

Korbzack's character as emerging
from the 'The last journey' myth:
PROTEST AND DEFIANCE

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Korbzack's defiant and protesting character emerges from several texts.

source	Nahum Remba From: Nevo Korbzack and the children on their way to Umschlag	Jerahmiel Weingarten Janusz Korbzack - the tortured Jew
perception	protest	heroism and defiance
highlighted value	Human Dignity	Courageous leadership

Nahum Remba was a community worker. During the deportation of Jews from Warsaw, Remba established a "first aid station", next to the Umschlagplatz, which was actually a fake "hospital". As the "hospital's" director, while risking his life, Remba pointed out to German officers Jews who - according to him - were too ill to make the journey east. Convinced by Remba, the Germans allowed to admit those Jews to the "hospital". Many owe their lives to his heroism. In 1943, Nahum Remba was murdered in Majdanek.

Remba knew Korbzack well, and he describes what happened at the Umschlagplatz, and on the way to the train cars: **"This day - completely stunned me"** he wrote. Remba tried to seat the children of the orphanage in the shade, at the end of the line - hoping they would be lucky and not be sent that day. He suggested to Korbzack that they go together to the Jewish community asking to save him and the children, but Korbzack refused to part with the children. From the moment the direct German order came, Remba describes the march from the Umschlagplatz to the train as a parade - the children in fours, Korbzack at the head carrying two children. Remba describes the order of the march, pointing out the names of the adults who walked at the head of each group of children. **"They walked to their deaths with**



contempt for the murderers in their eyes. Seeing Korczak, The ghetto policemen stood still and saluted. The Germans asked: "Who is this man?" ... I sobbed ... in sight of this murder."

According to Remba, It was clear to everyone that it was a murder. Even on their last journey - they did not renounce protest - "a silent and organized protest" - the only way left for them to protest. Remba describes them as platoons: "Contrary to images of crowds being led to slaughter - here was a procession, the likes of which I did not expect to see... These were the first Jewish companies that faced death with a sense of honor, looking with contempt and rage at the murderers. They were pioneers, and those who follow them will avenge their blood."

Remba corresponds with Aba Kovner's call at the beginning of 1942 in Vilna, saying it is better to die as free fighters; to defend oneself to the last breath, and in the case of Korczak and the orphanage - to protest. Remba ends his description with a wish for revenge, and by presenting Korczak's character as he wishes to convey it to his readers: "Korczak set a model and an example for his generation – young and old."

Within the inferno at the Umschlagplatz, Korczak, the staff and the children kept their **humanity**, their **values**- in face of the murderous regime, whips and all that happened there. Beyond heroism, a myth of protest and defiance emerges here, out of preserving human dignity and human values.

The ideal - Remba presents the readers with **protest** as an ideal.

The value from which the perception of protest stems is **human dignity**.

Jerahmiel Weingarten was an educator at Korczak's Orphanage for several years, and also worked with him in the Polish Jewish weekly gazette for children, "Mały przegląd" (A little review). In the ghetto, he lived next door to the orphanage, and was often in contact with Korczak. His description is based on the writings of eyewitnesses whom he considered reliable, and on Korczak's "ghetto diary".

In his description, "Korczak, Stefa and the other staff members knew what was coming... They prepared the children to the best of their ability. Their explanation suited each child's age and understanding." They had no hesitation about how to behave, but continued on the educational and

humanitarian path that characterized them all their lives. In the same spirit, there was no attempt to hide or lie to the children, only adapting the explanation to the children's ability to understand.

Korczak prepared everything in advance. The surprising and strangely orderly march - in light of the circumstances - is, in Weingarten's eyes, defiance towards the murderers. Korczak fearlessly leads the marchers. He continues to take care of everyone, carrying two young children who had difficulty walking. Next to him was the bearer of the flag with a blue Star of David on the white side, and a reddish chestnut leaf on the green side. In this description, Weingarten combines a Zionist symbol (a blue Star of David) with a Polish symbol (the chestnut leaf), thereby emphasizing the integration of these aspects of Korczak's life.

A quote from Dr. Gideon Hausner sums up this description: "**Korczak was the noblest symbol of Polish Jews.**"

The ideal - Weingarten presents the readers with **heroism and defiance** in the face of evil, as an ideal.

The value from which the perception of heroism and defiance stems is **courageous leadership**.

Summary:

Both Weingarten and Remba describe a protest on the part of Korczak marching with the children to their deaths. Both authors refer to the uniqueness of the confident and orderly march in the face of death. The protest is expressed in Weingarten's description of the combined Jewish and Polish flags - indicating that Korczak saw himself as Polish until the end, even in the orderly march - in spite of everything. Remba points out the contemptuous expression on their faces towards their murderers, and the lowness of the murderers who do not even know who that famous and well-known person is, whom they lead to his death.

Weingarten portrays Korczak's character as a role model. Remba encourages and inspires resistance and protest, it seems that it is important for him to say these things both to future generations and to the Jews who continued to suffer the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe. He may have tried to show that even when things are lost it is important to preserve human dignity, even when



it is impossible to save and be saved - one can protest, as Korczak did.
Remba adds a call for revenge.

Sources of information about the phrase "Let us not go like sheep to the slaughter":

- ~ [ויקיפדיה – אל נלך כצאן לטבח](#)
- ~ [הרצאתה של פרופ' דינה פורת על הרקע ההיסטורי ל"כרוז המרד"](#)
- ~ [דינה פורת – ישראל היום: למה הכוונה ב"כצאן לטבח"?](#)
- ~ [הארץ - "ולא נמות כצאן לטבח יובל". על הקשר הלשוני בין מרד החשמונאים למרד גטו וילנה](#)