectives, and carrying out decisions of the all-school meeting. This is one instance where the Democratic School has no such counterpart; rather, the duties and responsibilities of Group High's intercollective council are part of the function

of the Democratic School's Parliament, all-school meeting.

Status equalization is not without dilemmas. For teachers, it requires that they depend heavily on their personal influence. Having renounced the authority of traditional teachers, teachers at the Democratic School and Group High seek to develop closer ties with their students than traditional schooling normally allows. The informal atmosphere of both alternative schools encourages the formation of personal close ties. As a guest speaker in Woman's Studies, Gamel, the teacher of Arabic, shared intimate details of her life with high school female students. Sitting in a circle, the students appeared captivated by Gamel's openness and frankness as she described her life as a native-born, Islamic Palestinian. Similarly, Alice, who teaches in the women's studies class at Group High, described her love life, attitudes towards marriage and children and her feelings about being a woman. In both instances, the teachers were willing to share their own personal lives as a precondition for openness and commitment on the part of their respective students. Besides what is shared in classes, the Democratic School's student body seem to know a lot about the private lives of the staff, such as which teachers lived together and the approximate "due date" of the principal's wife. The informal exchanges by the teachers with

the students about their personal experiences open the channels of communication. Whether the information is "passed" while sitting under The Tree, or during a game of basketball, teachers at the Democratic School seemed to have their students' "number." In effect, these personal disclosures and discussions of what would usually be considered usually guarded details of one's life represent an alternative to the traditional authority structure. A community is thus created based not only on shared intimacy but shared power.

In the Democratic School and Group High, egalitarianism resulted in students being given new structural sources of power: self-governance. Students are not fully equal in authority to teachers in part because students are not accountable to outside agencies and because they were required to attend school, whether alternative or traditional. Nevertheless, in the Democratic School, a student can participate in the hiring of teachers by sitting on the six-member committee responsible for hiring new teachers. Participatory democracy affects school policy as it is debated, discussed, and ratified in school meetings of both alternative schools. The principle of student power could best be summarized by Group High's ideology (Swidler, 1979, p 26):

> Perhaps the most striking aspect of

> [Group High] is the partnership between staff and students. All decision-making is done by the staff and student community together, including the hiring of teachers, curriculum, time scheduling, etc. A net result of this partnership is a sharing of the failures as well as the successes of the project. The staff never 'owns' school problems, but rather shares them with the students.

Formal authority is also replaced by a sphere of coordinated activities where individuals and groups are united by their shared engagement in a purpose (Swidler, 1979, p. 176). At first glance, both Group High and the Democratic School appear to lack structure. Upon closer examination, one becomes aware not only of the similarity of the institutions' organizational structure but of the way in which close personal relationships between teachers and students have become a substitute for traditional power relationships. Both seek to provide a particular kind of learning environment that would facilitate students' autonomy and independence as well as self-confidence and inner-direction. Such status equalization promotes the students' commitment to and participation in the school's organizational life.

Although Group High has no commitment to Korczak's pedagogy in particular, it reflects the basic principles of some of Korczak's like-minded contemporaries. In the Democratic

School, by contrast, a formal commitment to Korczak ideas exists, although it is not always clear that the teachers and students consciously see themselves as putting those ideas into practice. It is rather the institutional structures that Korczak devised, such as the Parliament and the Court of Peers, that are the most visible reminders of Korczak's legacy at the Democratic School. His status in Israel as a Holocaust martyr also has important symbolic meaning.

What makes the Democratic School and Group High so similar is the way they have replaced the traditional authority structure. Essentially, they accomplish this in two ways: First, an alternative governing structure is established in which students participate on a virtually equal basis with the adults in the schools. Secondly, and equally important, teachers and administrators relate to students in rather intimate and personal ways. As a result, personal relationships and shared experiences serve to replace traditional power relationships. Contrary to popular impression, alternative schools are not anarchistic. They replace one kind of authority structure with another.

Group High and later the Democratic School sought to create a particular kind of learning environment in which autonomy and independence as well as self-confidence and inner-direction of

their students were enhanced. To do so, according to Swidler (1979), the alternative schools she studied were created as organizations without traditional authority, characterized by the "tension between cohesion (of purpose, individual effort and group exchange) and disintegration" (p. 182). The workings of organizational control and conflict, maintains Swidler, revolve around this tension. In part, the freedom of such organizations without traditional authority to hold their members, coordinate effort and sustain a sense of purpose occurred as the members participated in the development of a group culture. Thus, both schools used the members' values of self-actualization, freedom, and autonomy as catalysts for public participation and the sharing of private feelings. This capacity to voice disagreement and conflict in a public open forum provided opportunity to build a shared common culture. Thus, the ideals of self-realization and group solidarity provided both schools with the resources necessary to build a cohesive and sustain a school culture. Absolutely critical to the creation of an institutional culture both in Group High and in the Democratic School was the creation of governing structures consistent with the schools reigning ideology. In the Democratic School, many teachers were quite ignorant of Korczak's philosophy. A cohesive school culture nevertheless

emerged by virtue of formal structures such as the Court of Peers and informal structures such as The Tree.

Will Korczak's Pedagogy Survive?

Lawrence Cremin (1961) maintains that the ideals that motivated the alternative school movement of the 1960s were the very ideals which inspired the innovative educators of the early twentieth century. The ideals - democracy, respect for the individual, cooperation, autonomy, and independence - are important in the organizational structure of the Democratic School. Cremin (p. 350-351) suggests that the movement of innovative schools failed because it did not keep pace with the continuing transformation of American society. Are alternative schools such as the Democratic School also doomed to disappear? In an ever-changing world, innovative educators must be able to persuade ever larger segments of the population that schools such as Group High and the Democratic School do not exist just for fun and games. They have a serious mission. That mission is largely reflected in the effort to substitute new forms of teacher-student interaction for traditional ones. Presumably, if such new forms of interaction are successful and satisfying in a school setting, then the same relationships will be reflected in the larger society. It is in this sense that

Korczak's pedagogy would be mischaracterized as simply child-centered. Behind the love and attention he showered on his children, there was a larger social purpose. Through self-governance and the rejection of traditional authority, a new democratic community would emerge - or so he hoped.

The children of professionals and academics who populated the Democratic School and Group High, according to Swidler (1979), learned the group skills necessary for new organizational patterns in the innovative sectors of the public and private economy. Thus, Group High and the Democratic School represented in part attempts to create new organizational forms. Most likely, the extreme of organizations without traditional authority as demonstrated by both schools is not likely to be widely diffused; however, the skills and ideologies which the members learned were in response to real limitations of traditional organizational forms and the ideologies that sustain them.

A school's survival depends to some extent on the perception of whether the school prepares its students for the real world. Most schools seek to adjust their students to the kind of society in which they find themselves. In many respects Korczak wanted his students to transcend the circumstances they were in. His pedagogy reflects that

purpose. When a child completed his or her stay at Our Home or Orphans Home, Korczak (1967, p. xiv) gave the child a farewell message:

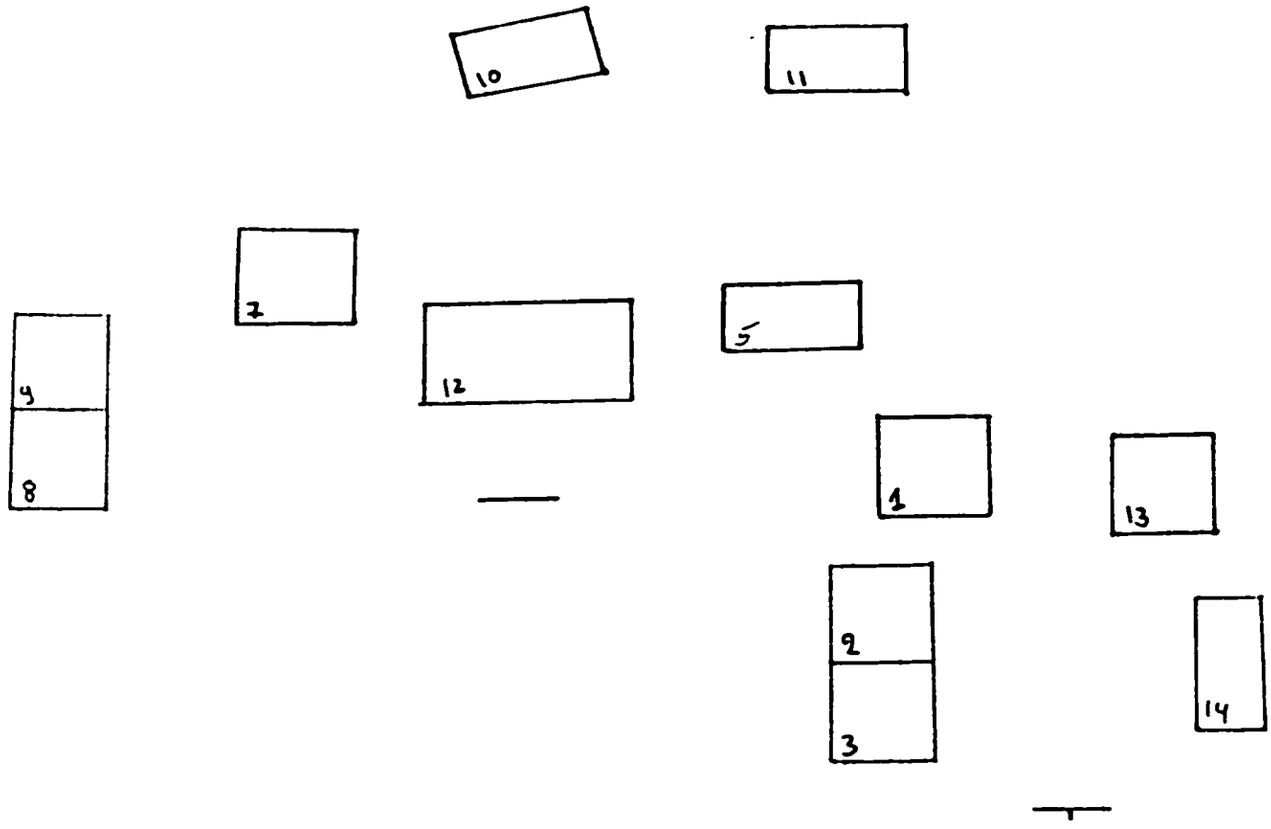
> We did not give you God, because you must look and find Him within yourself.
> We did not give you love of country because your heart and reason must dictate your own choice.
> We did not give you love of Man, because love comes from forgiveness which must be discovered through effort.
> We did give 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.

That farewell message emphasizes the values of justice and faith in humanity he so revered rather than specific preparation for the tasks of life.

To some extent, Korczak's legacy may be gleaned from the testimony of his alumni. One alumnus Daniel, for example, commented at a gathering marking the thirtieth anniversary of Korczak's death, "Korczak made my life difficult, because he educated me - successfully - to believe in justice, when we live in a world where brute force prevails" (Arnon, 1983, p. 34). Although he thought he was successfully educated, Daniel apparently felt that there was something of a mismatch between Korczak's high ideals and the practical world of affairs. Bernard, another alumnus, reflected a similar

sentiment: "If I'm a decent person today, it's because of Korczak. True, I haven't elbowed my way to greatness or wealth, but at least I can look my children in the eye with a clear conscience" (ibid.).

Success in Korczak's view was not measured in terms of material success but in terms of higher truths. Life in Orphans Home did not prepare Daniel and Bernard to adjust to the world around them. Korczak's orphanages stressed the value of self-realization and participatory democracy rather than adjustment to existing social conditions, and these values are not always compatible with the workaday world. If, as these alumni seemed to think, their experiences in Korczak's orphanage served to develop "a longing for a better life, a life of truth and justice," did it fail? I think not. The survival of schools like the Democratic School and others like it that may evolve depends more than anything in their ability to sustain Korczak's spiritual core, but at the same time, they need to balance that emphasis with the realities of the world around them. In the end, Korczak's pedagogy did more than prepare a person for the real world; it provided a foundation for a life worth living.



Key:

1. Parliament
2. Hebrew
3. Arts & Crafts
4. Art
5. Administrative Offices
6. All-Purpose Room
7. Bomb Shelter/Music
8. Literature
9. English
10. Court of Peers
11. Science
12. Library
13. Drama
14. Shop

Course Listing

Sciences
-Archeology
-Biology
  Beginning
  Laboratory
-Environmental Sciences
  Protecting the Planet
-Mathematics
  Algebra
  Geometry
-Physics
-Psychology
  The Origins of Thought
-Sociology
  Modern Religions
-Topography

Foreign Languages
-Arabic
-French (very advanced)
-English (I-VII, tutorial)

Physical Education
-Movement

Shop

Home Economics
-Cooking
-Sewing

Preparation for Bagrut
-Citizenship
-English
-French
-Geography
-Hebrew Language
-Literature
-Tanach, Part II

Arts
-Bible
  Joseph's Storytelling
  Samuel II; Kings II
-Complexities of
  Contemporary Cinema
-Creative Writing
  Master Class
  For Children
  Beginning Writing
-Drama
-Drawing
  Drawing & Sculpture
  Illustrations
  Nature
-Hebrew Language
  Tutorial
  Various Levels
-History
  In Search of Nation-
    hood
-Literature
  Literature of the
    Holocaust
  Tutorial
  Various Levels
-Music
-Photography
  Still Photography
  Various Level
    Workshops
-Sculpture
-Theatre Appreciation

Miscellaneous
-Actions & Happenings
-Me, My Body, My Soul
-Who am I?

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