

Feliks Koneczny

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THE POLISH CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Feliks Koneczny

Edited by
Paweł Skrzydlewski

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I.

FELIKS KONECZNY:
PERSON AND WORK

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FELIKS KONECZNY'S BIOGRAPHY AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE EPOCH

FAMILY, CHILDHOOD, SCHOOL YEARS

Feliks Karol Koneczny came from a Polish family settled in the Moravian town of Hranice. His ancestors came from Silesia with the army of Jan III Sobieski, who was heading to Vienna in 1683.¹ He was born on November 1, 1862 at 17 Kleparski Square in Krakow.² When he was 10 years old, Feliks started his education in the elite St Ann's Gymnasium, known today as the Bartłomiej Nowodworski High School.³ In 1873, after passing the entrance examination and paying the appropriate fee, he was accepted to the first class. In May of 1876 he left school irrevocably with three failing grades: in Latin, Greek and History.⁴ Years later he maintained that "experience teaches that no one in school has ever learned to speak a language."⁵ Having failed to receive promotion to the fifth class after a half-year break, in 1877 he repeated the fourth class in St. Hyacinth's Gymnasium.

¹ J. Koneczny, "Poprawki poczynione przez wnuka prof. Konecznego w 1951 roku," in *O ład w historii*, ed. F. Koneczny (Londyn: Towarzystwo im. Romana Dmowskiego, 1977), p. 167.

² *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 13, s.v., "Koneczny Feliks," p. 498.

³ S. Możdżeń, *Reformy szkoły średniej w Galicji w latach 1884–1914* (Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1989), p. 43.

⁴ The National Archives in Krakow, Bartłomiej Nowodworski High School in Krakow, Manuscript 134, p. 295.

⁵ F. Koneczny, *Państwo i prawo* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 1997), p. 183.

Feliks started learning in the new place very ambitiously, receiving perfect and high grades for his fourth class certificate and getting third place among 37 students and a high general note.⁶ As a 17-year-old boy, he fell into depression and began to play truant and run away from home. He was not able to finish the seventh class in the ordinary course due to progressive illness, so he had to withdraw from examinations in the winter of 1880.⁷

After a two and a half year break, in June 1883, he returned to the matriculation exam. He received six satisfactory marks, three C marks and one unsatisfactory mark—in Mathematics. On September 12, 1883, he entered for the resit examination, which ended successfully for him with a satisfactory result.⁸ After a number of years, he said deprecatingly about the subject of his failures: “In the distribution and system of knowledge, two factors entered, the least qualified: mathematics and literature—both similar in the fact that in their nature they can only determine forms.”⁹

In the autumn of 1883, Koneczny began his studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University, where history was at that time a very important subject. Stanislaw Smolka was the director of the Department of the History of Poland, Wincenty Zakrzewski that of the Department of the History of Austria, and Anatol Lewicki that of the Department of History.

In the first year of his studies, Koneczny attended strictly historical lectures: Zakrzewski’s on Greek history, on the history of the eighteenth century and on the French Revolution; Smolka’s on the history of Poland and those about the reign of Sigismund II Augustus; and Lewicki’s on the history of Austria. A prominent representative of the conservative camp, Michael Bobrzyński was the lecturer in Polish law. He was regarded as the first Polish law historian. In addition, the beginner student took part in classes in Polish literature conducted by Stanisław Tarnowski, whose influence is found in Koneczny’s later works *Życie i zasługi Adama Mickiewicza* (1898) and *Teatr krakowski* (1905). In terms of aesthetics and pedagogy, he did his apprenticeship

⁶ The National Archives in Krakow, St. Hyacinth’s Gymnasium and Lyceum in Krakow (hereinafter: HGL), Manuscript 14, p. 13.

⁷ Ibidem, HGL, Manuscript 17, p. 19.

⁸ Ibidem, HGL, Manuscript 61, p. 38.

⁹ F. Koneczny, *O wielości cywilizacji* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 1996), p. 11.

under the direction of Teofil Ziemia; he also learned geology from Władysław Szajnocha and geography and statistics under the direction of Francis Schwarzenberg-Czerny.¹⁰

In 1885, Koneczny, under the direction of Zakrzewski, wrote his first seminary paper entitled "An opportunity to create a modern administrative type in Royal Prussia in the second quarter of the 16th century." It was probably then that he also wrote a dissertation entitled "Administration of the German Order until 1400" (unpublished).

Zakrzewski, a researcher of wide horizons, an excellent methodologist and a caretaker of young talents, had an indisputable influence on Koneczny's development of his research profile and the development of his need for self-dependent creativity. Under his direction, Koneczny learned to deepen the critique of sources and to formulate judgments *sine ira et studio*. After a number of years, in one of his last books, he recalled the seminar as follows:

The beginning of my investigations into historical laws goes back to the years of my student life, when I scared the only professor I owe something to with issues of history, and thanks to him I learned something. The late Wincenty Zakrzewski, who is worthy of great reverence, was not at all delighted by these fondnesses, and he thought that they would pass away and be lost with my professional studies, which I did not avoid. Oh, My Master!¹¹

Under Zakrzewski's direction, Koneczny prepared his first published scientific paper, *Kazimierz the Great as the Protector of the Riga Church* (1887).

THE BEGINNINGS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

In 1888, Koneczny submitted a dissertation entitled "The oldest relations of Livonia with Poland until 1393" to the Council of the Faculty of Philosophy. He prepared it under the direction of Zakrzewski,

¹⁰ Jagiellonian University Archives (hereinafter: JUA) S II 134–135, Catalogue of Students JU, 1883–1884 (Senat's Catalogue).

¹¹ F. Koneczny, *Prawa dziejowe* (Londyn: Towarzystwo im. Romana Dmowskiego, 1982), p. 1.

and the reviewer was Lewicki.¹² The two critical comments by the reviewer were especially important: a too one-sided presentation of the problem and too far-reaching conclusions. The promoter's opinion was the same. The professor pointed out that during the interpretation of the collected material, the author uses too bold combinations and misleadingly and problematically identifies certain historical processes. Over the years, the specifics of Koneczny's scientific workshop have created a distance between him and the historical academe.

His official promotion took place on July 2, 1888. After graduating, Koneczny continued his research work by attending Smolka's seminary classes. This resulted in three essays about Prussian matters. One of these essays—about the relations of Poland with Livonia during the times of Sigismund II Augustus—was awarded by the Academy of Skills with a scholarship from the foundation of Udalryk Heyzman. In the same year, Koneczny submitted another dissertation entitled *The policy of the German Order in 1389 and 1390* (1889) for publication in the Academy. Koneczny received a prize from the Historical-Literary Society in Paris at the Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz Contest (1200 francs) for his next article entitled “Jogaila and Witold during the Union of Krewo.”¹³

In 1879, Pope Leo XIII made the Secret Archives of the Vatican available. Thanks to the efforts of Smolka and Zakrzewski, a group of researchers from the Academy of Learning went to Rome (1886). From January to August 1890, Koneczny participated in it, conducting inquiries in Rome, Florence and Venice. In Rome he collaborated with Stanislaw Windakiewicz and the Italian scholar Edoardo Soderini.¹⁴ From the Vatican he sent monthly reports to Smolka about his research, which primarily concerned the Polish and Swedish mission of Nuncio Antonio Possevino.¹⁵ His work in the Vatican over several years resulted in the following dissertations: *Walter von Plettenberg*,

¹² Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University (hereinafter: FPh), II 504. Koneczny's PhD notecase.

¹³ Scientific Library of the Polish Academy of Learning and the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow (hereinafter: SL PAL and PAS Kr), manuscript 7097, vol. 2. Letter from L. Gadon to F. Koneczny, Paris 4 V 1890.

¹⁴ Archive of Science of the Polish Academy of Learning and the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow (hereinafter: AS PAL and PAS), W II 24. A letter from S. Smolka to E. Soderini, Krakow 21 I 1890.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, W II 25. Rome expedition.

the *Livonian Captain of the Order, Lithuania and Moscow* (1891) and *John III of Sweden and Possevino's Mission* (1900). In the first dissertation, contrary to the common opinion expressed by Western scholars about the outstanding virtues of Plettenberg, Koneczny showed the unfounded character of his legend based on false and biased research by German and Russian scholars. In the second one, there was good knowledge of universal history and Vatican sources.

WORK AT THE CHANCELLERY OF THE ACADEMY OF LEARNING: STUDIES AND MONOGRAPHS ON SILESIA

After returning from Italy and the payment of the Barczewski scholarship ended, from September 1890 Smolka employed the young Dr Koneczny at the Academy of Learning. A year later, Koneczny was promoted to the position of adjunct. On November 27, 1891, he was chosen in an open vote to become a collaborator of the Historical Commission.

Koneczny worked at the Academy until September 30, 1897. Among the works published at this time, the following deserve special attention: *Jogaila and Witold During the Union of Krewo* (1893) and *The History of Silesia* (1897)—a monograph that was intended to be his habilitation. In the first of these dissertations, Koneczny, apart from the political side of the events, presented important legal and state issues. In 1921, the most prominent expert on the Polish system, Oswald Baltzer, when discussing some of the more important studies on history of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, wrote: "We owe the conclusion about the incorporation of Lithuania into Poland to Feliks Koneczny."¹⁶

In his work about Silesia, he emphasized the close connection of this land to Poland, despite its separation from the Polish Republic in the fourteenth century. He returned to the issues of this land several times in political discourses concerning modern history, including in *About Silesia* (1905), *Social and Economic Relations in Silesia* (1905), *German Oświęcim or Polish Cieszyn?* (1917), *Plebiscite in Cieszyn Silesia* (1919), and *Czech and Polish Historical Rights to Cieszyn*

¹⁶ O. Baltzer, *Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie* (Lwów: Towarzystwo Naukowe we Lwowie, 1921), p. 82.

(1919). He remained in constant and close contact with Silesians—during the period of Austrian rule he went to the Prussian partition, and after it regained independence he went to Katowice and Ruda Śląska, where his youngest son Stanisław settled. He also collaborated with such prominent Silesian politicians as Adam Napieralski, Wojciech Korfanty and the Michejda brothers. The door of his house was also open to the clergy: Bishop Stanisław Adamski, Fr. Ferdinand Machaya, Fr. Joseph Londzin and Fr. Stanisław Radziejewski.¹⁷ It is also significant that during the disputes over Silesian Cieszyn and the Silesian Uprisings, in spite of his kinship with the Czechs and his interest in the Slavic community, he stood firmly in the position that these lands belong to Poland. At home he used to say: “I would like to fight for Wrocław.”¹⁸

Koneczny finished *The History of Silesia* in February 1896, and it was published the following year by the Katolika press, whose editor was then Adam Napieralski. In his work, the author expressed his joy at having the opportunity of writing for simple Polish people, because “other books written for scholars weigh much less in my eyes.”¹⁹ The aim of the publication was to teach Silesians the history of their own country, as well as to highlight their relationship with Poland.

In unexplained circumstances, on July 10, 1897, Stanisław Smolka—General Secretary of the Academy of Learning—decided to transfer Koneczny to the National Archives of Land and Town in Krakow.²⁰

In the stifling atmosphere caused by the conflict with Smolka, Koneczny felt compelled to resign from his job at the Academy of Learning and move to a lower-paid job in the Jagiellonian Library.

¹⁷ Oral account of M. Wiatrowa, Skomielna Biała, 26 June 1999, recording in the author’s private hands.

¹⁸ Correspondence of the author with W. Koneczny, Sanok 3 December 1997.

¹⁹ F. Koneczny, *Dzieje Śląska* (Komorów–Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Antyk – Marcin Dybowski, 1999), p. 506.

²⁰ AS PAL and PAS Kr, PAS, Correspondence of the Secretary-General, Manuscript 2854/97.

WORK AT THE JAGIELLONIAN LIBRARY

He began his work at the Jagiellonian Library on May 27, 1897 as a trainee.²¹ In the public opinion of his time, work in the library was "an asylum for people unable to do other jobs and therefore [were] good for books."²² This kind of work marked the professional degradation and collapse of Koneczny's academic career. In the atmosphere of the "Stańczykowski Krakow," he did not feel good; he felt rancour towards Smolka and Piekosiński. He broke off relations with Cracovian conservatives, blaming them for his failures in life.²³ In the autumn of 1897 he began looking for a better-paid job, competing with Wiktor Czermak and Jan Kozubski. His nomination for the new position did not solve Koneczny's financial troubles, however.

He got his desired function of amanuensis only in 1906. This allowed him to take up his literary and political career. The advancement was related to the changes that took place in this scientific institution. In 1906, after Karol Estreicher, the well-known historian of the Jagiellonian times and prominent Lviv librarian Frederick Papée became the director of the library. Because he cooperated with a group of young and talented workers, including Koneczny, he could start the work of modernizing the library and adapting it for scientific purposes. After the death of Władysław Wisłocki, Koneczny took over the manuscript section. In the library, Koneczny also met Vladimir Lenin during his stay in Krakow.

JOURNALISTIC, EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

In 1897 Koneczny began publishing the biweekly illustrated magazine *Światło*. Because of a lack of money, only five issues of the magazine were printed. There was a lot about the folklore of the southern regions of Poland; in the literary supplements, publications by such

²¹ JUA S II 906. Copy from 28 V 1897.

²² F. Koneczny, "Karol Estreicher" [obituary], *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 22 (1908), p. 799.

²³ SL PAL and PAS Kr, Manuscript 7097, V. 1. Letter from A. Górski to F. Koneczny, Kraków 8 VII 1898.

writers as Zygmunt Sarnecki, Władysław Orkan, and Ignacy Sewer Maciejowski²⁴ were announced. In 1901, Koneczny was elected as a co-editor of the Literary Commission.²⁵ At the meeting on March 17, 1904, he informed his colleagues about the discovery of previously unknown reports of the first visit to the Krakow Academy by Hugo Kołłątaj in 1777.²⁶ From 1891 he also worked in the Krakow Literary Association, which mainly organized lectures, and he subscribed the press to the Association's library.²⁷

Another important aspect of Koneczny's journalistic activity was popularizing historical knowledge among people. He formulated his education program for the peasantry as a twenty-year-old man in a letter to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski.²⁸ Kraszewski helped him to establish contacts with the Folk School Society, where he made a speech about Silesia and Galicia. He also lectured for a short time at the Helena Kaplińska Feminine Gymnasium and, despite his conservative views, on the courses of the Adam Mickiewicz People's University. In his youth he traveled around almost all of Lesser Poland and Silesia with lectures on historical and literary subjects. As a good lecturer, a keen observer of political and social life, and a polemicist, he was popular in the national camp, though formally he never belonged to it. In his lectures he told his audience, among other things, about the need to increase the number of public schools and public libraries. He postulated the creation of a company that would publish books on scientific themes for the general public and accessible historical syntheses, examples of which he gave thanks to his three famous works: *The History of Poland* (1902), *The History of Poland During the Rule of the Piast Dynasty* (1903) and *The History of Poland During the Rule of the Jagiellonian Dynasty* (1903). His theses caused a lot of opposition in the historical academe. As Tadeusz Stanisław Grabowski stated, the criticism mainly concerned "a fanatical love of certain principles, doctrines and beliefs, resulting

²⁴ E. Będzińska, E. Madej, "Z korespondencji literackiej Feliksa Konecznego," *Rocznik Biblioteki PAN w Krakowie* 15 (1969), p. 280.

²⁵ AS PAL and PAS Kr, PAS, W I-193, k. 36 v.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, W I, 193, k. 50 v. Reports from Literary Commission meetings 1875–1933.

²⁷ Library of the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław, Manuscript 7700 II, k. 295. A letter from F. Koneczny to O. Balzer, Kraków 26 IV 1892.

²⁸ Jagiellonian Library, Manuscript 6510 IV, 369–370. A letter from F. Koneczny to J.I. Kraszewski, Kraków 26 IX 1883.

from profound religiousness, traditionalism and dependence on Rome; and it was the reason for this almost fighting tone of Koneczny's work; and it gave rise to frequent misunderstandings between him and the scientific academe."²⁹

The achievement of his life's stabilization allowed him to engage in Slavonic activities. These activities were supported by the Slavic Club and its press organ, the monthly magazine *Świat Słowiański*, edited by Koneczny, which were established in December 1901 on the initiative of Marian Zdziechowski and August Sokołowski.³⁰ The Slavic Club represented a Slavophile direction with a clear anti-German attitude; it was a rather peripheral political trend, however, as the majority of Galician politicians were more oriented towards cooperation with the central states than with the tsarist Russia.³¹

After the last publication of *Świat Słowiański* in the summer of 1914, Koneczny worked for more than a year at the editorial office of *Głos Narodu*.³² As a deputy editor-in-chief, he was known for his anti-German orientation and Slavophile views. His work was accepted by Polish bishops (including Adam Stefan Sapieha and Józef Sebastian Pelczar).³³ In his letter to Koneczny, Józef Sebastian Pelczar congratulated him:

I am very pleased that you are taking charge of *Głos Narodu*, because your character, your past activities and honesty for Catholic principles, besides excellent talents, are for me and other bishops a guarantee that this difficult case is in good hands. God bless you and your associates.³⁴

²⁹ T.S. Grabowski, "Feliks Koneczny," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 57 (1949), p. 337.

³⁰ SL PAL and PAS Kr, Manuscript 7097, V. 2. Letter from K. Włodkiewicz to F. Koneczny, Rome 16 I 1905.

³¹ See more: J. Kochan, "Oblicze ideowo-polityczne «Świata Słowiańskiego»," *Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej* 18, no. 2 (1979), pp. 41–62; Z. Solak, "Marian Zdziechowski i Klub Słowiański," *Studia Historyczne* 30, no. 2 (1987), pp. 219–239; P. Biliński, *Feliks Koneczny a «Świat Słowiański»*, "Slovanství a věda v 19 a 20 století. Práce z Archivu Akademie věd ČR," Řada A, sv. 8, Praha 2005, pp. 15–39.

³² C. Lechicki, "Krakowski «Głos Narodu» w latach 1914–1939," *Studia Historyczne* 16, no. 3 (1973), p. 345.

³³ SL PAL and PAS Kr, Manuscript 7097, V. 2. Letter from A.S. Sapieha to F. Koneczny, Kraków 8 XI 1913.

³⁴ Ibidem, Letter from J. Pelczar to F. Koneczny, Przemyśl 13–19 XII 1913.

Koneczny had hard time during the First World War. The first months of the war were the hardest for him. Krakow, which was then a military fortress, was ruled by a commandant—unfriendly to the Polish general Karl von Kuk. For fear of the Russian invasion and because of the need to defend the Cracovian fortress for a longer time, in September 1914 the Austrian military authorities issued an order to evacuate the inhabitants of the town. Koneczny and his family took refuge in Staré Hamry in Moravia.³⁵ In the years of the First World War, he prepared three major works: *Tadeusz Kościuszko* (1917), *The History of Russia* (1917), and, as a co-author, *Poland in the Universal Culture* (1918), a particularly valuable work.

WORK AT STEFAN BATORY UNIVERSITY IN VILNIUS

In July 1919, Koneczny was appointed as an assistant professor by Rector Michał Siedlecki at the re-activated Stefan Batory University in Vilnius.³⁶ Koneczny began lecturing in Vilnius in October 1919. At the same time, he began his habilitation process in Krakow on the basis of a published work entitled “History of Russia until 1449.”³⁷ On May 20, 1920, he gave a habilitation lecture, which the professors found to be quite sufficient. Two days later, the Faculty Council asked the Ministry of Education to award him a docent degree in the area of Eastern Europe. On June 20, 1920 the Ministry approved the habilitation.

The reviewers of Koneczny’s habilitation dissertation, Professors Władysław Konopczyński and Waclaw Sobieski, emphasized that

³⁵ U. Perkowska, *Uniwersytet Jagielloński w latach I wojny światowej* (Kraków: Universitas, 1990), p. 95.

³⁶ Lithuanian State Modern Archive (hereinafter: LSMA), F 175, A 5, IV B 100, k. 14.

³⁷ About Koneczny’s standpoint on the subject of history of Russia, see: M. Filipowicz, *Wobec Rosji. Studia z dziejów historiografii polskiej od końca XIX wieku po drugą wojnę światową* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2000), pp. 70–76; J. Kolbuszewska “Konecznego koncepcja dziejów Rosji,” in *Koneczny dzisiaj*, ed. J. Skoczyński (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2000), pp. 187–197; A. Wierzbicki, *Groźni i wielcy. Polska myśl historyczna XIX i XX wieku wobec rosyjskiej despotii* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo “Sic!”, 2001), pp. 188–220; P. Biliński, “Feliks Koneczny, studioso della storia della Russia e dell’Europa Orientale,” *Organon* 32 (2003), pp. 71–92; K. Błachowska, “Feliks Koneczny jako historyk Rosji – podstawa koncepcji,” *Klio Polska* 6 (2012), pp. 169–196.

... the work of Dr. Koneczny has a uniquely informative value; the author has covered all aspects of political, constitutional, economical and cultural life, interpreting events and their relationship in a very intelligent way. His book is read with interest, and even in places where it is doubtful whether all the author's arguments and hypotheses remain strong in the forefront of criticism, it is hard to deny that the author teaches, stimulates, gives rise to thinking, and thus he advances knowledge. Because Dr. Koneczny is known as a qualified historian, well-known for his knowledge of sources, and as an author of not only popular works, but also valuable academic contributions, there is no obstacle to accepting *History of Russia* as a habilitation dissertation.³⁸

Shortly after the habilitation, Koneczny was nominated as an associate professor at the Stefan Batory University in Vilnius.³⁹ From March 1921 he conducted a seminar on Eastern European history.⁴⁰ In 1922 he was appointed as an ordinary professor by the Ministry.⁴¹ In their justification of the proposal, the Faculty Committee highly appreciated his academic achievements, emphasizing that his habilitation dissertation was the first full history of Russia written by a Polish researcher and that "this work will be considered not only in Poland, but also abroad."⁴² In January 1921 he was elected as the associate dean of the Faculty of Humanities.⁴³

In his lectures at the Stefan Batory University of Vilnius, Koneczny focused primarily on Eastern issues, as well as on the philosophy of history, at the base of which was the view of the existence of many different civilizations fighting each other.

Koneczny prepared his lectures very scrupulously, basing them on extensive domestic and foreign sources and a thorough knowledge of Polish and foreign literature. He often quoted Russian, German, French and Latin texts. He consistently linked and compared the history of Poland with pan-European issues, passing from analytical to synthetic lectures.

³⁸ JUA, FPh II 121. Opinion by W. Konopczyński and W. Sobieski.

³⁹ LSMA, F 175, I Bb 86, k. 4.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, F 175, A 5, IV B 12, k. 102v.

⁴¹ Ibidem, F 175, I Bb 86, k. 23–24.

⁴² Ibidem, F 175, A 5, IV B 100, k. 4.

⁴³ Ibidem, F 175, A 5, IV B 12, k. 99v.

A special place in his didactic activity was held by the seminar, in which, over eight and a half years, 12 people participated. At the seminars, students analyzed sources of the Lithuanian Tartars' history and of the rule of Casimir IV Jagiellon. There was a lack of funding for the publication of the best works, while the historical journal *Vilnius Ateneum* was limited to printing dissertations strictly related to Lithuania.⁴⁴

In July 1929, after Koneczny retired, the Ministry planned to solve the problem by renaming the Chair of Eastern European History as the Chair of Polish and Lithuanian History and made Ludwik Kolankowski its director.⁴⁵ However, the proposal met with sharp opposition from the Council of the Faculty of Humanities, which at its meeting of September 26, 1929 decided to ask the Senate and the Rector "to take actions to defend the autonomy of the university."⁴⁶ During the next session—October 3—the Faculty Council, standing on the position of its powers guaranteed by the law on academic schools, unanimously voted to declare to the Ministry that "they cannot agree to nominate L. Kolankowski as the professor, ... they consider that the creation of the History of Poland and Lithuania Chair is inadequate, ... they recognize that the deletion of the Eastern European History Chair is wrong, because this kind of research program should exist, in particular in Vilnius."⁴⁷ The matter was not even closed by the nomination of the Director of the Vilnius Archives, Ryszard Mienicki, for the position of the Eastern European History Chair; Mienicki withdrew his application, threatened with dismissal from the archive.⁴⁸ It was only after a few years that one of Koneczny's students, Henryk Łowmiański, became the Chair.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, F 175, A 5, IV B 100, k. 45v.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, F 175, I A, 387, k. 267.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, F 175, A 5, IV B 283, k. 35.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, k. 40.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, k. 9. University of Toruń Library (hereinafter: UTL), Manuscript 962 II, k. 6v. R. Mienicki, *Diary*. The author is grateful to prof. Waldemar Chorążyczewski for providing him with access to its electronic version.

DISPUTES OVER KONECZNY'S RETIREMENT

In 1927, Feliks Koneczny was 65 years old, and thus he reached retirement age. In consideration of his merits, the Council of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Vilnius at the meeting of May 25, 1927, on the initiative of the Dean Jan Oko, submitted to the Ministry a proposal to extend his right to be a lecturer for another five years. The Faculty's decision was unanimously approved by the Academic Senate, extending him the right to be a lecturer until the academic year 1931/32.⁴⁹ The Ministry responded favorably to the decision of the Faculty Council and the Senate.⁵⁰

The same situation was repeated in 1928 when the Dean Kazimierz Chodynicki submitted to the Faculty Council a proposal to extend Koneczny's right to teach for longer, despite his reaching the retirement age. At the turn of May and June 1929, the Council of the Faculty of Humanities, taking the position of its original resolution of 1927, once again asked the Ministry to allow Koneczny to stay at the university.⁵¹

In reply, Minister Sławomir Czerwiński, on July 8, 1929, did not extend Koneczny's employment for another year after nine years of professorship, as requested by the Faculty and Academic Senate, and transferred him to retirement. Ryszard Mienicki maintained that Koneczny's departure was a disadvantage for the university, because "he had great erudition, he was extraordinary, he lectured well, he conducted the seminar in an engaging and useful way." Stefan Ehrenkretz, "well conversant with ministerial secrets," said that Koneczny's retirement was due to the decision of the head of the university department, Witold Suchodolski, who believed that in a situation when such an outstanding scholar as the philosopher Wincenty Lutoslawski retired, when it came to Koneczny, being a researcher of a smaller measure, "the more he must retire." "In this way, a ministerial pawn was to decide about people and matters of science!" Mienicki stated indignantly.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibidem, F 175, I A, 951, k. 32.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, F 175, I Bb 86, k. 41.

⁵¹ Ibidem, k. 47.

⁵² UTL, Manuscript 962 II, k. 6v. R. Mienicki, *Diary*.

It is difficult to find out today what the real reason for Koneczny's retirement was. The keeper of official files does not fully explain this mystery. Józef Pawlak, who researched the Vilnius Archives, stated that the reasons for removing the scholar from the university are unclear and only speculations can be made on this matter.⁵³ According to Koneczny's speculation—expressed in a letter to Teofil Emil Modelski—this happened after his public criticism of the administrative methods of the Sanation regime against science, expressed by him at the Vilnius National Club meeting. Moreover, he never hid that he considered Józef Piłsudski to be a mentally ill man.⁵⁴ However, it should be remembered that this opinion (*nemo iudex in causa sua*) is not confirmed by the source, and the only reason for his retirement—according to the Vilnius Archives—was Koneczny's advanced age. Stefan Ehrenkretz, who was working at the University of Vilnius at that time, believed that he unsuccessfully tried to convince Koneczny that his speculations were groundless.⁵⁵

It cannot be excluded that some personal conflicts in the Faculty of the Humanities and the desire of the Ministry to find a position for Ludwik Kolankowski, who was in favor of the Sanation authorities, influenced the decision to remove Koneczny from the group of active lecturers. It certainly did not help that Koneczny's work about the history of Russia was criticized by his colleague Kazimierz Chodynicki in *Kwartalnik Historyczny*,⁵⁶ but he upheld his opinion despite the author's robust response. The protocols of the Faculty Councils also show that Koneczny was not very popular with Vilnius scholars, and his nomination in 1919 was treated as a temporary one by the professors of the University of Vilnius. At a time when only three historians were lecturing at the Faculty, the presence of Koneczny was indispensable. In the following years, after the transfers of Jan Dąbrowski and Władysław Semkowicz to Krakow and the death of Witold Nowodworski,

⁵³ J. Pawlak, "Feliks Koneczny – profesor Uniwersytetu Stefana Batorego (1919–1929)," in *Filozofia na Uniwersytecie Wileńskim*, eds. R. Jadczyk, J. Pawlak (Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 1997), p. 154.

⁵⁴ JUA, sign. 126/14. Letter from F. Koneczny to T.E. Modelski, 21 I 1930.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, Letter from F. Koneczny to T.E. Modelski, Kraków 5 I 1930.

⁵⁶ K. Chodynicki, [Review of] "Feliks Koneczny: Litwa a Moskwa w latach 1449–1492. Dzieje Rosji tom drugi," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 44 (1930), pp. 386–408; F. Koneczny, "Polemika," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 50 (1936), pp. 175–178; K. Chodynicki, "Replika," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 50 (1936), pp. 587–588.

this need still existed. However, in 1929, the Faculty already had a sufficient number of independent academic workers; what is more, there were not enough chairs for young scientists. In this situation, Koneczny was useless.

The Vilnius academe was indignant about the removal of Koneczny. Waclaw Komornicki wrote in a letter to Koneczny that

... the entire national camp in Vilnius felt pain hearing about your retirement. It is a great loss for the University, harm to young people, harm to Vilnius. Such an active and creative scholar has to leave in full strength, in the period of the most beautiful synthesis of his works and thoughts! It is really difficult to prove more clearly the thoughtlessness and blindness of today's government; it is hard to find a more bright proof of blind factionalism!⁵⁷

ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF THE THEORY OF CIVILIZATION AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE: RELIGIOUS CULTURE

In the autumn of 1929, Koneczny returned to Krakow and settled on the Salwator Hill at 18 Saint Bronisława Street. In the 1930s, he essentially departed from historical subjects in his works. Their place was taken by the philosophy of history, ethics, and historical and religious issues. During this period, the following works were created: *On the Plurality of Civilisations* (1935), *Extension of Morality* (1938), *Protestantism in the Collective Life* (1938), *Church as a Political Educator of the Nation* (1938) and *Saints in the History of the Polish Nation* (1937).

The thirties, and then the Nazi occupation, became a very painful period in Koneczny's life. In 1935, at the age of 76, his wife Marcela died. In 1942, the German Wohnungsamt deprived him of the upper part of the house where his workroom was located. In 1943, his younger son Stanisław was arrested in Krakow for conspiracy and killed by beheading on October 23, 1944 in Brandenburg an der Havel. Earlier, on August 15, 1944, during the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising, the Germans had killed his elder son Czesław and his wife Maria. Only the daughter of Bronisław, the owner of a jewelry

⁵⁷ SL PAL and PAS Kr, Manuscript 7097, V. 1. A letter from W. Komornicki to F. Koneczny, Vilnius 9 XI 1929.

store in Sukiennice, and two young grandsons, Jacek and Wiesław, remained alive.⁵⁸

After the Red Army entered Krakow, Koneczny reported to the Jagiellonian University in January 1945, offering them his services. However, due to the lack of a “proper occupation” for him, he was only registered by the Dean Zenon Klemensiewicz.⁵⁹ On this basis, from February 1945, he received a salary according to the pre-war IV group, which was paid to him until October 1947. In the last years of his life, Koneczny, constantly in need of money to support two orphaned grandchildren, devoted himself to journalistic activity. For profit, he wrote a lot of articles for *Niedziela* and *Tygodnik Warszawski*. His articles were very popular and were addressed to a wide range of readers. Unable to publish books, he worked intensively on the fuller shape of his historiosophic theory. Only a few friends knew about it, and because of the increasing pressure from communists, they preferred not to share this information. Only after many years, thanks to the efforts of Jędrzej Giertych, were the works of Koneczny that had been left in manuscript form published in London. The following works were published by the Roman Dmowski Society: *On the Plurality of Civilisations* (1962), *The Byzantine Civilization* (1973), *The Jewish Civilization* (1974), *For Order in History* (1977), *State and Law in Latin Civilization* (1981) and *History Laws* (1982).

When Dr Włodzimierz Baranowski, a friend of his family, said there was no chance for him to live much longer, on January 31, 1949, Koneczny received the last sacraments from Fr. Władysław Długosz. He died on February 10, 1949 at the age of 87. Two days later, he was placed in the family tomb, near the Salvator cemetery, next to the grave of the Franciscan fathers.⁶⁰ A small funeral procession was led by a long-time friend of Koneczny, the priest Ferdynand Machay. The representatives of the already terrorized University were absent from the funeral, and there was no delegation from the Jagiellonian Library, at which he had worked for almost a quarter of a century.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Wiesław Koneczny's oral account, Kraków, 23 VI 1999, recording in the author's private hands.

⁵⁹ JUA, S II 619. F. Koneczny personal acts.

⁶⁰ Parish of the Blessed Salvator in Kraków, *Libri mortuorum*, V. 12, 1949, p. 296, l. 18.

⁶¹ Wiesław Koneczny's oral account, Kraków, 23 VI 1999, recording in the author's private hands.

In 1948, Koneczny summarized 60 years of his historiographic work, and his scientific achievements totaled 26 volumes, each of which had from 300 to 400 pages, not counting over 300 articles, brochures and prints. He divided his works into topics: history, civilization, philosophy and "various."⁶² Although in terms of the number of his written works he was outmatched by Joachim Lelewel, Władysław Konopczyński, Stanisław Pigoń, Władysław Semkowicz, Stanisław Kutrzeba and Franciszek Bujak, no Polish historians could boast of such a wide area of research interests, which included anthropology, sociology, philosophy, theology, psychology, economics, history and law.

This register, though substantial, does not reveal the most essential thing: the personal and moral dimension of his activity. It must be said that he was also a moralist; he was a rare example of a Catholic thinker. He was, in the most significant sense of the word, a humanist.

⁶² F. Koneczny, *O ład w historii* (Wrocław: Nortom, 1999), pp. 111–117.

2.

INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT OF THE IMPACT AND RECEPTION OF FELIKS KONECZNY'S THOUGHT

The analysis and presentation of Feliks Koneczny's work in Polish and world literature requires many factors to be taken into account, first and foremost, knowledge of the essential context in which the Christian culture of Poland and of the world found itself in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During this period, the development of Christian culture took place under the direction of the activities of eminent popes, above all Holy Father Leo XIII.¹ This Pope, in the face of numerous challenges and threats to the Christian world, urged all Catholics to respect the principles resulting from the knowledge of the natural truth about the world, as well as admonishing them to follow the rules of the Gospel in every area of human life. At the same time, he warned against accepting disastrous ideologies, myths, fictions and utopias; he encouraged Catholics to boldly fight for full knowledge of the truth and respect for the entire heritage of Christianity; he justified the need for adhesion to the native cultural

¹ It is worth pointing out here the encyclicals of Holy Father Leo XIII: *Immortale Dei*, 1 XI 1885, "Acta Leonis papae XIII" 2.146; *Libertas prestantissimum*, 20 VI 1888, "Acta Leonis papae XIII" 3.96; *Sapientiae christianae*, 10 I 1890, "Acta Leonis papae XIII" 4.6; and *Rerum novarum*, 15 V 1891, "Acta Leonis papae XIII" 4.177; see also *Kodeks społeczny. Zarys katolickiej syntezy społecznej*, trans. L. Górski, A. Szymański (Lublin: Towarzystwo Wiedzy Chrześcijańskiej, 1934).

tradition that accompanied the Church from the beginning of its existence; and he pointed to universal models and examples of creating Christian culture and, above all, the universal value of the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas and the entire Catholic tradition.²

Koneczny, as a Catholic, a Pole but also a scholar, created his works while bearing in mind the context and state of Christian culture, desiring with all his might its strengthening and development. However, a question arises here about the specificity of this state and the condition of Christian culture at that time.

THREATS TO THE FAITH AND ORDER OF SOCIAL LIFE IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

The Magisterium of the Catholic Church justified its actions by the fact that in the late nineteenth century, the enormous evil that infiltrated human life, especially after the French Revolution, intensified. It opened the way not only to laicism and secularism, but also to atheism, godlessness, materialism, relativism and the abandonment of the proper form of life by many people in favor of attempts to build utopian structures guided by the principles of liberalism or collectivism.³ They carried a utopian program of the self-liberation (salvation) of people while negating the God of Revelation and His existence and action. It brought real evil; the ruin of human life in the economic, social and national spheres, numerous harms and even crimes (two World Wars, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and totalitarian systems using genocide and other types of evil).⁴ These programs and their implementations struck the social order, shaped by the ages thanks to the Church. This order was based on

² Encyclical of Holy Father Leo XIII *Aeterni Patris*, 1879; C. Strzeszewski, *Katolicka nauka społeczna* (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1994), pp. 254–258.

³ H. Romanowski, *Wstęp do ekonomji społecznej chrześcijańskiej* (Kraków–Warszawa: Gebethner & Wolff, 1910), p. 1ff; see also S. Wyszyński, *Katolicki program walki z bolszewizmem* (Włocławek: Neuman & Tomaszewski, 1937); S. Wyszyński, “Pius XI o walce z komunizmem,” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 39 (1937), pp. 466–478; S. Wyszyński, “Myśl katolicka wobec nieładu w gospodarstwie międzynarodowym,” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 30 (1932), pp. 503–506.

⁴ *Bolszewizm. Praca zbiorowa* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Wiedzy Chrześcijańskiej, 1937).

Christian personalism and solidarism; principles of Roman law and Greek science.

Importantly, Pope Leo XIII showed that the threats were strengthened not only by human errors and bad will, but also by people of science, education and culture, people creating a system of upbringing, law, and public authority. A particularly bad role was played by various Masonic associations (Masonry), which in many ways tried to establish a culture of hatred for God and the revealed religion itself, carrying the naturalistic vision of man as the creation of the blind forces of nature.⁵ Their aim was to consolidate the alleged conflict between science and religion in the general awareness; between authentic progress and Christianity. It was claimed that it is impossible to know the existence of God, His presence in the history of man and the cosmos, and finally that the act of religious faith, which at most is an emotional, subjective experience, is irrational and never has a rational justification.

It was claimed that the fact of the presence of an act of religious faith in someone is evidence of a bad use of reason, and any relationship between Christianity and individual, family or social culture affects man and culture itself pejoratively. For this reason, the program of godlessness—the removal of religion and Christian heritage from human life—was proclaimed as a *sine qua non* condition of “a new, better world order.”⁶ The realization of these ideas was connected not only with the naturalistic concept of man and the reductionism of all areas of human life to finite goods, but also the elimination of the inseparable marriage of a woman and a man as the basis of the family and the family itself; removing justice from public life in favor of variable voluntary law based on strength and benefits; and the liquidation of private property.

In the name of the false meaning of freedom, the sense of the existence of an institution of public authority as well as private property, natural associations and forms of human life (family, local, national, state, and ecclesiastical communities) was undermined while propagating the ideology of struggle without moral principles, cosmopolitanism in different varieties, or various egoisms, trampling

⁵ Encyclical of Holy Father Leo XIII *Humanum genus*, Rome 1884.

⁶ A. Szymański, *Zagadnienie społeczne* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Wiedzy Chrześcijańskiej, 1939), pp. 20–38.

on the inherent rights of a person, the equality of the dignity of all people.⁷

All these acts posed numerous threats to the religious life of man and the social order. For this reason, eminent popes (Leo XIII, Pius XI, Pius XII) strongly urged the counteracting of the resulting evil also through scientific, educational, cultural and popularizing activities. As a Catholic and a scholar, Koneczny was involved in it, which inevitably put him at risk of the false accusation of being a confessional thinker, promulgating even some kind of fideism; he provoked many attacks and unfavorable opinions, which in fact were a form of attack on Christianity itself, on its defenders.

Defending the thesis that the West itself, as the Latin civilization, is a work of the Catholic Church's educational activity and that this is the best existing (though imperfect!) method of the collective life system, Koneczny exposed himself to all those who wanted the world without God and His presence in the life of humanity. No wonder, then, that the perception of Koneczny's achievements was difficult in the twentieth century, encountering various false accusations and misunderstandings, or even complete negation, because this age was strongly permeated with the ideologies of utopianism, atheism, materialism, and finally relativism, agnosticism, and evolutionism—this age saw, in Koneczny's works, its denial and its natural opponent. And Koneczny, with his work, was in fact such an opponent. This work has always carried and will always bring hope, because

... evil in collective life is powerless until it creates an imitation of good in order to extort the cooperation of citizens who want good. Therefore, in the collective life, stupidity (and even naivety) is worse than evil itself, because there would be no evil in public life if it did not find support among good people, if it was not accepted in the best thought. ... Bad people will never create anything without the help of good ones, so since [good ones] will retreat from the atria of evil, evil must fall.⁸

⁷ Encyclical of Holy Father Leon XIII *Libertas Praestantissimum*, 1888.

⁸ F. Koneczny, "Tło polityczne renesansu włoskiego," *Mysł Narodowa* 10, no. 21 (1930), pp. 327–329.

PHILOSOPHY AND ITS UNDERSTANDING IN FELIKS KONECZNY'S TERMS

WHY DOES A HISTORIAN NEED PHILOSOPHY?

Koneczny's philosophical interests arose primarily from the need to thoroughly understand history—the need to learn the ultimate truth and the need to gain understanding, so they arose not only from the knowledge of facts from the past.¹ Koneczny focused his attention on philosophical inquiries also because of the awareness of threats and errors that must appear in historiography because of its deformation with various apriorisms that have their origin in the errors of philosophy. Examples of these errors were the practices born in historical inquiries because of German idealism or positivist concepts, permeated with materialism, cognitive reductionism and minimalism.² According to Koneczny, it brought the *a priori* conception of science itself, the *a priori* theory of the scientific method, and finally a false vision of the subject as well as of the fundamental goal of science. It did not aim to learn the truth but to ideologically justify

¹ J. Szczepanowski, *Paradygmat cywilizacyjny jako zasadniczy element koncepcji historiozoficznych Feliksa Konecznego i Oswalda Spenglera* (Warszawa: Wydział Dziennikarstwa i Nauk Politycznych UW, 2013).

² “German philosophy made from history a kind of a speculative entertainment”. F. Koneczny, *O wielości cywilizacji* (Kraków: Gebethner i Wolff, 1935), p. 21; see also J. Skoczyński, *Idee historiozoficzne Feliksa Konecznego* (Kraków: Nakładem Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1991), pp. 15–18.

a concept, a doctrine.³ It resulted in the loss of the nature of scientific knowledge, valuable in general. It also posed a serious threat to the entirety of human culture as well as to social order, which because of the ideologization of science could harm the good of man.

When I was young [he wrote with irony—P.S.], I was warned against historiosophy as a plague that could fill up the brain with clichés and waste the historical sense in the historian. It was also pointed out that historiosophy is not a field for historians, but for various volunteers who do not know history. Historiosophy was also considered as philosophy of history, and in that sense any philosophical system could, if it wished, have its own historiosophy; if anyone invented a new system, then a new historiosophy came into being—and historians will not care about it anyway. For a historian, historiosophy was something that was below his scientific dignity; and he looked at these dilettantish games with an indulgent and slightly contemptuous smile. A historian had to limit himself to the investigation of the causal relationship of facts; so nobody would like to get historiosophy from the hands of philosophical dilettantes and try to find out what it would be if it were based on the historical method.⁴

In this context, we should perceive Koneczny's philosophical considerations as work on the completion of strictly historical studies with philosophical investigations. Why, however, did he do it?

Koneczny pointed out that

... extensive studies would not give a historian the ability to synthesize if he was deprived of philosophical education ... As long as he carries philosophical emptiness in himself, he will be incapable of synthesis in any science ... A philosophical approach to matters is (apart from strong personalism) the condition of creative originality. Where there are no philosophical approaches to the subject, only caustic incidence will develop there, but the general view will never be added, because there is no scientific perspective. The scholar's work does not have a plan then, not caring about the questions

³ According to Koneczny, historiography based on the method of German historians or on the positivist method was ultimately, for him, "the most false and above all an insufficient and already wrong way"; see F. Koneczny, *Polskie Logos a Ethos. Roztrząsania o znaczeniu celu Polski*, vol. 1 (Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1997), p. 23.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

“from where” and “to where” and in fact working incidentally, without knowing the aim. Such science is deprived of knowledge; because knowledge is the sum of the relationships that take place between sciences. Without realizing the whole, it is difficult to detect a synthesis, but it does not follow that it will not exist.⁵

It is important in this context to understand that the synthesis mentioned by Koneczny is not a combination of all the results of sciences into one system (a synthesis of knowledge about everything), but rather a certain intellectual perfection of a man which allows him to fully understand the phenomena, recognizing them from the perspective of knowing the ultimate truth about them. This perfection implies respect for the methodological order in science and respect for the differences that exist between disciplines. Historiography therefore has its own subject, methods, aspect and purpose. Analogously, there is philosophy, which cannot be reduced to historical reflection and retains its full autonomy.⁶ The deficiencies of philosophical education carry, in Koneczny's opinion, catastrophic consequences for culture and nations. For this reason, weak philosophical education was, for the history of Poland, the cause of its weakness. “All our [Polish—P.S.] great philosophers could not give philosophical education to society—this is the secret of our failure.”⁷

AREAS OF FELIKS KONECZNY'S PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES

Due to the criterion of the subject, Koneczny's philosophical research can be divided into:

A. Philosophy of culture and civilization, where he presented his approach to understanding culture and civilization,

⁵ F. Koneczny, *Prawa dziejowe* (Komorów: Wydawnictwo Antyk – Marcin Dybowski, 1997), pp. 16–17.

⁶ “Let us all do our own job, scientists and humanists, in our own way, and we will find ourselves on the right path to those high places where everything coincides, where we find the relationship of everything with everything. I was succeeding, I suppose, in indicating the direction of a new path for pilgrims to the Truth. It is about the method of learning about civilization.” F. Koneczny, *O wielości cywilizacji*, p. 320.

⁷ F. Koneczny, *Polskie Logos a Ethos...*, vol. 1, p. 266.

mainly in the context of historical research.⁸ Examples of this are the following works: *Polskie Logos a Ethos. Roztrząsania o znaczeniu i celu Polski*, vols. 1–2 (Poznań 1921); *O wielości cywilizacji* (Kraków 1935); *Cywilizacja bizantyńska*, vols. 1–2 (Londyn 1973); *Cywilizacja żydowska*, vols. 1–3 (Londyn 1974); “Napór Orientu na Zachód” in *Kultura i cywilizacja* (Lublin 1937); *Prawa dziejowe* (Komorów 1997); *O ład w historii* (Warszawa 1991), and other minor studies and articles.

Koneczny argued in them that human culture, as a work of intelligent and free human activity, is always connected with the human way of learning about the world and of materializing his experiences in the form of knowledge, moral action, art and technology, but also through social creations and the social order itself. Culture is also created by human religious acts that constitute the essential ground for the formation of the understanding of man, of human action, and of all reality as an effect of God’s action. According to Koneczny, human culture as it is embedded in social life creates a civilization or “method of the system of collective life.” Civilization as a permanent form of human co-existence as a work of man is also one of the main determinants of man.⁹

B. Philosophy of man and morality, in which he first and foremost analyzed human actions in terms of how they perfect man, while at the same time realizing the tasks that are right for them.¹⁰ This form of his philosophy can be found in all works dealing with civilization issues but also in the following: *Rozwój moralności* (Lublin 1938); *Zwierzchnictwo moralności: Ekonomia i etyka* (Warszawa 2006); *O cywilizację łacińską* (Lublin 1996); and *Obronić cywilizację łacińską* (Lublin 2002). We can also find these issues in the following works: *Pajdokracja* (Warszawa 1912); “Chrześcijaństwo wobec ustroju życia zbiorowego” in *Ateneum Kapłańskie* (1932); *O sprawach ekonomicznych* (Kraków 2000), as well as in his other dissertations and studies.

⁸ J.B. Serafińska, *Filozofia kultury Feliksa Konecznego* (Warszawa–Krosno: Wydawnictwo Armagraf, 2014); P. Bezat, *Teoria cywilizacji Feliksa Konecznego* (Krzeszowice: Dom Wydawniczy Ostoja, 2002); K Gajda, *Świat krytycznoteatralny Feliksa Konecznego* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej w Krakowie, 2008).

⁹ L. Gawor, *O wielości cywilizacji. Filozofia społeczna Feliksa Konecznego* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002).

¹⁰ R. Polak, *Cywilizacje a Moralność w myśli Feliksa Konecznego* (Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2001).

Koneczny argued that personalism is the only correct concept of man, because it is a vision of man affirming not only human dignity but, above all, rationality, freedom, and subjectivity in public and family life. He emphasized that behind the strengthening of this vision of man in Western culture stands Christianity above all and a realistic trend of classical philosophy (Greek and medieval). Personalism had a strong influence on pedagogy, as well as on economics and politics, where the respect of human dignity and the primacy of moral good (honesty) are required over useful and enjoyable goods. Koneczny emphasized the constant necessity of intellectual and moral work to deepen the knowledge of the moral life of man; he stood in the position of moral objectivity, while also emphasizing the necessity of progress in the field of moral life. This progress (the so-called development of morality) in his opinion is not so much connected with a change of moral principles but rather with the improvement of human actions, which, as human knowledge of the fuller truth about good develops, demand a better life and actions of people. The key to moral progress is, according to Koneczny, the "culture of action" by which he understands the development of human life in its authentic virtue. The meaning of all moral and educational activities, in Koneczny's opinion, is connected with enabling man to achieve the goal of his life, i.e. the fulfillment of man in God. For this reason, Koneczny emphasized the need to combine educational, moral, economic and cognitive life with religious life. In the Latin civilization, the authentically personalistic one, all people should work for the common good with a responsibility for the realization of this good.

C. Philosophy of politics and law, in which he showed not only the sense of the public actions of man, but also their civilization and cultural determination.¹¹ This philosophy gave not only a general understanding of politics, law, social relations and the actions appearing in their context, but also outlined a specific program of social order, proper for Poland. In a way, it was connected with

¹¹ P. Grabowiec, *Model społeczeństwa obywatelskiego w historiozofii Feliksa Konecznego* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2000); R. Jadczyk, "Feliks Koneczny o państwie i jego roli w wychowaniu," in *Wychowanie a polityka. Między wychowaniem narodowym a państwowym*, ed. W. Wojdyło (Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 1999), pp. 69–81.

Koneczny's political and social journalism.¹² This philosophy can be found in works dealing with civilization and historical issues, especially in the following: *Państwo i prawo w cywilizacji łacińskiej* (Komorów 1997); *Protestantyzm w życiu zbiorowym* (Lublin 1995); *Polska między Wschodem i Zachodem* (Lublin 1996); “Elephantiasis’ prawodawcza” in *Myśl Narodowa* (1932); “Tło polityczne renesansu włoskiego” in *Myśl Narodowa* (1930); *Dzieje administracji w Polsce* (Wilno 1924); “Czterdzieści tez zasadniczych” in *Trybuna Narodu* (1927), and others.

Koneczny shows that politics and law have their determination in the moral order of human affairs and in the way people understand this order, while the functioning of law and politics depends on the type of civilization.¹³ The principles of Latin civilization require the respect and primacy of the human person in the sphere of collective life, while the order of collective life must respect many related matters. Koneczny argued that “Poland will either be Catholic or it will not exist.” This position was connected with the thesis that unrighteousness is just as condemnable and despicable in public life as in private life.

The politics implemented according to the indicated rules allows the pillars of Western culture to be strengthened. These rules are:

- (a) a family based on an inseparable and voluntary marriage of a man and a woman;
- (b) justice in all areas of human life realized by public authority;
- (c) respect for human (including physical) work; and
- (d) the independence of religious life from political and temporal factors.¹⁴

¹² P. Biliński, *Feliks Koneczny (1863–1949). Życie i działalność* (Warszawa: Inicjatywa Wydawnicza “Ad astra”, 2001), pp. 147–154.

¹³ R.Z. Piotrowski, *Problem filozoficzny ładu społecznego a porównawcza nauka o cywilizacjach* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo “Dialog”, 2003).

¹⁴ “Who will save our Latin civilization? I only know one strength, which is called this: the Church. ... In this fight you must necessarily be a Catholic, otherwise the fight will be vain. One could even say that it is enough to fight for Polish Catholicism, and when we defend the Church ..., Latin civilization will be useful to us, it will be saved.” F. Koneczny, *Napór Orientu na Zachód i inne pisma o życiu społecznym* (Lublin: Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 1999), pp. 195–196.

CONCLUSION

Koneczny's philosophy did not distance itself from personal human experiences related to religion and religious faith, aiming instead to provide an integral and universal understanding of the world. The basis of this philosophy was a human, natural experience of the world, and its guide was healthy human reason, ordering one to learn the truth to the end.

In the field of anthropology, Koneczny's philosophy built a personalistic vision of man, emphasizing the affirmation of human subjectivity, rationality and freedom. He also did it in his philosophical inquiries about culture and civilization, politics and law. Here, the philosophical understanding of culture, civilization, and historical laws became an important complement to and deepening of historical studies, because, as Koneczny explained, the science of history

... is not just a collection of stories about kings and wars to satisfy curiosity. ... History is simply an explanation and demonstration of why today we are what we are and why we are not others. ... The present is a mystery to a thinking man, because every step of the way begs the question, why is it so, and not differently? This puzzle is developed by history. ... Learning about the past is therefore a means and tool for working around the future; is necessary for progress. The content of it is the hope and disappointment of generations; the goal of modern people is to find a conclusion for themselves.¹⁵

Although Koneczny's philosophy was not a systematic or academic philosophy, it was nevertheless created responsibly. It was guided by the value of truthful knowledge, aimed at obtaining ultimate and integral cognition. All this makes Koneczny's philosophy possible to be defined as a realistic and, at the same time, Christian, original, universal and valid philosophy for the entirety of the world's culture.

¹⁵ F. Koneczny, *Dzieje Polski za Piastów* (Komorów: Wydawnictwo Antyk – Marcin Dybowski, 1997), pp. 2–3.

THE RELIGIOUS WORK OF FELIKS KONECZNY AND HIS CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ORDER IN POLAND

SAINTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE NATION

In the autumn of 1929, Feliks Koneczny returned to Krakow and lived on the Salvator hill at 18 Bronisława Street. It was a period in Koneczny's life in which his scientific work at Vilnius University ended and the period of his Catholic journalism, closely connected with the analysis and presentation of socio-political issues, began. In the 1930s, Koneczny departed from historical subjects in his works. Their place was taken over by journalism, the philosophy of history and theory of civilization, ethics and historical and religious issues. During this period, the following works were written: *On the Plurality of Civilisations* (1935), *The Development of Morality* (1938), *Protestantism in the Collective Life* (1938), *The Church as the Political Educator of Nations* (1938) and *Saints in the History of the Polish Nation* (1937). In that time, Koneczny wrote also the following works that were published after his death: *The Byzantine Civilization* (1973), *The Jewish Civilization* (1973), *On Order in History* (1977), *The State and Law in Latin Civilization* (1981), and *The Laws of History* (1982). In all of these works we can find analyses regarding religion and the defense of principles and heritage carried by the Catholic Church. They are also a space for reflection on the social, cultural and religious

order; they are a form of researching the politics that best serves the good of man.

According to Jacek Barlik, Koneczny belonged to the intellectual elite of Polish Catholicism. In support of this opinion, one can mention the fact that as one of the few secular professors, besides Stanisław Kutrzeba, he was invited to give lectures organized by the Catholic University of Lublin for the Catholic clergy.¹ In 1932–1933, Koneczny also gave lectures on “Four civilizations” in Poland for students of the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University. He also collaborated with the editors of the Jesuit *Przegląd Powszechny* and of the *Ateneum Kapłańskie*, published in Włocławek by the then professor of the Diocesan Seminary, and the later Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.²

Reading Koneczny’s work tends to accept the thesis of his unbounded commitment to the Catholic Church and the deep faith in Christ the Lord, whom he tried to imitate in his personal life as best as he could. The pursuit of truth and charity were for him a source of literary inspiration. His works on religious matters had extraordinary popularity in the Catholic milieu of the interwar period. His work *Saints in the History of the Polish Nation*, in which he presented the fate of the Catholic Church and the saints throughout the thousand years of Polish history, brought him special recognition and publicity in the Catholic milieu. Over the seven hundred pages of the text, he placed detailed descriptions of the lives of little-known martyrs, paying attention to the urgent need for their beatification or canonization. These people, combining religious love for God and man, as well as love for the Homeland, became, in the history of Poland, the defenders of moral principles in public life and examples of how to understand the authentic personalism descending from the acceptance of the faith of the Catholic Church and of how to pursue patriotism. Koneczny showed that these people, in their own ways, carried out the ideal of human and Christian life, embedded in the national context, becoming a timeless model of Polishness.

¹ J. Barlik, “Czy kres cywilizacji łacińskiej? O historiozofii Feliksa Konecznego,” *Chrześcijanin w Świecie* 18, no. 11–12 (1986), p. 152.

² J. Braun, “Feliks Koneczny twórca nauki o cywilizacji,” *Wiadomości* 25, no. 10 (1970), p. 3.

The author of *Saints in the History of the Polish Nation* often referred to numerous printed and archive sources, and in the conclusion quoted the words of Cardinal August Hlond:

A Catholic citizen, a worker, an official, an officer, a soldier, a deputy, a senator, a member of the government, cannot have two consciences, a Catholic one for his private life, and a non-Catholic one for public affairs. The innate moral law and the Decalogue are binding for the state in the same measure as for the individual and family. The state, therefore, has no power to do unethical acts, that is, evil does not become moral and allowed when done by the state, or when it is committed in the interest of the state. There is no power under the sun that would be allowed to order subordinates to act against the Decalogue. The state does not stand outside of ethics, just as it does not stand above it. If it ordered evil acts, it must be drawn aside unconditionally. The Catholic should not be a tool of sin and harm under any circumstance.³

The work, impressive in its volume, the vastness of its research and the objectivity of its statements, became a monumental work of Polish historiography over the years, but also proved that the Catholic faith penetrated and co-created Polish essence and history from the very beginning of Poland. This work, especially after 1945, became one of the most important sources of knowledge of the history of the Polish nation and its religious life throughout its history for the younger generations of Poles; it played a great role in the formation of the intellectual elites of Poland during the communist period, strongly fighting with religion itself and with the Church.

PROTESTANTISM AND CATHOLICISM

Another book on religious issues that touched on one of the most painful issues of Christianity, that is, the Western schism, was a brochure entitled *Protestantism in Collective Life*. Koneczny gave in it the nine consequences of schisms that were destructive for Europe, contributing significantly to the weakening of the Latin civilization

³ F. Koneczny, *Święci w dziejach narodu polskiego* (Komorów: Wydawnictwo Antyk – Marcin Dybowski, 1997), p. 684.

itself in the West and ultimately leading the West towards Neo-Paganism. He claimed that Protestantism brought

the acceptance of political independence to the Reich States and, consequently, the right to pursue a foreign policy without looking at the empire. Giving governments control over consciences; the strengthening of Byzantinism in Germany; an inclination to the mechanization of society; the contractedness of ethics; relieving the state from ethics; the introduction of absolutism and the tendency to supremacy of the state; the establishment of autonomous, non-religious ethics; religious indifferentism; neo-paganism.⁴

To sum up, Koneczny stated that not one of the above-mentioned tendencies was derived from Catholicism. Eight of them were already widespread, whereas Neo-Paganism was struggling to make its way in Protestant Germany. According to Koneczny, the only possibility of a moral revival of Germany, and in a sense also of Europe and the Western world, was in a return to Catholicism and to the principles of individual and collective life carried by the Universal Church. In practice, this meant staying with the principles of the Latin civilization, which, according to Koneczny, was the work of the educational work of the Catholic Church. However, in order to make this possible, it is necessary to recognize the evil that fell with the arrival of Protestantism in the Western world and reject it in its entirety. In other words, one should immediately return to the Latin method of collective life, to Catholic ethics and to the personalistic anthropology connected with it.

In the publication entitled *The Church as a Political Educator of the Nation*, Koneczny argued that

The depth of Catholic ethics derives from a sense of a personal relationship with God, and this is where the greatest moral power of the Catholic is. Even if the association is committed to the most serious offenses, the relationship of an individual to God remains pure as long as no one approves of evil. But each one also has a personal responsibility for his thoughts, speeches and deeds, which is symbolized by personal confession. ... Catholics in their

⁴ F. Koneczny, *Protestantyzm w życiu zbiorowym* (Gliwice: Wydawnictwo Onion, 1998), p. 49.

conscience are responsible even for group acts, each one personally, as if each of them acted individually.⁵

Koneczny, therefore, showed that what is most important in Latin civilization is personalism, a personal form of life and human activity. It is connected with individual responsibility, with human dignity and rationality, with human freedom and subjectivity.

Personalism shapes the basic principles of the social order in the Latin civilization, while its source is essentially religious. Only this civilization is genuinely personalistic. For this reason, Koneczny explained, the deformation of human religiosity that occurred after the appearance of Protestantism and its variations had to result not only in a new vision of man, but also in a social order proportional to it, in which citizens depart from personalism in favor of individualism glorifying the individual and its powers, or collectivism in which man becomes only an element subordinate to the entire collective. In Koneczny's opinion, the need to reflect on the social order, on the principles of politics that do not stem from the errors of individualism and collectivism, thus appeared.

DECALOGUE OF SOCIAL LIFE

His cooperation with *Trybuna Ludu*, edited by Karol Hubert Rostworowski, resulted in the publication of a number of Koneczny's articles on socio-political topics; among others, in 1927, he argued for the change of the electoral law in the Polish parliament. He proposed to reduce the number of deputies and senators by half, introducing a single-member system, limiting the electoral law to people able to read and write, and raising the age of majority to 24 years. He also believed that a double vote should be given to voters who are more than 45 years old because "a 24-year-old youth is not mentally equal to the experienced father of the family." In addition, a double vote should be given to those who have obtained a high school diploma and triple to university graduates.⁶

⁵ F. Koneczny, *Kościół jako polityczny wychowawca narodu* (Gdańsk: Franciszkański Ruch Ekologiczny, 1997), pp. 17–18.

⁶ F. Koneczny, "Jakiej ordynacji wyborczej do parlamentu potrzebuje Polska?" *Trybuna Narodu* 2, no. 22 (1927), pp. 10–12.

Already in the 1920s, Koneczny presented in *Trybuna Ludu* his “Forty basic theses,” setting the direction of the behavior of the Polish society and state and constituting the spiritual foundation on which Poland should be based as part of its civilizational grounding. He presented these principles in the form of theses, arranged in ten groups. They are a kind of outlining of the foundations and the nature of social order, as well as an explanation of where the source, or the cause, of basic social order should be sought. This source is on the one hand in the nature of man as a person and on the other in the personal relationship of man with God.

The content of these principles is as follows:

I.

- (1) Of all public matters, religion is the most public one.
- (2) Poland either will be Catholic, or it will not exist.
- (3) Whatever is aimed at harming the Catholic Church is also harmful to Poland.
- (4) All unrighteousness in public life is also condemnable in private life.

II.

- (1) From all prejudices that distort the social and state life, the worst opinion is that all should be equal in everything.
- (2) The development of society requires hierarchical inequality, based on differences in the ableness and efficiency of work.
- (3) Mental work is *ceteris paribus* hierarchically above manual work.
- (4) The reduction of hierarchical differences cannot be done other than by the absorption of mental work by manual laborers, by the growing support of these works by the worker’s intelligence.

III.

- (1) Private property is sacred and untouchable.
- (2) Owners should not be proletarianized, but should let the diligent and governmental proletarian also be able to become the owner.
- (3) Taxes and burdens on property cannot be so high that they discourage acquisition and maintenance.
- (4) Taxes and burdens related to parental inheritance should be gradually reduced until they are completely abolished.

IV.

- (1) The class struggle method is against our religion and civilization.
- (2) It is foolish and dishonest to claim that the good of society requires the success of one single social layer, based on the oppression of others. No social layer belongs to hegemony, and all are historically in solidarity, that is, defeats falling on either of them bring common ruin. The general good requires not class struggle, but the mutual help and sharing of all social layers.
- (3) It is not acceptable for anyone to create a monopoly from social institutions.

V.

- (1) States are divided into bureaucratic and civic; they are mainly based on the self-government of citizens. There are also two methods of action: centralization and decentralization.
- (2) Some state matters (e.g. the army) must be solved centrally, but generally the civic state requires decentralization.
- (3) Too many offices put the state in the dependency of officials—and the opposite should be the case.
- (4) The difference between a state and a social organization is that the latter is voluntary and the former is obligatory.
- (5) According to the research and development of social forces, state interference should be limited.
- (6) Matters of external and internal security are an adequate department of state competence.
- (7) The state is neither “many-sided” nor can be free from ethics.
- (8) The political equality of an illiterate with the president of the Polish Academy of Learning is an injustice and an evident misunderstanding.

VI.

- (1) Unity does not mean one-sidedness. The extraordinary differences in the levels of Polish provinces mean that they cannot be governed equally.
- (2) Administration must be adapted not to the rulers, but to the governed; it cannot be the same in the whole of Poland.
- (3) The greater the population, the higher the education and the greater the prosperity of a province, the more local governments should have.
- (4) Nations cannot be shaped from the outside, nor can their natural development be accelerated artificially from the outside.

- (5) It is not correct to hamper minorities in the Polish state to produce their own separate nationalities—but it is also unacceptable for a Pole to avoid work for the good of the Polish nation in order to put his strength to work for another nation.

VII.

- (1) The army must not deal with politics in any civilized state.

VIII.

- (1) A poor society will not be able to bear the costs of maintaining a modern state.
- (2) Continuous poverty must lead the Polish nation to the loss of independence.
- (3) The property of the state is proportional to the work of its citizens. Work bans are contrary to reason.
- (4) All matters of the nation and the state are connected with the fate of production. We will not keep our independence without increasing agricultural and industrial production.
- (5) Because of the scarcity of Polish cities in Poland, we are a backward society compared to Europe and we will move back more and more if the country's urbanization does not take place.
- (6) The peasant issue will not be settled if the excess of the rural population does not find prosperity in its resettlement to cities.

IX.

- (1) Pure science is a luxury, but it is an indispensable condition for the development of national culture and the power of the state.
- (2) Without discoveries, there are no inventions, and therefore without pure science there are no applied sciences, needed for all departments of modern life.
- (3) Universities are six centuries older than primary schools. There is no education without science, because education is a popularized science. The collapse of sciences must soon bring common darkness with all its terrible consequences.

X.

- (1) The condition of the state is dependent on the condition of four fundamental factors: morality (law and order)—science—production—army.

- (2) The period of revolution must finally be eradicated unless Europe wants to fall into total poverty and comprehensive depravity.⁷

The presented theses, in an elaborate and justified form, also appeared in one of his last works: *State and Law in Latin Civilization* (finished in 1941). These theses outline the need for Poland to respect the ways of human existence and action (personalism) in all areas of personal life and to respect the social order in which a family based on an indissoluble marriage becomes a place of education and human life, with support from the local community (commune) as well as from the nation and the state itself. This policy must, according to Koneczny, have a national character and must be morally correct, without losing anything from realism and its effectiveness. It cannot tolerate secularism, atheism, or godlessness in any form, but it also attempts to sacralize it because the state, law and social life are always directed towards achieving natural goals, not supernatural ones.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Koneczny's work devoted to religious and social issues also reveals another aspect of his life and views, testifying that his personal life was full of dramatic decisions and sensations. A lot about the traumatic experiences of this period of his life, the disputes which he had to have, is said by his words when he wrote that

Is it not contrary to reason—I will ask myself in November 1943—to start a new book, not knowing where I should look for accommodation for the next night, in constant uncertainty about water, fire and a roof over my head? During the time when the Decalogue was suspended, and all private property was actually abolished, when only lawlessness was being made into legal forms? And manuscripts, going from hideout to hideout, can be found unexpectedly somewhere in a place that the author himself will never know? Of course, starting this book is against reason, but reason does not mean reasonable only. And can one even live

⁷ F. Koneczny, "Czterdzieści tez zasadniczych," *Trybuna Narodu* 2, no. 19 (1927), pp. 2–3.

only by reason? As a rule, you have to be guided by it, but sometimes a certain deviation may even be a duty.⁸

The year 1944 was an important caesura in Koneczny's life, marking his further life with the stigma of great suffering. He met a distressing fate. He stopped leaving the house, reading newspapers and contacting people. He had a spiritual breakdown during this period. This is evidenced by the fact that he did not attend Sunday Masses, and he drove away the priest who tried to intervene, Fr. Władysław Długosz. The reason for the conflict was a dispute regarding the understanding of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Koneczny was to advocate the thesis that the Old Testament is unnecessary due to civilizational reasons. His nervous breakdown of 1944 was preceded by family dramas and personal catastrophes. In 1942, the German occupiers took a significant part of the house from him by putting a German family in it and depriving Koneczny of his own home, his place of work, everything that served him in his everyday and scientific life. He was already eighty years old. His property was not returned to him after the January 1945 invasion of Krakow by the Soviets, who put forced tenants in his house. His son, Stanisław, was arrested and then sentenced to death on August 22, 1943. He died by beheading on October 23 in Brandenburg an der Havel. On August 15, during the Warsaw Uprising, the Germans killed his second son Czesław together with his wife. To make matters worse, the only daughter of Koneczny from the pre-war period still suffered from serious heart disease and rheumatism, which was associated with many limitations and was a constant threat to her life.

Difficulties in his life even seemed to intensify after the Germans were expelled from Poland. There was a necessity to care for and bring up the two orphaned children of Stanisław (Jacek and Wiesław), which in the absence of means of living and the professor's advanced age seemed to be an impossible task to overcome. To make matters worse, the new socialist state, installed in Poland by the Soviets after 1945, aimed to annihilate people like him, pushing aside his entire scientific and journalistic activity. However, he did not lose spirit and constantly worked, which allowed him to finish and take

⁸ F. Koneczny, *Prawa dziejowe* (Komorów: Wydawnictwo Antyk – Marcin Dybowski, 1997), p. 6.

several of his important works from Poland to London, which appeared posthumously owing to the efforts of the Roman Dmowski Society in London.

However, despite all these difficulties, Koneczny was still working and going to “ever harder difficulties.” After the war, he published many short articles in *Niedziela* and in *Tygodnik Warszawski*.⁹ They were his main and, in time, only sources of income, which was so needed for the upbringing of his two orphaned grandchildren.

On August 20, 1948, Wanda—his daughter-in-law, the wife of his murdered son Stanisław—died of a heart attack. From then on, he was left alone with all his problems. He began to suffer from numerous illnesses that finally led to his death. Even when his diseases got worse and made eating impossible, he continued to work, and he finished the last pages of his books.

Just before his death, Koneczny was reconciled with God, and received the sacraments from the hands of the parish priest, Fr. Władysław Długosz. He died on February 10, 1949, and his funeral took place on February 12 in Krakow in the Salvatorian cemetery.

PIETY AND COMMITMENT

This brief review of the work of Feliks Koneczny does not reflect the most important thing, namely his personal relationship with the Creator-God. It was always alive and at the same time human, not free from difficulties, struggles, and even traumatic experiences. It was the thing which always gave him strength in his tireless work, which lasted until the final days of his life, despite blows, deaths of his loved ones, diseases, shameful injustice and painful poverty. That relationship with God gave him a sense of authentic happiness and joy, although, like a human being, he had a hard and even tragic life. He wrote just before the Second World War:

Hits and internal cheerfulness! They possessed this high quality of the soul that Catholic ethics in our days called the joyful fidelity

⁹ P. Biliński, *Feliks Koneczny (1862–1949). Życie i działalność* (Warszawa: Inicjatywa Wydawnicza “Ad astra”, 2001), pp. 222–224. A full list of Koneczny’s publications is also contained therein.

of life. To feel it, you have to stay young, i.e. work as a young person. Can you think of something better than these good things! ... For happiness is based on joyful fidelity and the culture of an act consistent with Catholic ethics, happiness consists of going to greater problems, and thus of the education of all higher abilities—when pursuing happiness is simply a duty, because it is approaching the ideal of similarity in the image and likeness of God. Under such slogans, purposeful life is created.¹⁰

This purposeful life, to the full extent, to the last moments of his earthly existence he created, was lived in the conviction that “Man cannot be limited by the shortness of his life, and in a collective life he must act as if death did not exist. Collective life consists in transmitting the (spiritual and material) achievements to the next generation, and thus on the moral (not only physical!) continuity of generations. You have to think till death and leave something to your successors, otherwise our life would be worth little. It is necessary to work *sub specie aeternitatis*.”¹¹

¹⁰ F. Koneczny, *Rozwój moralności* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Wiedzy Chrześcijańskiej, 1938), p. 387.

¹¹ F. Koneczny, *Prawa dziejowe*, p. 212.