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## THE POSITION OF WŁADYSŁAW KONOPCZYŃSKI IN THE WORLD HUMANITIES

Władysław Konopczyński, a Polish scholar and an investigator of modern history, certainly deserves to be recalled and to reappear yet again in all-European awareness. It must be done due to the fact that the name of that very outstanding and titled pre-war scholar was forced to disappear completely from the European humanities for fifty years. The decision of expelling Konopczyński from the world of European historians was made by communist leaders of Poland. However, before that time Konopczyński had played an important role in Europe. It is just enough to mention that during Poland's twenty years of independence after World War I, in the year 1931, it was Konopczyński himself that was granted a membership in the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm. Moreover, he was awarded with the Swedish Royal Order of the Polar Star and the French Legion of Honour. Furthermore, the historian participated in many international congresses. In addition to that, his works were printed in many countries of Western Europe. It was in Stockholm, in 1947, that the heir to the throne himself attended Konopczyński's lecture.

Let us briefly examine the life and achievements of that remarkable scholar. Władysław Konopczyński was born on 26 November 1880 in Warsaw as a son to Ignacy, an engineer of transport, and to Ludwika of Obrąpalscy<sup>1</sup>. On the day of his baptism, at St. Alexander's Church, he was given two names: Władysław and Aleksander, the names that were strongly connected with the family tradition. The mass was celebrated by a priest, Ksawery Rogowski, and it happened on 15 December 1880. Zofia Strumiłło and Aleksander Konopczyński were chosen as the child's godparents. On the day of Władysław's birth, his father was already 31 years old and his mother 27<sup>2</sup>.

Władysław was brought up together with his two brothers: Zygmunt (born 29 June 1878) and Adam (born 16 July 1885.) They were raised almost solely by their mother. The father did not devote much of his time and attention to his sons' upbringing due to the fact that he strongly believed that the father's

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<sup>1</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Autobiografia* in: *Nauka Polska* 26, 1992, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński's certificate of baptism in St. Aleksander's Church in Warsaw, the copy in the Archive of the Konopczyńscy family in Gliwice (further referred to as ARKG), p. 1.

duty was to maintain the best possible standard of living for his family. Among other activities, the brothers were playing games and practicing gymnastics at M. Olszewski's school. The boys, together with their mother, used to spend their holidays in Iwonicz, Szczawnica or Sopot. It must be stated that their whole family, not only the closest one, was extremely close and Władysław Konopczyński, being a young boy, paid frequent visits to his aunt and uncle Ostromęczcy in Rogalin, Strumiłłowie in Książniczki and to his grandparents, Obrąpalscy, in Dziepułć. At his family home, filled with positivistic attitudes and spirit, there was only one person who aroused humanistic interests in Władek. The person in question was his uncle, Emilian Konopczyński, a well-known Warsaw educator and a founder of a grammar school for boys. Up to this day, there exists a street in Warsaw named after Emilian Konopczyński<sup>1</sup>.

Yet there was another person who had even greater influence on Władysław Konopczyński. Getting acquainted with Tadeusz Korzon marked the greatest trace on the historian's soul. Tadeusz Korzon was a friend of Władysław Konopczyński's grandfather. Erazm Obrąpalski, the grandfather, met Korzon in Russia where they were both sent into exile. After some time, in his memoirs, Konopczyński described the work with his *honourable master* as his *first, the most fruitful seminar*. It was under Korzon's guidance that Władysław Konopczyński read Polish history textbooks of Michał Bobrzyński, Anatol Lewicki, Józef Szujski and Leon Rogalski<sup>2</sup>. The mentioned works gave Konopczyński a firm and solid basis for his printed series of course lectures on Polish history. The lectures encompassed the years of the reign of Piast and Jagiellonian dynasties as well as the ones of elective kings. It must be added and emphasized that while writing that work Konopczyński was only fifteen years old. In his work, he divided the politics of each and every ruler into interior and exterior. What is more, he included chronological and genealogical layouts not only for the rulers themselves but also for magnate houses of Ostrogorscy, Sanguszkowie and Radziwiłłowie. The entire work was ornamented with amusing drawings and caricatures. The material was presented in a casual and humoristic way and it was full of controversial opinions such as describing one of the Polish kings as *Mieczysław II the slothful*<sup>3</sup>. However, as Konopczyński himself pointed out, it was general history that was his real interest. Already at school, he used to read Fryderk Schlosser's and Korzon's history books about the Middle Ages<sup>4</sup>.

The prospective historian spent his childhood years in Łódź and Radom, to later leave the places to attend, with his brother, Wojciech Górski's School [Szkola Realna] in Warsaw. In 1891 he went to the IV government grammar school where he got to know himself as the best student. During his school

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence with W. Mrozowska, Gliwice 3 VI 2003, in the author's possession.

<sup>2</sup> J. Maternicki, *Władysław Konopczyński i jego synteza dziejów Polski nowożytnej* in: W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski Nowożytnej*, Warszawa 1996, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Biblioteka Jagiellońska [The Jagiellonian Library] (further referred to as BJ), manusc. cat. no. 119/61, 120/61: *Mieczysław II z przydomkiem gnuśny*.

<sup>4</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Autobiografia*, p. 111.

years, he devoted a great deal of attention and time to studying foreign languages. He proved to have an extraordinary linguistic talent. He was fluent at many languages, namely: English, German, Italian, French, Russian, Swedish, Danish, Czech, Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian, Dutch, Latin and Greek<sup>1</sup>. In 1899 he graduated from that school and brilliantly passed his final exams (Matura exams) and was awarded with a silver medal for learning. It was with his parents' and his friend's, Karol Lutostański, encouragement and instigation that he decided to enroll to the Faculty of Law at the Russian Imperial Warsaw University<sup>2</sup>. It is strongly believed that the mentioned choice was determined by financial reasons since as a graduate of History Konopczyński would not be able to find himself a well-paid job. In 1904 he graduated from the university as a holder of a university degree in law and political sciences<sup>3</sup>.

Before the graduation, he had served one year in the army (14 September 1903 – 14 September 1904) in the III Brigade of Artillery Guard. He chose that very brigade because of its glorious participation in the battle of Ostrołęka in 1831. He did not try to avoid his military duty to the country due to the fact that he did not want to expose his father to paying 1000 roubles for so-called *compensation*<sup>4</sup>. After the outburst of war between Russia and Japan, not wanting to go on Manchurian front, he pretended to be ill. That made-up illness saved him from being sent to fight and from certain death while defending tsarism, the idea that Konopczyński opposed with his whole heart and soul. The fact of being ill could also allow him to flee abroad, yet he did not use that chance because of his officer's honour<sup>5</sup>. He was sent to military hospital instead, where he was reading Walerian Kalinka's *Sejm Czteroletni* to make the time pass more pleasantly. He was also making a great deal of preparations for his book *Polska w dobie wojny siedmioletniej*. Still, in his opinion, staying at hospital was the most unproductive period of his entire life.<sup>6</sup>

In 1906, in May, Konopczyński returned to Krakow to later move to Warsaw. He reached the Congress Kingdom of Poland just after the revolutionary riots. He began his career as a teacher in his uncle, Emilian Konopczyński's grammar school. In his diary, Zygmunt Konopczyński wrote that *Władek took the post of the torturer (the slaughterer of the innocents) in uncle Emilian's school. Meaning: he was lecturing History to young boys and giving fail notes*

<sup>1</sup> The Archive of the Jagiellonian University (further referred to as AUJ), S II 619. W. Konopczyński's Personal questionnaire.

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Autobiografia*, pp. 111–112. Compare with W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in the Archive of the Konopczyński Family in Warsaw (further referred to as ARKW), fasc. 14, unnumb. p., record of 17 June 1899.

<sup>3</sup> Konopczyński's University Diploma, manusc. in ARKG.

<sup>4</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Jak zostałem historykiem* in: *Znak* 10, 52/1958, pp. 16–17. Compare with W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 27, unnumb. p., record of 5 September 1903.

<sup>5</sup> Biblioteka Naukowa Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk [Scientific Library of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the Polish Academy of Sciences] (further referred to as BN PAU i PAN), manusc. 7266, vol. 2: Zygmunt Konopczyński's Diary, unnumb. p.

<sup>6</sup> *Summa summarum three years were wasted – at the Faculty of Law, in the army, in the Sejm* [Polish parliament – P. B.], in prison. W. Konopczyński, *Jak zostałem historykiem*, p. 31.

to the ones who did not believe in Peter I, Catherine II and Sigmund III<sup>1</sup>. Thanks to Korzon's help, Konopczyński was also able to have classes in a newly opened Society of Scientific Courses [Towarzystwo Kursów Naukowych]<sup>2</sup>. He lectured there about the Saxon times with the great emphasis on the literary sources of the lectured subject<sup>3</sup>.

In 1907, in autumn, he went to Lvov where he attended the lectures of Ludwik Finkiel, Józef Kallenbach, Bronisław Dembiński, Kazimierz Twardowski and Szymon Askenazy's seminar. Konopczyński did not seem to have any relevant problems with starting his PhD course due to the fact that he was an author of two serious historical dissertations entitled *Geneza Liberum veto* and *Sejm grodzieński 1752 roku*. In addition to that, he passed with excellent grades his History exam (10 July 1908) and Philosophy exam (17 October 1908). After the year of extensive work, Konopczyński finished his PhD thesis which became the first part of the greater work *Polska w dobie wojny siedmioletniej (1755–1758)*. On 17 October 1908 at the Emperor Frank Joseph I University in Lvov he defended his doctoral thesis. After that memorable event, the rector of the university, Antoni Noga Mars, the dean, Stanisław Witkowski, and the supervisor, Bronisław Kruczkiewicz, put their signatures on the diploma on 16 November 1908<sup>4</sup>.

Already in 1911, in January, Konopczyński started his postdoctoral studies at the Jagiellonian University. He started the studies having the second part of his book *Polska w dobie wojny siedmioletniej* and his numerous articles and studies as a basis for his postdoctoral work. His postdoctoral examination was held on 27 April 1911. It was noted that *Dr Konopczyński proved to possess thorough knowledge of modern history, especially of the XVIII and XIX centuries*<sup>5</sup>. Having passed the examinations, Konopczyński's postdoctoral lecture was nothing but formality. The mentioned lecture took place on 29 April 1911 and was entitled *Anglia wobec upadku Polski przed pierwszym rozbiorem*. Konopczyński delighted all his listeners with his erudition, knowledge of the sources and professionalism of his technique. The resolution made by the Faculty of Philosophy Council at the Jagiellonian University on 26 May 1911 stated that Władysław Konopczyński ought to be granted *veniam legendi* in modern history which was later accepted by the Ministry of Education and Religion in Austria–Hungary on 2 August 1911<sup>6</sup>.

From that time Konopczyński worked at the Jagiellonian University as a private assistant professor. Achieving certain stability in his life allowed him

<sup>1</sup> BN PAU i PAN, manusc. 7266, vol. 2: Zygmunt Konopczyński's Diary, unnumb. p.: *Władek objął urząd oprawcy (ścinacza niewiniątek) w naukowym zakładzie stryja Emiliana, to znaczy wykladał historię młodzieńcom i stawiał dwóje tym, którzy nie wierzyli w Piotra I, Katarzynę II i Zygmunta III.*

<sup>2</sup> BJ, manusc., cat. no. 60/61.

<sup>3</sup> BJ, manusc., cat. no. 130/61.

<sup>4</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 43, unnumb. p., record of 17 October 1908. See BJ, manusc. cat. no. 69/61: Konopczyński's Doctoral Diploma.

<sup>5</sup> AUJ, WF II 121: Konopczyński's Postdoctoral files: *Dr Konopczyński wykazał się gruntowną znajomością historii nowożytnej, w szczególności XVIII i XIX wieku.*

<sup>6</sup> AUJ, WF II 121: A written approval of Konopczyński's postdoctoral qualifications.

to get married to Jadwiga Lutostańska (8 August 1887 – 28 January 1961), a sister of his good friend, Karol<sup>1</sup>. His first daughter, Halina, was born on 17 September 1912<sup>2</sup>. The newly formed family used to spend their time in a country manor in Młynnik near Ojców. It was in that manor that Konopczyński devoted his time to gardening, planting trees and watering his flowers. The mentioned manor was bought by Konopczyński's parents from Mr Nawrocki. In 1901 they paid him 23 000 roubles for the property<sup>3</sup>.

The outburst of the First World War found Konopczyński in Gdynia where he was spending holidays with his family. They were expelled from Gdynia to Sweden as subjects to the Tsar<sup>4</sup>. While being deported, professor Konopczyński forgot to take his personal belongings but, at least, managed to take his suitcase with the materials for *Konfederacja barska*<sup>5</sup>. He spent about half of the year in Scandinavia, either in Copenhagen or Stockholm. He maintained a satisfactory standard of living thanks to private lessons that he was offering. Yet most of his time, the scholar devoted to archival research due to the fact that he was preparing a new dissertation called *Polska a Szwecja 1660–1795*. In 1915 he became acquainted with Ajencja Lozańska who ordered a book *A Brief of Polish History* (Geneva 1919) that Konopczyński wrote with Karol Lutostański. Konopczyński arrived in Krakow in 1916, after his father's death. His father, Ignacy, died of heart attack on 30 July 1915. Władysław Konopczyński's second daughter, Maria<sup>6</sup>, was born on 26 August 1917 and the third, Wanda, on 18 October 1922<sup>7</sup>.

After the death of Stanisław Krzyżanowski (15 January 1917), Konopczyński faced the opportunity to take over the Faculty of Polish History. Yet he was not the only person willing to take that post. Among his opponents there were Oskar Halecki, Ludwik Kolankowski and Stanisław Zakrzewski<sup>8</sup>. There appeared a fierce competition among the candidates. There was a number of people who were against Konopczyński taking over the faculty, among them Waław Tokarz and Waław Sobieski, who were in favour of Oskar Halecki and Ludwik Kolankowski. However, when it was made clear that the mentioned two candidates held no chances of winning, Tokarz and Sobieski stood in favour of Stanisław Zakrzewski. Yet Konopczyński had his supporters, too. Franciszek Bujak and Władysław Semkowicz opted for his candidature. Because of the mentioned support and due to the fact that it was not certain that Stanisław Zakrzewski could be favoured by the majority, Tokarz and Sobieski tried to prolong the matter what, in consequence, would

<sup>1</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 51, unnumb. p., record of 22 July 1911.

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 54, unnumb. p., record of 17 September 1912.

<sup>3</sup> P. Biliński, *Młynnik w życiu Władysława Konopczyńskiego* in: *Ochrona dóbr kultury i historycznego związku człowieka z przyrodą w parkach narodowych*, (ed.) J. Partyka, Ojców 2003, pp. 597–602.

<sup>4</sup> U. Perkowska, *Uniwersytet Jagielloński w latach I wojny światowej*, Kraków 1990, p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Oral account of W. Mrozowska, Gliwice 29 IV 1998, recording in the author's possession.

<sup>6</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 69, unnumb. p., record of 26 August 1917.

<sup>7</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 85, unnumb. p., record of 18 October 1922.

<sup>8</sup> AUJ, WF II 137: Appointment to a post of an associate professor.

lead to the situation in which the faculty would have no head for some time<sup>1</sup>. Yet again their scheme failed since the Faculty of Philosophy Council, after a stormy discussion, reached the conclusion that it would be Konopczyński who would chair the faculty in question. On 16 July 1917 the decision was made, with 18 people in favour of Konopczyński and 11 against him<sup>2</sup>. Władysław Konopczyński was appointed the head of the faculty on 13 December 1917<sup>3</sup>, yet it was only next year, 1 January 1918<sup>4</sup>, when he formally took over the post of an associate professor.

The twenty-year period of Konopczyński's scholarly–didactic work at the Jagiellonian University was full of numerous source–books, lectures and seminars. It was just before the First World War, in 1913, when Konopczyński was a representative of Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences [Polska Akademia Umiejętności (PAU)] at the IV International Congress of Historians in London and when he made a presentation entitled *Liberum veto*. An extensive report from the congress was preserved in *Biblioteka Warszawska*<sup>5</sup>. After having returned to Poland, he continued with his research in order to finish his remarkable work *Liberum veto*, which was printed in 1918. It is necessary to add that the very work was translated into French and published in Paris nine years later<sup>6</sup>. The book was intended as a kind of warning for the Polish nation fighting for independence. What is more, Konopczyński did ask certain questions in his book, among them a very crucial one. Konopczyński wondered whether Poles, unlike their ancestors, would be able to subjugate the right of an individual to the rights of general public, whether they would be able to be self–disciplined and to possess some civil honesty. What is more, if they would manage to give up that Polish national pride, political foolishness and corruption (the necessary component of social life.) Konopczyński was also wondering whether Poles would be able to govern their own country efficiently. The historian also criticised Michał Bobrzyński's work and postulated for a new, more optimistic Polish history textbook to be published<sup>7</sup>. Yet Konopczyński was not blindly optimistic as far as Poland gaining independence was considered. His work and opinions were characterised by moderation and deliberation. He was somewhere in between the Cracovian pessimistic school, which blamed the nobility for the decline of Poland, and the Warsaw optimistic school, which held the belief that the decline was solely the fault of the neighbouring countries, diminishing the role of Poland

<sup>1</sup> H. Barycz, *Historyk gniewny i niepokorny. Rzecz o Wacławie Sobieskim*, Kraków 1978, pp. 360–362.

<sup>2</sup> AUJ, WF II 47: The report from the proceeding of the Faculty of Philosophy Council, 10 July 1917.

<sup>3</sup> AUJ, WF II 137: Konopczyński's contract of employment, 20 December 1917.

<sup>4</sup> AUJ, Komisja do opracowania historii UJ w czasie wojny 1939–1945 [Commission responsible for preparation of history of the Jagiellonian University during the war 1939–1945] (further referred to as KHUW), S II 619: Konopczyński's Personal file.

<sup>5</sup> *Pod znakiem Heroda (kilka słów o Międzynarodowym Kongresie Historycznym w Londynie, odbytym w dniach 3–9 kwietnia)*. in: *Biblioteka Warszawska* 2, 1913, pp. 1–30.

<sup>6</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Liberum veto. Studium historyczno–porównawcze*, Kraków 1918; W. Konopczyński, *Le liberum veto. Etude sur le développement du principe majoritaire*, Paris 1927.

<sup>7</sup> M. Bobrzyński, *Dzieje Polski w zarysie*, Warszawa 1927.

itself. Konopczyński strongly emphasized the influence of the *sick* Polish parliamentarism on Poland's fate. He sought the reasons for the decline in the immaturity of the Polish nobility. According to the scholar, it was egoism and pursuing of private interests that were amongst the worst features of the Polish nobility. An English model of ruling that was filled with Republican spirit enthralled Konopczyński. He was a supporter of constitutional monarchy possessing strong executive power. He was firmly against Bobrzyński's longings for absolute monarchy, for which Konopczyński saw no place in democratic Poland. In addition, he strongly criticised the nobility's foreign policy. Contrary to the nobility, Konopczyński did not perceive Moscow as Poland's greatest enemy but saw that danger in Prussia. In his opinion, it was Prussia that was indefatigably and consistently trying to destroy Poland<sup>1</sup>.

The world of humanities did regard Konopczyński as an outstanding scholar and historian. Among other proofs for the respect, there was granting him a membership in the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm in 1931<sup>2</sup>, granting him the Swedish Royal Order of the Polar Star (1924) and the French Legion of Honour (1939.)<sup>3</sup> Jan Fabre, a French historian, enclosed a very favourable opinion about professor Konopczyński in his memoirs. He wrote that the professor *possessed a rarely encountered virtue, namely: a continuous concern with justice and fairness driven by charity and love for other people*<sup>4</sup>. During the period of twenty years of Polish independence after the First World War, Konopczyński took part in numerous international and Polish historical congresses. Among the others in Zurich (1917)<sup>5</sup>, (1938)<sup>6</sup>, Paris (1919)<sup>7</sup>, Warsaw (1933)<sup>8</sup>, Brussels (1923)<sup>9</sup>, Oslo (1928), Poznań (1925)<sup>10</sup>, Vilnius (1935), etc.

Konopczyński's reviews on Polish foreign policy in the XVII and XVIII centuries made up a very important trend in his research. During the period in question, that was the period between the wars, the mentioned trend could be represented by and traced in two books, namely: *Polska a Szwecja*<sup>11</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> P. Biliński, *Władysław Konopczyński historyk i polityk II Rzeczypospolitej (1880–1952)*, Warszawa 1999, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 110, unnumb. p., record of 17 May 1930.

<sup>3</sup> AUJ, KHUW, S II 619: Konopczyński's Personal file.

<sup>4</sup> J. Fabre, *Od Oświecenia do Romantyzmu. Studia i szkice z literatury i kultury polskiej*, (ed.) K. Kasprzyk, Warszawa 1995, pp. 286–289: *posiadał on bowiem zaletę jeszcze rzadziej spotykaną: była nią nieustanna troska o słuszność i sprawiedliwość, kierowana miłością bliźniego.*

<sup>5</sup> BJ, manusc. cat. no. 146/61: Materials connected with historical congresses.

<sup>6</sup> BJ, manusc. cat. no. 149/61 Ditto.

<sup>7</sup> BJ, manusc. cat. no. 150/61: Ditto.

<sup>8</sup> BJ, manusc. cat. no. 148/61: Ditto.

<sup>9</sup> BJ, manusc. cat. no. 147/61: Ditto.

<sup>10</sup> BJ, manusc. cat. no. 142/61: Ditto.

<sup>11</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Polska a Szwecja od pokoju oliwskiego do upadku Rzeczypospolitej 1660–1795*, Warszawa 1924. See also BJ, manusc. cat. no. 101/61: Taken from the Swedish Archive.

*Polska a Turcja*<sup>1</sup>. While creating the two works, Konopczyński had one idea in mind. He believed that co-operation with Sweden and Turkey could be the most valuable protection for the Polish independence in the XVIII century. In the former work, the historian discussed Polish–Swedish and Polish–Dutch relationships. The latter was written in a hasty way, being ordered by the Polish embassy in Ankara, thus it was not as thoroughly researched as the previous one. Yet it must be added that it was equally valuable one. In the mentioned two works, as well as in the article published in *Tygodnik Powszechny*<sup>2</sup>, not only did Konopczyński present the current affairs but he also made an attempt to present a great possibility of international co-operation which he considered highly important for the fate of Poland.

In his research work, Konopczyński devoted his attention to legal and political issues. The issues were discussed in his scholarly work such as in his draft *Dzieje parlamentaryzmu angielskiego*<sup>3</sup> or his article *Rząd a sejm w dawnej Polsce*<sup>4</sup>. In the article, Konopczyński wrote: *While the English, thanks to the properties of their minds and characters, were able to build an omnipotent parliament, standing hand in hand with a very powerful government, we created neither a ruling parliament, a monarchy nor any respectable presidential system whatsoever. In fact, we created no national power, all we did create were extensive regional councils at most. For other peoples and epochs, in our history book we only made a negative inscription as far as political knowledge is taken into account. The very knowledge that the English were able to express in a positive way and which stated that the power of a government did not depend on the parliament being weak or vice versa. The knowledge that stated that in a modern society a powerful government existed on equal terms with a healthy parliament since the real power was born out of responsibility.*<sup>5</sup> These were the words towards the Polish, the bitter words, indeed, yet cruelly true.

It was already during the war, when Konopczyński made a considerable attempt to co-ordinate collective work concerning the overall history of Poland. To that very issue of collective work, he devoted an extensive article

<sup>1</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Polska a Turcja 1683–1792*, Warszawa 1936. See also BJ, cat. no. 34/61: Source-notes for the history of Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Polska a Szwecja. Ideowo ustrojowe kontakty w przeszłości* in: *Tygodnik Powszechny* 4, 16 April 1948, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje parlamentaryzmu angielskiego*, Warszawa 1923. Three studies concerning Polish–English relationships in the XVIII century in BJ, manusc. cat. no. 71/61.

<sup>4</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Rząd a sejm w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* in: *Pamiętnik V powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Warszawie od 28 listopada do 4 grudnia 1930 roku, referaty*. Lwów 1930. Notes to the history of parliamentarism in Poland in BJ, manusc. cat. no. 115/61.

<sup>5</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Rząd a sejm ...*, p. 205: *Jeżeli Anglicy dzięki właściwościom swych umysłów i charakterów potrafili zbudować obok silnego rządu wszechpotężny parlament, to my nie stworzyliśmy ani sejmowładztwa, ani monarchii, ani porządnego systemu prezydenckiego, w ogóle żadnego narodowego władztwa, najwyżej rozległe rządy sejmikowe. Negatywnie wpisaliśmy w swej księdze dziejowej, dla wiadomości innych ludów i epok, tę samą naukę polityczną, którą Anglicy wyrazili pozytywnie: że siła rządu nie polega na słabości parlamentu ani na odwrot: że w nowoczesnym społeczeństwie silny rząd istnieje właśnie obok zdrowego sejmku, bo siła rodzi się z odpowiedzialności.*



entitled *Dziejopisarstwo zbiorowe u obcych i u nas*<sup>1</sup>. Despite the fact that Konopczyński had made several attempts to gather a few historians to work together, not many scholars seemed to be interested in the enterprise. Yet Konopczyński himself participated in many similar projects on many occasions. The following titles are just a few in which the historian marked his presence: *Polska w Kulturze Powszechnej* (1918), *Wielkopolska w Przeszłości* (1926), *Pomorze i ziemia Chełmińska* (1927), *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (1933), *Pologne Suisse* (1938), *Repetitorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Lander* (1936, 1950). In 1938 Konopczyński participated in the greatest enterprise of that time that was publishing of *Wielka Historia Powszechna*. The historian contributed to its creation by means of writing a part that encompassed the times of absolutism, 1648–1788<sup>2</sup>. After the war, there appeared other textbooks encompassing the general history of the XVII and XVIII centuries, by Jarema Maciszewski and Andrzej Kersten, yet neither of them could be compared to that created by Konopczyński. Konopczyński, being the greatest and the most outstanding historian of the Polish Republic, was no match for neither of the mentioned historians and was nothing but an ideal example for them to follow.

Another important work created by the Professor, just before the war's outburst, was Polish history published in English, entitled *The Cambridge History of Poland* (1940)<sup>3</sup>. After the war, in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, there appeared Konopczyński's article *Cambridge History of Poland w ogniu anglosaskiej krytyki* in which the author himself pointed out to the fact that *The History of Poland* was numerously reviewed (about 40 reviews) in Great Britain and in the United States of America. Apart from the reviews, he encountered a number of polemics concerned with the mentioned work. It must be stated that the reviews were favourable, Konopczyński's erudition and his writing artistry were emphasized. Moreover, some of them, literally glorified the heroic attitude of the Polish nation. Yet there was one thing in the reviews that the Professor found unwelcoming. That was the fact that *the English editors were glorifying Piłsudski at that very moment when his greatest opponent, general Sikorski, in England, took the lead of the Polish government in exile*. His conclusion was also significant: *I pity the fact that the peculiar tendency to apology of the 'sanacja' [Piłsudski's followers after 1926 – P. B.] regime was born under the roof of the pre-war Polish Republic embassy in London*.<sup>4</sup>

The last work created before the Second World War was *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*. That work was meant as a continuation to *Dzieje Polski średnio-*

<sup>1</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dziejopisarstwo zbiorowe u obcych i u nas* in: *Rok Polski* 1, 6/1916, pp. 11–26.

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Czasy absolutyzmu 1648–1788* in: *Wielka Historia Powszechna*, vol. 5, part 3, Trzaska, Evert and Michalski, Warszawa 1938.

<sup>3</sup> BJ, manusc. cat. no. 77/61: The reviews of the book.

<sup>4</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Cambridge History of Poland, w ogniu anglosaskiej krytyki* in: *Tygodnik Powszechny* 25, 26 June 1949, p. 5: *angielska redakcja gloryfikuje Piłsudskiego w chwili, kiedy jego główny przeciwnik, gen. Sikorski, stanął na czele rządu emigracyjnego w Anglii. (...) Szkoda, że pod dachem przedwojennej ambasady Rzeczypospolitej w Londynie zrodziła się pewna tendencja do apologii sanacyjnego reżimu*.

*wiecznej* by Roman Grodecki, Stanisław Zachorowski and Jan Dąbrowski. The idea of undertaking that very task came to Konopczyński in 1931. It must be emphasized that Konopczyński made a thorough preparation in order to create that leading textbook. Up to this day, his notes, outlines, sources and typescripts, though not complete, are kept and preserved in the Jagiellonian Library [Biblioteka Jagiellońska]<sup>1</sup>. *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej* in a large extent consists of political history, which makes about 80% of the whole text. The work is rich in numerous events and facts, this time carefully thought over and presented in such a comprehensible way that the reader could not lose the thread while appreciating the work. In addition, the work is characterized as being clear and simple in comprehending. Moreover, it boasts an evident and understandable guiding principle. The principle of presenting and explaining the history of Poland in modern times. There were a number of Marxist historians who strongly criticised the work. It was criticized for possessing national and patriotic spirit. They claimed that in that way Konopczyński was hurting brotherly Ukrainian nation by writing: *rowdy Cossack savages (...)* *freedom abusing Cossack savages (...)* *roguishness (...)* *peasant riot (...)* *Cossack ringleaders*.<sup>2</sup> Stanisław Śreniowski, an agitated critic, unfortunately forgot that the *pedigree nationalist*, as he contemptuously called the Professor, was also willing to ruthlessly condemn the destruction of the noble riffraff. Moreover, Konopczyński was also quite eager to compare the first half of the XVIII century's Republic of Poland to the *decaying and rotting pond*<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, Konopczyński's style of writing was rich, full of expression and rapacity. Konopczyński employed a great deal of irony, anecdotes, metaphors and comparisons to work as his allies. It was not a rarity that he mentioned shameful deeds of rulers, what is more, he did not protect them from his fierce comments such as: *The first Wasa heir, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, spoke eight languages yet in none of them did he have anything interesting to say*.<sup>4</sup> Marysieńka, on the other hand, was an *incorrigible plotter, always ready to disturb the public affairs with pursuing her private interests*.<sup>5</sup> Maria Ludwika was controlling Jan Kazimierz *the way a little Ethiopian controls his elephant*.<sup>6</sup> August III Sas *grew out from being a sweet, plump youth to become a heavy lump of fat and meat. The lump that was becoming more and more apathetic and thoughtless as the years were passing by*.<sup>7</sup> The author

<sup>1</sup> BJ, manusc. cat. no. 61/61, 62/61, 63/61, 64/61, 66/61, 67/61, 68/61.

<sup>2</sup> S. Śreniowski, *Sprawa chłopska w XVII wieku w polskiej historiografii burżuazyjnej* in: *Kwestia chłopska w Polsce w XVII wieku*, Warszawa 1955, pp. 39–40: *rozwydrzone żywioły kozakujące (...)* *nadużywający swobody żywioł kozacki (...)* *hultajstwo (...)* *ruchawka chłopska (...)* *hersztowie kozaccy*.

<sup>3</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 495, 597: *gnijąca sadzawka*.

<sup>4</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, p. 453: *Pierwszy spadkobierca Wazów Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki mówił ośmioma językami, ale w żadnym z nich nie miał nic ciekawego do powiedzenia*.

<sup>5</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, p. 484: *niepoprawna intrygantka, gotowa zamącić sprawy publiczne najpospolitszą prywatą*.

<sup>6</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, p. 425: *jak mały Etiopczyk słoniem*.

<sup>7</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, p. 556: *z ładnego pulchnego młodzieńca zrobił się ciężką bryłą mięsa i tłuszczu, z każdym rokiem coraz apatyczniejszą i bezmyślną*.

divided his work into chapters with each of them telling a story of a different monarch and a period of his rule. The decision was made due to the fact that *in our country, with this not fully developed Republican system, each and every election seemed to be a peculiar kind of novelty and each and every reign made a separate and distinct whole forming around a new ruler in the center*<sup>1</sup>.

The outburst of the Second World War appeared to be a breakthrough in the Konopczyński family. 6 November 1939 marked the beginning of a new era in the historian's life, the period of being imprisoned in a concentration camp in Sachsenhausen. His wife, Jadwiga Konopczyńska, in order to determine the exact location of her husband, applied to the Swedish legation in Warsaw. She made a request to Sven H. Grafström, a legation secretary, to help her acquire permission to send her husband some necessary food and clothing<sup>2</sup>. On 9 December 1939, Grafström intervened in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs by means of writing a letter in which he formed a request to release Konopczyński from the camp<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, Johan H. Beck-Früs sent a message, concerning the details of Konopczyński's being held captive, to the Swedish legate in Berlin – Arvid G. Richter. In the letter he wrote: *Amongst the imprisoned people, there happens to be professor Władysław Konopczyński, a foreign member of the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. Konopczyński is also a knight of the Polar Star. Moreover, the professor is a member of the Royal Society, responsible for publishing of manuscripts concerning history of Scandinavia, and a member of the Scientific Association in Lund. According to some information, it is evident that he was severely beaten while being arrested.*<sup>4</sup> On 23 January 1940, the Swedish legation in Berlin wrote a humble letter to the Federal Office of Germany stating that: *the (Swedish) Academy learnt about professor Konopczyński's being arrested or interned. Due to the significant relation between the Academy and the professor himself, they kindly expect that some considerable steps will be taken in that case.*<sup>5</sup> In response, on 21 February 1940, the Germans informed that Konopczyński returned to his place of

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<sup>1</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, p. 74: *u nas, przy nie dokończalanej budowie ustroju republikańskiego, każda elekcja stanowiła wielkie novum, każde panowanie odrębną całość krystalizującą się około osoby nowego króla.*

<sup>2</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego i Akademii Górniczej (6 XI 1939). Dokumenty [An Insidious Imprisonment of the Jagellonian University and the University of Mining and Metallurgy Professors]*, selected and edited by J. Buszko and I. Paczyńska, Kraków 1995, p. 25. Cf. also S. Grafström, *Polskie Stronice*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 173–174.

<sup>3</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów ...*, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów ...*, p. 142: *Wśród tych, których aresztowano, znajduje się profesor Władysław Konopczyński, będący członkiem zagranicznym Królewskiej Akademii Literatury, Historii i Starożytności. Jest on również kawalerem orderu Gwiazdy Polarnej oraz członkiem zarówno Królewskiego Towarzystwa do spraw publikowania rękopisów dotyczących historii Skandynawii, jak i Towarzystwa Naukowego w Lund. Zgodnie z informacją został on podczas samego aresztowania ciężko pobity.*

<sup>5</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów ...*, pp. 211–212: *Akademia (Szwedzka) dowiedziała się, że profesor Konopczyński został aresztowany lub internowany. Ze względu na łączące ją z nim związki Akademia oczekuje, że jeśli jest to możliwe, będzie można dla niego coś zrobić.*

residence<sup>1</sup>. The Swedish legation obviously did not forget to express their deep gratitude for the actions taken and, on 26 February 1940, they sent an appropriate letter<sup>2</sup>. Konopczyński's setting free aroused a great deal of happiness and relief among his Swedish fellow scholars.

After the war, in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Konopczyński presented some hypothetical reasons for Polish professors' being released from the camp in Sachsenhausen<sup>3</sup>. It is possible to learn from certain confidential data that the Swedish were striving to set the Cracovian scholars free, and their attempts were particularly directed towards Konopczyński's release, though, their protests were ineffective. It was the Hungarians who achieved a considerable success in that matter by means of obtaining freedom for two professors: Zygmunt Sarna and Jan Dąbrowski. Any help from intimidated and fascist German professors was out of the question. There was only one of them, professor Max Vasmer, who mustered up his courage and, on 10 January 1940, wrote a letter to the counselor, Martin Schliep, in the Federal Office of Germany. In his letter he formed a request concerning the issue of four professors: Ignacy Chrzanowski, Kazimierz Nitsch, Władysław Semkowicz and Władysław Konopczyński being released from the camp<sup>4</sup>. However, his attempt was not at all successful. The Pope's nuncio in the Reich also made an attempt to rescue the Professor, yet it is believed that it was the allied Italian government that was the most successful in that matter. The Italian scholars, the Pope and Vatican, the Royal Family and the Polish embassy, represented by general Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszowski, united their efforts and exerted pressure on the Italian government. Halina Heitzman of Konopczyńscy went to Italy to help in setting her father free<sup>5</sup>. All the mentioned factors could have been the reasons why the professors were released. However, as Konopczyński himself claimed, the mentioned actions had not been proved. The Professor was not aware of the fact that the Spanish embassy in Berlin also paid a great deal of attention to help in his case. On 7 February 1940 a letter was issued, in which it was mentioned that Konopczyński suffered from angina pectoris<sup>6</sup>.

While Konopczyński was in the concentration camp, his family was thrown away from their flat on Słowacki Avenue. The mentioned incident took place on 10 November 1939. The flat was then occupied by *a savage drunkard and debauchee, Dr Fritz Fischeder. Fischeder, sometimes together with his beloved Miss Morgenroth, was shooting to Volumina Legum and other respectable books. On other occasions he used some papers as*

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<sup>1</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów ...*, pp. 302–303.

<sup>2</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów ...*, p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Jak się to stało żeśmy ocalili?* in: *Tygodnik Powszechny* 3, 45/1947, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów ...*, pp. 181–182.

<sup>5</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów ...*, pp. 266–267.

<sup>6</sup> *Podstępne uwięzienie profesorów ...*, p. 254.

*kindling-fuel*<sup>1</sup>. Fortunately, Jadwiga Konopczyńska managed to save some of her husband's important papers and documents. Had it not been for a Polish caretaker friend and a servant friend, she would not have been able to take them away. It was only after a year and a half (1 May 1941), when Fischeder was transferred to Germany and another German moved in the flat, that all the other books were taken from the flat. The new tenant, a police inspector, Pollnau, allowed the books to be taken from the flat and it was Genek Berezowski, a porter, who persuaded him to take that action<sup>2</sup>. The books and documents were taken to the nearby manor in Młynnik, the place where Konopczyński was staying after having been released from Oranienburg<sup>3</sup>. During the war, the Professor's family lived on Krzywa Street in a rented two-room flat<sup>4</sup> and, after his returning from the camp, they lived on Krowoderska Street where they occupied half of a flat. The other half belonged to professor Lewkowicz and his family. After the Warsaw Uprising, a lot of Konopczyński's relatives found a safe place in the flat and *Mrs Lewkowicz was lending us some bedding so that our relatives were able to get some sleep in a clean place, even though they were sleeping on the floor*<sup>5</sup>.

Underground teaching at the Jagiellonian University made a very serious and vital venture in the Professor's didactic work during the war. It was Mieczysław Małecki that persuaded Konopczyński to take charge of the history studies. It was a very dangerous job due to the fact that if uncovered it could lead to death penalty or being sent to a concentration camp. It is necessary to add that the majority of professors refused to take part in the underground teaching since they were afraid of the mentioned punishment. There were only a few professors that had decided to participate in that undertaking, having been earlier persuaded by Konopczyński. The classes were held in a private house of Maria Traczewska on Pańska Street. At the very beginning only nineteen people attended the classes. The Professor had very fond memories of that time: *To each and every two-hour meeting I was riding [a bicycle – P. B.] or going on foot, covering the distance of 26 km from Młynnik, yet I did it for the exceptional young people. Thus I did not regret the trouble. (...) I gathered the fondest memories from those meetings. The memories teeming with the echo of our conspiratorial and secret self-education from the previous forty odd years, from the Apuchtin's era.*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AUJ, KHUW, manusc. 11: *dziki pijak i rozpustnik Dr Fritz Fischeder, który sam czy też do spółki ze swą lubą panną Morgenroth strzelał do Voluminów Legum i innych szanownych ksiąg, brał na podpałkę niektóre papiery.*

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 142, unnumb. p., *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> AUJ, KHUW, manusc. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Oral account of W. Mrozowska.

<sup>5</sup> J. Konopczyńska, *Wspomnienia*, manusc. in ARKG, unnumb. p., record of 1944: *pani Lewkowiczowa pożywała nam pościel, żeby nasi bliscy mogli chociaż na podłodze przespać się w czystym mieszkaniu.*

<sup>6</sup> AUJ, KHUW, manusc. 11: *Na każde dwugodzinne zebranie jeździłem lub chodziłem pieszo z odległego o 26 km Młynnika, ale nie żał mi było tej fatygi dla młodzieży wyjątkowo dobranej. (...) Z tych zebrań wyniosłem jak najlepsze wspomnienia, tętniące echem naszych konspiracyjnych kółek samokształceniowych z poprzednich lat czterdziestu kilku, z doby apuchtinowskiej.*

On 20 January 1945, just after the Red Army marched in Krakow, Konopczyński returned to his work at the Jagiellonian University<sup>1</sup>. At the very same time, the Soviets plundered his manor in Młynnik. *Some major, a devoted adherent of the Marxist ideology, expressed his deepest hope that, due to my being a historian, I would make an efficient Marxist capable of explaining Polish history.*<sup>2</sup> For the following three years, Konopczyński was examining his students and giving his monographic lectures and seminars. He did not resign from his risky co-operation with a secret organization, National Party [Stronnictwo Narodowe]. Among other things, he also occupied himself with writing polemics to a secret national newspaper *Walka*<sup>3</sup>. Luckily he was not arrested, yet it must be said that he was under the constant observation by the secret police<sup>4</sup>. That very moral and firm attitude towards the Polish matters became one of the reasons for his later persecution.

On 15 February 1945, he was chosen a president of Historical Commission at Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences [Komisja Historyczna Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności (PAU)], and after the death of Stanisław Kutrzeba, he became a chairman of Polish Historical Society's [Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne (PTH)] department in Krakow (22 June 1946.) Kazimierz Nitsch became a new president of PAU on 21 March 1946. Nitsch was chosen for that post because he was strongly supported by Czesław Wycech, the Minister of Education. The Minister believed that Nitsch's adversary, Franciszek Bujak, held no chances of winning due to the fact that Bolesław Bierut would certainly oppose his candidature<sup>5</sup>. Thus the choice was made clear. During the meeting of the Main Board of PTH, in Łódź, Konopczyński was chosen a president of the Society on 12 April 1947<sup>6</sup>. Although Konopczyński held the most important positions in historical circles, yet there appeared certain factors that made his position weaker. The attitude of Marxist political elite in Polish People's Republic, together with a strong dislike from the Minister of Education, Stanisław Skrzyszewski, made that situation possible to happen. It was with horror that Konopczyński was observing the spread of communist totalitarian system in Poland. The system that he strongly and openly despised and criticized. When he was being persuaded to make certain concessions and to humiliate himself before some communist dignitaries, during a scientific conference at the Jagiellonian University, 26 January 1946, he formulated an opinion: *There are certain demands for science to serve life. Indeed, it is its role, let the science serve life in any possible*

<sup>1</sup> AUJ, KHWU, S II 619. Konopczyński's Personal file.

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 151, unnumb. p., record of 22 January 1945: *Major ideowiec wyraził nadzieję, że jako historyk zostanie dobrym marksistą od wyjaśniania dziejów Polski.*

<sup>3</sup> BN PAU i PAN, manusc. 7785, vol. 3. Materials for biographies of the members of Liga Narodowa [National League], compiled by J. Zieliński.

<sup>4</sup> In his diary he mentioned several times that *an individual in black was following me.* W. Konopczyński, *Dziennik*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 160, unnumb. p., *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 153, unnumb. p., record of 21 March 1946.

<sup>6</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Autobiografia*, p. 116.

way, yet do not make it a lackey.<sup>1</sup> Those particular beliefs and opinions he advocated, resulted in his profound conflict with communist reign and in considerable attempts to remove the Professor from the Jagiellonian University, PAU and PTH.

The spring 1947 marked the beginning of a severe witch-hunt. The Professor was perceived as being a *zoological anti-Semite*. The issue of anti-Semitism was first mentioned by Skrzyszewski and it became a sufficient reason for removing the Professor from PTH, UJ and PAU. It was in January that Konopczyński was forced to resign from his position of the president of PTH, due to the fact that *Skrzyszewski did not allow me to meet him and he refused any financial help for the Society [PTH – P. B.] as long as it is chaired by that zoological anti-Semite. Every intelligent person was aware of the fact that it was nothing but nonsense and the real reason for such decisions was based on my opinions formulated during the conference at the Jagiellonian University on 26 January 1946. Indeed, it was not forgotten by the authorities.*<sup>2</sup> And indeed, with a broken and ill heart, Konopczyński resigned from his post. After having resigned, he analyzed the situation in PTH and wrote: *Polish historians are being drilled by Roman Werfel and professor Żanna Kormanowa, together with some instructors brought here from the East. And the situation shall continue unless there appears a person, sensible but dangerous, who will authoritatively explain to them, as it was explained to the linguists, the fact that they do nothing else but practice hermeneutics and talk nonsense.*<sup>3</sup>

In a letter to his friend, Władysław Tomkowicz, Konopczyński wrote sarcastically: *I do not assume that we will continue our correspondence to discuss PTH matters due to the fact that I transferred all my powers, because of my poor health, to professor Stanisław Łempicki (it seems that the meetings are not hazardous to his health.) (...) Yesterday I learnt about my 'zoological anti-Semitism'. Mr. G's suggestion came to me as a total surprise and novelty. He believes that 'for the cause' PTH should discuss all the affairs connected with members of its board with the Minister. As for Kwartalnik – somebody is constantly lying. In the past some accounts were required, so we sent all the necessary documents, but they pretended that we had sent nothing. So we proved that we did send the accounts. Even our Main Board has sent appropriate information recently, but they still pretend that they have received nothing. And finally, as for the audience: our letter clearly states that it is not*

<sup>1</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Autobiografia*, p. 118. The mentioned words are engraved as a motto on his gravestone: *Słuchać żądanie, aby nauka służyła życiu. Owszem, niech służy czym może, niech mu przyświeca. Ale niech się nie wysługuje.*

<sup>2</sup> The Rostworowscy Archive in Kraków. A copy of Konopczyński's letter to the chairman of PAU – Kazimierz Nitsch: *Skrzyszewski nie dopuścił mnie przed swoje oblicze i odmówił Towarzystwu wszelkiej pomocy materialnej, póki mu przewodniczy zoologiczny antysemita. Każdy inteligentny człowiek wiedział, że to jest nonsens, ale też kamień obraży krył się gdzie indziej: zapamiętano w sferach rządowych moje słowa wypowiedziane na konferencji naukowej w auli UJ 26 stycznia 1946 roku.*

<sup>3</sup> The Rostworowscy Archive in Kraków. A copy of Konopczyński's letter to the chairman of PAU – Kazimierz Nitsch: *musztrują dziś historyków polskich Roman Werfel i prof. Żanna Kormanowa i sprowadzeni ze Wschodu instruktorzy. I tak będzie nadal, dopóki ktoś rozsądny a groźny nie wyjaśni im autorytatywnie, jak językoznawcom, że uprawiają talmudyzm i plotą niedorzeczności.*

*for courteous reasons only but for the sake and well being of Polish science. My friends persuaded me to ask for the audience, I myself believe that it will be the greatest sacrifice on my part (especially in my present condition.) Generally speaking, I have all audiences in the greatest contempt and particularly the ones like Kisiel's going to Chmiel [Konopczyński refers to Adam Kisiel's mission to Bohdan Chmielnicki during the Cossack Uprising in Ukraine in 1649 – P. B.]. With the greatest relief, have I found Mr Minister's [Stanisław Skrzyszewski – P. B.] refusal to meet the current presidium and to answer any letters written by me.*<sup>1</sup>

In 1948, due to the fact that Konopczyński reached the age of 65, the pensionable age, Eugenia Krassowska, the Undersecretary of Education, pensioned the professor off<sup>2</sup>. Konopczyński learnt about that decision when he met Zdzisław Jachimecki, on the stairs at the Jagiellonian University. Jachimecki asked: *Władziu is it really true? But what? That you are a pensioner.*<sup>3</sup> Eugenia Krassowska rejected Konopczyński's formal request to change the decision and she had his personal record sent to National Pension Office [Państwowy Zakład Emerytalny].

Removing the Professor from his post as an editor-in-chief in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (PSB), though he was a founder of that enterprise, became a peculiar culmination of the described witch-hunt. Censorship's preventing Feliks Dzierżyński's biogram from being printed, became a peculiar reason for the decision. Certain secret and confidential talks between the Minister Skrzyszewski and the Secretary General, Jan Dąbrowski, together with a threat of subsidy withdrawal led, on 17 May 1949, to a dramatic meeting of Kazimierz Nitsch and Adam Krzyżanowski with Konopczyński<sup>4</sup>. After that very meeting, Konopczyński formally resigned from his position as an editor of PSB and his position as a president of the Historical Commission at PAU. A week earlier, Konopczyński learnt about the decision of removing him from all the positions. He received the news from Władysław Szafer, who assured the professor of his loyalty: *in case of my removal from PAU, he will*

<sup>1</sup> PAN Archive in Warsaw, manusc. III 280, un. 143, f. 42. Konopczyński's letter to Władysław Tomkiewicz, Kraków 12 V 1947: *Wzmoczenia naszej korespondencji w sprawach PTH nie przewiduję, bo z powodu marnego zdrowia czynności swoje jako prezes PTH przekazałem prof. Stanisławowi Lempickiemu (jemu posiadzenia nie szkodzi). (...) Wiem od wczoraj o swoim 'zoologicznym antysemityzmie'. Nowiną jest sugestia p. G., aby PTH 'dla dobra sprawy' uzgadniało skład personalny swych władz z ministrem. Co do Kwartalnika ktoś systematycznie kłamie. Dawniej żądało się rozliczeń; przysyłaliśmy rozliczenia; potem udawano, że ich nie ma – wykazaliśmy, że są; ostatnio pisaliśmy wyraźnie, jako Zarząd Główny – udają, że tego nie dostrzegli. Wreszcie, co do audyencji: pismo nasze wyraźnie zaznacza, że chodzi nie tylko o kurtuazję, ale o dobro nauki polskiej. Do prośby o audyencję skłonili mnie koledzy, ja to uważałem za ciężką ofiarę (zwłaszcza w obecnym moim stanie), bo audyencji nie lubię, zwłaszcza takich jak Kisiela u Chmiela [chodzi o poselstwo Adama Kisiela do Bohdana Chmielnickiego podczas powstania kozackiego na Ukrainie w 1649 roku – P. B.]. To też prawdziwą ulgę przyniosła mi wiadomość o tym, że p. Minister [Stanisław Skrzyszewski – P. B.] obecnego prezidium nie przyjmie i na moje pisma nigdy odpisywać nie będzie.*

<sup>2</sup> AUJ, S II 619: Konopczyński's Personal file.

<sup>3</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 159, unnumb. p., record of 23 October 1948: *Władziu, czy to prawda? Ady co? Żeś już emerytem.*

<sup>4</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Profesor Jan Dąbrowski*, manusc. in ARKW, p. 8.



*resign as well*<sup>1</sup>. In his conversation with the Secretary General, Jan Dąbrowski, Konopczyński said: *Could you ask them if I am to be arrested?*<sup>2</sup> Having received an affirmative answer, Konopczyński resigned from all his functions without even one word. Kazimierz Nitsch found that decision very surprising due to the fact that he did not know about the threat of Konopczyński being arrested<sup>3</sup>. Even though Konopczyński's opponents did succeed in the battle, they were not satisfied with the mere change of the editor-in-chief in PSB. What they truly and deeply wanted was for the whole publishing house to be eliminated. To achieve that aim, they started yet another witch-hunt that time in the press. The article *Prasowy organ endecji* in *Kuźnica* became a peculiar prelude for the intended elimination. The article was published on 21 August 1949 and it was written by the author who used a pseudonym *grz*. *Grz* unscrupulously vilified Konopczyński and his work<sup>4</sup>. Yet Konopczyński exactly knew the identity of *grz*. In one of his letters he wrote: *In spring, 1949, the minister Skrzyszewski decided to destroy Słownik [PSB – P. B.]. He did not close the publishing house, but he had the editor-in-chief removed. That stupid article by Konstanty Grzybowski was supposed to justify the decision. The article that I could not respond to since the censorship prevented me from doing so.*<sup>5</sup>

While considering and judging an attitude of Polish scholarly elite, Konopczyński wrote: *That exterminative campaign of minister Skrzyszewski did not hurt me personally. I am still working and I am working just as I used to before my resignation. My financial loss is nothing in comparison to the moral ill-treatment of my colleagues who, taking into consideration their professional lives, are treated more favourably or persecuted to lesser extent than I was. If I were to lecture for that audience infected with denouncing or if I were to beg censors in the Office for Press Control for mercy, I would not live to be 70 years old. All those resignations, dismissals, evictions, with a turning point in PTH, persecutions, bans, prohibitions, groundless accusations did not hurt me but they did hurt the dignity of Polish science. They did hurt that spiritual power of the factors that should have reacted to all that harm being done. The factors that should have reacted but they did not since they hid themselves behind the same scapegoat. Hoc fonte derivata clades. That very degradation*

<sup>1</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 160, unnumb. p., record of 8 May 1949: *że w razie usunięcia mnie z PAU on też ustąpi.*

<sup>2</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 160, unnumb. p., record of 9 May 1949: *Niech Pan ich spyta, czy będę aresztowany.*

<sup>3</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 160, unnumb. p., record of 17 May 1949.

<sup>4</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 160, unnumb. p., record of 23 August 1949. The issue is discussed in detail by P. Hübner, *Sila przeciw rozumowi ... . Losy Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności w latach 1939–1989*, Kraków 1994, pp. 112–116.

<sup>5</sup> The Rostworowscy Archive in Kraków. A copy of Konopczyński's letter to the chairman of PAU – Kazimierz Nitsch: *Na wiosnę 1949 roku minister Skrzyszewski postanowił zniszczyć Słownik. Niby nie zamknął wydawnictwa, ale kazał usunąć redaktora, a uzasadniać ją miał głupi artykuł Konstantego Grzybowskiego, na który cenzura nie pozwoliła mi odpowiedzieć.*

*of our historiography is not to be quickly forgotten or made up for.*<sup>1</sup>

According to research carried out by Piotr Hübner, the Professor was not the only historian persecuted by the communist authorities. Only in Krakow such outstanding scholars like: Franciszek Bujak, Eugeniusz Romer, Jan Stanisław Bystróż, Ludwik Piotrowicz, Władysław Semkowicz, Feliks Koneczny, Ludwik Kolankowski, Stanisław Pigoń, Karol Górski, Henryk Wereszycki, Waław Felczak, Adam Vetulani, Roman Ingarden and Karol Buczek were persecuted<sup>2</sup>. They all resigned from their careers to fight for the good cause and they openly criticized all the crimes of the system. They made considerable attempts to help those who were imprisoned or convicted, even though being innocent. The mentioned scholars did take an action, whereas the others started to collaborate with the authorities and for their loyalty they were awarded with numerous prizes. Their works were printed, they were granted scholarships and they were sent abroad. Yet they did not feel entirely safe since there was always a possibility of such a situation: *Like a bolt from the blue, Piwarski was debunked by the party as an ex-nationalist, insincere democrat, living his life in a bourgeois manner. He was removed from his post as a rector, a dean and from all his chairmanships. He was transferred to Poznań to do his penance there.*<sup>3</sup> Karol Estreicher Jr assumed that it was Teodor Marchlewski that contributed to Piwarski being removed. *That malicious, cynical, self-occupied rector, not being able to treat any matters seriously and mocking everything, was probably that very person who helped Piwarski to be removed from the Party and the Jagiellonian University for fidgeting and attempting to take over his place.*<sup>4</sup> However, there was yet another group of scholars which was considered to be the most numerous one. They neither openly fought with the system nor signed a pact with the devil. They resigned from their posts in silence in order to make their livings on selling their book collections, doing translations from Western languages, giving cheap private lessons and on typing out other people's works<sup>5</sup>. Yet

<sup>1</sup> The Rostworowscy Archive in Kraków. A copy of Konopczyński's letter to the chairman of PAU – Kazimierz Nitsch: *Mnie osobiście eksterminacyjna kampania ministra Skrzyszewskiego niewiele zaszkodziła. Pracowałem i pracuję nie gorzej niż przed dymisją. Straty materialne są niczym z tą poniewierką moralną, jakiej doznają w swej zawodowej działalności moi koledzy traktowani laskawiej, albo mniej prześladowani. Może bym nie dożył nawet 70-ciu lat, gdybym musiał wykładać dla audytorium zarażonego donosicielstwem, albo błagać o łaskę cenzorów w urzędzie kontroli prasy. Otóż te wszystkie dymisje i eksmisje poczynając od przesilenia w PTH, szykany, zakazy, głoślowne zarzuty trafiały nie we mnie, lecz w godność nauki polskiej i w siłę duchową tych czynników, które powinny były na krzywdy reagować, a nie reagowały, wciąż kryjąc się za tego samego kozła ofiarnego. Hoc fonte derivata clades. Ta degradacja naszej historiografii nie prędko da się powetować i nie pójdzie w zapomnienie.*

<sup>2</sup> P. Hübner, *Stalinowskie 'czystki' w nauce polskiej* in: *Skryte oblicze systemy komunistycznego u źródeł zła ...*, (ed.) R. Backer and P. Hübner, Warszawa 1997, pp. 211–224.

<sup>3</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Profesor Jan Dąbrowski*, manusc. in ARKW, p. 9: *Nagle grom z jasnego nieba. Piwarski w nielacie zdemaskowany przez partię, jako dawny narodowiec, nieszczerzy demokrata, żyjący po burżujsku. Zrzucony z rektorstwa, dziekanatu, wszelkich prezesur, przerzucony na pokutę do Poznania.*

<sup>4</sup> K. Estreicher, *Dziennik wypadków*, vol. 2: 1946–1960, Kraków 2002, p. 235: *do wyrzucenia Piwarskiego przyczynił się Teodor Marchlewski. Ten złośliwy, cyniczny, dbający wyłącznie o siebie rektor, nie odpowiadający na żadne kwestie poważnie, zbywający kpinami wszystko, postarał się podobno o wylanie Piwarskiego z Partii i z Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego za to, że się miala i chciał zająć jego miejsce.*

<sup>5</sup> P. Hübner, *Krakowskie środowisko akademickie w latach przemian ustrojowych* in: *Kraków w Polsce Ludowej*, Kraków 1996, pp. 65–75.

there was one more group of scholars who became secret agents of the Security Force and on show trails they denounced their colleagues. The Professor grieved: *the Jagiellonian University presents a state of spiritual break-up. To replace the dead ones or the ones who left to be not active (some of them were sent to prisons) those young, flexible and, most preferably, promising Marxists are introduced or sought for.*<sup>1</sup>

The last years of Konopczyński's life were filled with pain and sorrow. He was searching for comfort in meetings with his friend from the grammar school father Jacek Woroniecki, a Dominican. Woroniecki together with Tadeusz Strumiłło and Jan Obrąpalski were among that very few people who visited the Professor and did not turn their backs on him. Jan Obrąpalski, Konopczyński's peer and his best friend, was a son of Erazm Obrąpalski and his second wife Maria Siemiradzka. There were also some priests that visited the ill Professor, among them: bishop Stanisław Rospond, Stanisław Czartoryski and Konstanty Michalski – a pre-war rector of the Jagiellonian University, a prisoner in Sachsenhausen and Konopczyński's confessor<sup>2</sup>. It was the Cracovian metropolitan bishop, cardinal Sapieha, whom Konopczyński perceived as an example to follow.

On 17 May 1952 Konopczyński, surrounded by a few dearest people, celebrated the fiftieth year of his work as a scholar. The host of the celebration, Władysław Czapliński, the Professor's former student, delivered an excellent speech in honour of Konopczyński. Afterwards Konopczyński himself read thirty opinions about himself and an extract from his biography. From his most faithful students, he received an album devoted to the Wit Stwosz's altar. In the same year, in his letter to Czapliński, Konopczyński wrote: *I am a gassed, plague-stricken leper ... As a Królewiatek [an inhabitant of Congress Poland – P. B.] from the Apuchtin's epoch, I thought that it was possible to turn away from people externally but not internally. Yet, when I observe some of my friends from Krakow, I realize that they do not possess that very skill. I am forced to divide people into the ones who avoid me and the ones who do not. The first group would certainly like me not to exist. And yet, since I do exist and I will haunt people after my death, their panic seems to be much bigger (...)*<sup>3</sup>.

In winter, 1952, Konopczyński's condition deteriorated and his doctors clearly stated that the chances for his improvement are almost improbable, but still the Professor did not forget about his research work. Lying in bed, finding

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<sup>1</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Profesor Jan Dąbrowski*, manusc. in ARKW, p. 10: *Uniwersytet Jagielloński przedstawia widok duchowego rozbicia. Na miejsca wymarłych lub tych co odeszli w stan nieczynny (niektórzy do więzień), wchodzą albo są poszukiwani ludzie młodzi, gięty, najchętniej obiecujący marksiści.*

<sup>2</sup> Oral account of W. Mrozowska, Gliwice 29 April 1998, in the author's possession.

<sup>3</sup> W. Czapliński, *Władysław Konopczyński jakim go znałem* in: *Portrety uczonych polskich*, (ed.) A. Biernacki, Kraków 1974, p. 249: *Ja już jestem zagazowany, zadżumiony, trędowaty ... Jako Królewiatek epoki apuchtinowskiej, wyobrażałem sobie jednak, że można odwracać się od pewnych ludzi zewnątrz, a nie odwracać wewnątrz. Widzę jednak obserwując niektórych znajomych krakowskich, że tej królewiateckiej umiejętności nie posiadają. Z konieczności dzielę ludzi na takich, co mnie unikają, i takich, co nie unikają. Niektórzy z tamtych woleliby nawet, żebym nigdy nie istniał. A ponieważ ja jednak istnieję i będę jeszcze straszyl ludzi po śmierci, więc tym większa panika.*

some intervals between his sudden attacks of fierce heartache, he was trying to bring his works to the end. Moreover, he was arranging his notes and getting familiar with some new books. After having spent 160 days in bed, on 6 May 1952, he went for his first walk and from that very moment it became his everyday activity<sup>1</sup>. In July 1952 he decided that the air in Krakow did not do him any good, and after having consulted with his doctor, Leon Tochowicz, he went to Młynnik. It was in Młynnik that he occupied himself with his orchards and beehives, regardless of his condition and the fact that he had had heart attacks. And indeed, that very effort was too much for the Professor's heart<sup>2</sup>. Władysław Konopczyński died of heart attack at night from 12 to 13 July in 1952 in his beloved Młynnik. He was buried in the cemetery in Salwator [a district in Krakow – P. B.]. Konopczyński's death left his wife in a deep shock; she confessed that she had lost her best friend<sup>3</sup>.

The further history of Konopczyński family was marked by hardship. The Professor's wife, desperate and ill, wrote a letter to the rector of the Jagiellonian University in which she begged him to help her. She was supposed to be evicted from her place of residence to a smaller flat. She was left with all her husband's works and his book collections, which occupied the space of five rooms. Yet she was left alone with that problem since the rector did not seem to be concerned about her burden and he ordered her to be moved to a two-room flat in which it was literally impossible to keep all the mentioned works and books<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, Jadwiga was suffering from leg paresis and arteriosclerosis and had to be taken care of by her sister, Aleksandra Rzańska<sup>5</sup>. After Jadwiga Konopczyńska's death, in 1961, part of the Professor's books and his legacy was bought from his daughter, Maria Wieczorkiewiczowa, by the Jagiellonian Library (138 files) and by a second-hand bookshop on Sławkowska Street in Krakow. Maria was forced to take such a decision because of her difficult financial situation and due to the fact that she had no place to store the numerous works<sup>6</sup>. Maria died in February 1995 and she was buried in Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw. The oldest daughter, Halina, lived in the United States and she died on 18 July 1995. She was buried by her father in Krakow.

The youngest daughter, Wanda, together with her children, lived in Krakow until the year 1956 when her husband, who was still an active military officer, was transferred to Gliwice. They moved to the latter city, where her husband, Jerzy Mrozowski died in 1993, and where she lives up to this day<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Sensing his death approaching, in his diary he wrote: *I will probably not finish writing you*. W. Konopczyński, *Dzienniki*, manusc. in ARKW, fasc. 167, unnumb. p., record of 29 February 1952.

<sup>2</sup> Oral account of W. Mrozowska, Gliwice 29 April 1998, in the author's possession.

<sup>3</sup> Correspondence with W. Mrozowska, Gliwice 3 June 2003, in the author's possession..

<sup>4</sup> BN PAU i PAN, manusc. 7746: Jadwiga Konopczyńska's correspondence.

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence with W. Mrozowska, Gliwice 3 June 2003, in the author's possession..

<sup>6</sup> BN PAU i PAN, manusc. 10453: Hanna Rudzka-Cybisowa's correspondence.

<sup>7</sup> P. Biliński, *Władysław Konopczyński w życiu i nauce* in: *Zróżnicowanie i przemiany środowiska przyrodniczo-kulturowego Wyżyny Krakowsko-Częstochowskiej*, vol. 2: *Kultura*, (ed.) J. Partyka, Ojców 2004, pp. 333–338.

*translated by Katarzyna Kubiak*