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## Biographical Romance, or the Wonders of the Life of an Émigré of Choice: Fryderyk Járósy (1889–1960) – the Author of Unwritten Memoirs of Life Among the Polish Diaspora in London

“They gave me Polish citizenship  
For love of Poland and Polish art.  
They took away my Polish citizenship  
For love of Poland and Polish art.”

(Fryderyk Járósy, *Qui Pro Quo cabaret*)

I don't believe memoirs! Especially those written by the émigré stage artists of the émigré Melpomene.

During the post-war half-century, Polish actors left behind many memoirs: in London, Paris, New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Melbourne, and even in Santiago...

Some were published in print by the authors or émigré publishing houses. Others were only announced in the Polish diaspora press. The vast majority have remained inaccessible to researchers for the time being. Relatives of deceased artists often do not realize what is left in drawers, old folders, and suitcases.

Few authors of memoirs have found interest on the part of Polish publishers. Why? Mostly due to the difference in literary correctness, which is not always accepted in Poland. This is because émigrés have almost always written differently from domestic authors... Publishers in Poland are often not familiar with the names of authors of memoirs written outside the country. In my opinion, the most discoveries in the field of memoir essays written by actors who stayed outside Poland after 1945 are yet to come. Valuable finds are hidden in the archives of Radio Free Europe (which are still not fully researched or described). RFE prepared series of memorial broadcasts featuring well-known artists. I will mention a few whose recordings I have become familiar with: Waclaw Radulski, Hanna Dorwska and her husband Karol Dorwski, Wiktor Budzyński, and Leopold Kielanowski.

The best-known memoirs, quoted in many domestic publications, were written by, among others: Konrad Tom, Ludwik Lawiński, Feliks Konarski, Loda Halama, Marian Hemar, Leopold Kielanowski, Czesław Halski, Kazimierz Krukowski, Gwidon Borucki, Wiesław Mirecki, Kaja Mirecka-Ploss, Jadwiga Domańska, Maria Modzelewska, Danuta Mierzanowska, Maria Drue, Lidia Próchnicka, and Hanna Reszczyńska-Essigman.

Still unpublished in full are the interesting memoirs of Zofia Sikorska-Ratschka, privately a tailor at the émigré theater and wife of the well-known actor Roman Ratschka.

Renata Bogdańska-Anders is working on a book together with a well-known writer.

Three years ago, Włada Majewska published her memoirs *Od Lwowskiej Fali do Radia Wolna Europa* [From the Lviv Wave to Radio Free Europe]<sup>1</sup> with the Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie publishing house.

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For more than a dozen years I have been interested in the post-war fate of the most prominent announcer of the revue theaters of pre-war Warsaw...

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<sup>1</sup> W. Majewska, *Od Lwowskiej Fali do Radia Wolna Europa* [From the Lviv Wave to Radio Free Europe], Wrocław 2006.

After the war, Fryderyk Járosy (1889–1960) settled in London in the Polish community. He became a Polish émigré by choice, out of the need of his heart. Actually, in fact, he has always been an émigré. He was one since 1913, when, after his marriage to Natalia von Wrotnowski, he settled in Russia. In London, he tried to run a theater under its old name, the Cyrulik Warszawski, which was the first to get a taste of humiliation and decline in the émigré conditions.

Járosy was fluent in Polish, both spoken and written. One may find this surprising and impressive at the same time. The opinion of his Hungarian origins is a firmly established legend. He knew five languages, but did not understand Hungarian at all! His first language was German. He also spoke French and English. During the six years he spent in Russia, he learned Russian. When he came to Poland from Berlin in 1924 with his theater of Russian émigrés, Blue Bird, for several weeks of performances, Antoni Słonimski taught him Polish. Marian Hemar later became his second teacher. The third person, thanks to whom the difficult Polish language had no secrets for him, was Hanka Ordonówna. He never graduated from any Polish school or language course. The magic of his comperé skills resulted from his ridiculously incorrect Polish and his accent. “[...] I myself was amused when I heard my ‘laydees and jentlman’” – he recounted in his last radio interview with Teodozja Lisiewicz.

[...] my announcer style, he continued, emerged when I understood the words of Ludwig Börne – that humor is not a gift of the mind, but a gift of the heart. If they write that I have captured the hearts of a million Poles, and if this was indeed the case, it is because the dear Warsaw residents still have my tone of a humoris causa Pole ringing in their ears. A joke fished out seemingly from a misunderstanding of Polish sayings, but really from the richness of the language of an Antek living on the bank of Vistula, from the sentiment hidden in the melody of the rough Warsaw language, from the comedy of the dialect from Bielany.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The script of the broadcast was published in A. Mieszkowska’s book *Była sobie piosenka... Gwiazdy kabaretu i emigracyjnej Melpomeny* [Once upon a time there was a song... *The stars of cabaret and émigré Melpomene*] (Warszawa 2006, pp. 44–51).

During the occupation, while hiding from the Gestapo in various places, both in and outside of Warsaw, he wrote (under the pseudonym Efen) satirical poems in Polish and German.

Those he wrote in Polish were printed in the underground press, including in the *Demokrata*, *Moskit*, and *Kret* magazines. Some of them were duplicated and distributed in movie theaters and officially open theaters. Those written in German were pasted on train cars that went to the Eastern Front. He managed to smuggle twenty such works after the fall of the Warsaw Uprising; they were published as early as in 1945, in Hanover, in *Mein Kampf. Moja walka z doktorem Goebbelsem* [Mein Kampf. My fight against Doctor Goebbels].

This was the beginning of the literary, rhyming memoir essay writing of the famous cabaret artist. After his arrival in London, he wrote a crime novel set in the theatrical milieu of pre-war Warsaw, “Majsterszyk doktora Niewiadomskiego” [Doctor Niewiadomski’s masterpiece]. It survived in typescript, never published either in whole or in parts.<sup>3</sup>

Járosy was also the author of three plays: *Okoliczności łagodzące* [Mitigating circumstances], *Do usług madame* [At your service, madame], and *Nim kur zapieje* [Before the rooster crows]. The first two were played in émigré theaters. The first play was directed by Regina Kowalewska,<sup>4</sup> and the second by the author himself, who also played, in his own “fantasy comedy,” the role of a servant to an English lord.<sup>5</sup> The third play still has not been found. I do not know its contents, I only know that it was certainly never staged. The topic of the play was the realities of Polish émigré life in England. “After all, I belong to her!” – said the author at the ceremony where he was presented with the third prize for that very play, funded by the Veterans Association.<sup>6</sup>

I have lived with you here, he continued, I suffered and arranged biscuits with you. And let’s be honest – whatever my feelings for the real Poland may be, and

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<sup>3</sup> In the collection of the Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw (hereinafter: APAS), inventory number of F. Járosy’s legacy group: III-361.

<sup>4</sup> Premiere in London in 1951.

<sup>5</sup> Premiere in London in 1952.

<sup>6</sup> In 1956.

no matter how correctly I would pronounce the “chrząszcz brzmi w trzcinie” tongue twister, I am a kind of outsider who looks at all that is happening seemingly from the sidelines and therefore observes it with great objectivity.

Only the *Mitigating Circumstances* were published by the Emigration Archive (Toruń, 2004).

In addition to novels and dramas, Járosy wrote short stories, skits, novellas, and radio plays, and a few of his poems and songs have survived. Unfortunately, he left no memoirs behind. Maybe because, as he believed, “autobiography never says anything bad about the author. It only reveals his poor memory.” However, there is evidence that he thought about writing down the experiences of his long, interesting life. He wanted to share his memories with someone. Interestingly, he wrote the beginning – just a few sentences and chapter titles – in Polish. It was as if he knew that his testimony of artistic experience would be important only to Poles. He even wrote down the title: “Biographical Romance. The Miracles of My Life.”

I know that he made the decision to write his memoirs in the autumn of 1957, after leaving the hospital where he recovered for a few weeks after another heart attack. He did not complete the project, but thanks to these few sentences preserved, I can guess what he missed and what brought him back to life after the serious illness. He wanted to fulfill his duty of remembrance. He felt the need to note things important to him from his professional, but also personal past. One day he sat down and wrote: “The first meeting with Eros. Venice. The summer of 1907. A girl with violet eyes, for whom I lost more than just my head. Then a short, manly conversation with the father.” Just that. He barely made a note of topics and inspirations, a substitute for memoirs that he probably wanted to expand:

Father’s letter for life’s journey. Winter in Davos. Assets. Wedding. Relatives. Tailor in Munich. Organizing the egg queue in Soviet Russia. Stanisławski’s studio. Oleczka, is that you? Blue Bird. How do you know Járosy? Qui pro Quo and making artists. Arrest and interrogation. Daniłowiczowska and Ordonka’s songs. Hitler’s speech. Occupation. Bidet. Books. I have seen them burn. The arrival of the Gestapo in Gołębki. Deaf gardener. Where is the foolish woman? Buchenwald. Polish card and death. Resurrection. English service. If I am still alive, this is a small misunderstanding. My travels.

The rest of the crumbs of memories remained in notes, on loose sheets of paper, in notebooks, in the last calendar of 1960, and in letters to friends and family.

From these miraculously preserved notes, I tried to arrange an autobiographical essay, as Fryderyk Járósy might have done. Even the titles of the various passages are borrowed from the protagonist of the unwritten memoirs.

All sentences are from his records, from different years. I just tried to arrange them into a chronological sequence of events. Occasionally, I only supplement them with information from other sources, for example, the memoirs of Marian Hemar or his daughter Marina.<sup>7</sup> I keep my commentary to the necessary minimum.

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The emigration journey of the great cabaret artist of the 20th century began in the Buchenwald concentration camp, where he was taken from a transport of expelled Warsaw insurgents in the autumn of 1944. But what happened before?

### Chapter One: life goes on...!

Spring of 1939. The last premiere before the summer vacation. The Komedia Theater's stage manager rang the bell for the third time in the artists' dressing rooms and approached the hole in the curtain. He looked inside.

"The auditorium will be full," he said quietly to the electric standing next to him.

"Anyway, this was to be expected." He slowly walked to the corridor that led to the actresses' dressing rooms. He approached the first door. He stopped. He nodded sadly. He sighed deeply and waved his hand. He called out in an indifferent voice:

"We're starting!"

And once again on the second floor at the actors' dressing rooms:

"We're starting!"

He returned to his post and rang the bell for the third time in the foyer and the audience. He waited motionless for a minute. Then he said:

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<sup>7</sup> Marina Járósy-Kratochwil, born in 1915, currently lives in Vienna.

“Gong!”

“Put out the chandelier!”

“Second gong!”

“Put out the sides!”

“Dark auditorium!”

“Third gong!”

“Silence!”

“Curtain!!!”

He leaned against the side flat and looked ahead with a blank stare. He thought: “The director is right! Life goes on!”<sup>8</sup>

## Chapter two: to live – not to die!

During the siege of Warsaw, I served as the commander of a block at 28–30 6 Sierpnia Street. Warsaw fell. Sitting in the Ziemiańska pastry shop on October 24, 1939, when asked by the film screenwriter Jan Fethke,<sup>9</sup> “What is the director going to do?” I replied: “*Deutsche far Niente*” (as you know there is a well-known Italian proverb *Dolce far Niente*, meaning “delightful idleness”). On the next day I was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned at Daniłowiczowska Street. As it later turned out, Jan Fethke was a Volksdeutch and worked for the 5th Column. During the interrogation, I was accused of anti-Nazi activities before the war. I shared the prison cell with the former president of Warsaw Stefan Starzyński, the former Speaker of the Sejm Rataj, a well-known Polish Socialist Party activist Niedziałkowski, and others. After six months, at a court hearing in the Gestapo building in the Brühl Palace, I received a sentence: ten years in a penitentiary camp. I realized that this was worse than the death penalty and decided to run away.

When I was on my way back from the Gestapo to Daniłowiczowska Street in the company of six gendarmes, I suddenly came up with a fiendish plan

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<sup>8</sup> APAS, F. Járośy, “Majsterszyk doktora Niewiadomskiego” [Doctor Niewiadomski’s masterpiece].

<sup>9</sup> Jan Fethke (1903–1980), a Silesian writer, film director and screenwriter. Originally from Opole, he studied in Gdańsk and began his film career in Berlin. After Hitler came to power, he emigrated to Poland, but he retained his German citizenship. In Poland, by 1939, he had directed several films and written more than a dozen film scripts. After the outbreak of World War II, he stayed in Warsaw and cooperated with the occupation authorities. He was arrested in 1944. After the war, he accepted Polish citizenship. Until 1960, he worked in the Polish film industry under a pseudonym. In 1962 he went on a business trip to West Berlin and stayed there. This is also where he died.

next to the European Hotel. I asked the highest-ranking man in the squad to let me shave at my regular barber shop in that hotel. The Wachmeister, of course, thought about it for a long time and finally agreed, giving me literally five minutes of time, while giving orders to his subordinates to guard the entrance to the shop, and followed me inside. Once inside, I headed momentarily to the back entrance leading to the hotel and, with excellent knowledge of the hotel's layout, began to run. Seeing no one and nothing, I ran like crazy, knocking over everything and everyone along the way. All I heard was a loud cry: "Halt! Halt!" After a few hours, losing consciousness, I found myself in some basement in the Old Town.

When I regained consciousness, I went to my friend Jurandot, who put me in the attic. There I rested for several months, growing a beard and a mustache. In this way, Fryderyk Járosy was eliminated. On the basis of new, or rather forged, documents, I saw the light of day again, as Franciszek Nowaczek. I joined the underground service as a propagandist. And so for several years, as Franciszek Nowaczek, changing my *pr* [place of residence], I wandered through villages and towns.<sup>10</sup>

For several months, from the autumn of 1940 to the spring of 1942, Járosy hid in the Warsaw ghetto. He generally did not leave his hiding place. Every once in a while, he had to change his location. He saw terrible scenes on the streets of the ghetto at the time. One of them he remembered and described ten years later in London, in the novella "Spotless Man."<sup>11</sup> The protagonist is walking down a London street. He meets a man who reminds him of someone. But whom? And what is it about this man's distinctive face that causes anxiety and makes him stop for a moment?

On one day, he remembered that smile! Yes! He never erased that smile from his life. It was after a roundup. An SS soldier was tormenting a group of captured Jews.

He made them jump on one foot, made them lie down in the mud, made them sing and dance. This amused the German very much. He stood on splayed

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<sup>10</sup> J. Leński, "Co mówi F. Járosy" [What F. Járosy says], *Dziennik Żołnierza APW*, August 10, 1945.

<sup>11</sup> APAS, F. Járosy, "Kryształowy człowiek" [Spotless man].



legs, with a horsewhip in his hand, and screamed. He laughed out loud. I can't forget this laughter.<sup>12</sup>

This laughter of the torturers haunted him throughout the post-war years. His daughter Marina recounted that her father, when meeting her in Austria or Switzerland, always looked closely at Germans who were of his generation. When she once asked why he was looking at them like that, as if he was looking for someone, he replied briefly: "Yes, I'm looking for someone."

Among his papers, I found a clipping from the London-based *Dziennik Polski* newspaper, presumably from the spring of 1960. A brief press release reported that the film *Warsaw Ghetto* had been stopped by British censors. A documentary depicting German atrocities committed during the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto was stopped by the Office of Film Censorship. "Screening of the film was prohibited, unless all scenes showing the victims' dead bodies were removed." On the destroyed piece of the newspaper, a note was made, presumably by him: "Idiots."

### Chapter three: While we are alive!

Finally came the Uprising. As a lieutenant of the Home Army, I was at the Narutowicz Square – Filtrowa 68 – where I was wounded in the leg. Warsaw fell again. This time I was taken prisoner and sent to the Buchenwald camp. One day the Germans loaded the transport into freight cars. The transport consisted of about four thousand men and women. Of course, I was in that transport, which, as it turned out later, was designated to be killed with gas. When the train was at the train station in Celle (near Hanover), an escort of Allied bombers arrived. It caused a panic of unbelievable proportions. I saw through the barred windows that our escort began to flee. And this time I was lucky. I escaped and reached the hospital in Celle and hid there as a paramedic. On April 12, 1945, Allied troops entered Celle, and that's when I felt I was becoming Fryderyk Jąrosy again. I shaved off my beard and mustache and reported to the English authorities, telling them about my experiences.

Because of my language skills, I was hired as an interpreter for a hospital in Bad-Rehburg. In May, I started applying for a vacation in London to com-

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<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

municate with my family and friends. On June 12, I took a plane from Hamburg to London, stopping in Paris and Brussels on the way back. In Brussels, I was approached by a delegation from the Polish diaspora community with a request to create a theater, stressing that, unfortunately, in the territories of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, Polish refugees are deprived of all cultural events. It so happens that famous actresses Helena Grossówna, Eugenia Magierówna, and others are staying in Belgium.

While in London, I made contact with my old friend Marian Hemar, who will provide me with texts. With the support of the Polish Consulate in Belgium, I believe that the theater will develop successfully.

The theater will be literary and artistic, and will be called the Cyrulik Warszawski.<sup>13</sup>

Writing someone's biography is like solving a jigsaw puzzle. In order to see a picture of the life of the person described, one has to put it together from a huge number of small elements. It happens that successive pieces, found with great difficulty, do not fit together so precisely. They differ in some details. But this is not important for the overall portrait of the person.

As Fryderyk Járósy wrote: "Naturally, it wasn't quite like that, but it was not very different either."<sup>14</sup>

#### Chapter four: The first step! London 1946

After running the soldier's theater Cyrulik Warszawski for almost a year, following performances in Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Italy, Fryderyk Járósy arrived in London in September 1946 with a large group of artists from other leading theaters.

For several weeks, he performed at the Polish Orzeł Biały club, the Polish Circle, and the Aviator House. He prepared three premieres, with which he visited dozens of hostels throughout England. On one occasion, so few spectators came to their performance that they did not have money to buy gasoline to get back to London. In the summer of 1947, the Cyrulik Warszawski theater ceased its operations.

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<sup>13</sup> J. Leński, "Co mówi F. Járósy..." [What F. Járósy says...].

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

Járosy mentioned the problems he encountered in running the theater in a letter to Bronisław Horowicz on May 10, 1947:

I can't write anything joyful about myself. After wandering around as part of the First Division in Germany and of the Second Corps in Italy, I landed in England and am running a theater here called Cyrulik Warszawski [...], a theater that is doing poorly because the emigration here is probably the worst swamp I have had to go through in my life. Therefore, I intend to close this shed in the near future and look around for something cleaner and more dignified. The local Polish atmosphere, full of black-market, lies, and deviousness is something I can't stand. After I was granted honorary Polish citizenship in 1938, I learned from the press a week ago that the Warsaw government had deprived me (among others – e.g. Hemar, Tom, Krukowski, etc.) of my Polish citizenship, so that I would have to live with a U.N.O. passport. That's all right. They can go to hell.<sup>15</sup>

Three months later, in a letter to his daughter Marina, he wrote: "I had to stop working with the theater in London. I have a proposal for serious artistic work in Tel Aviv. A contract for six months."<sup>16</sup>

The "serious artistic work" at the Li-la-lo<sup>17</sup> theater was arranged for Járosy by Antoni Borman. The contract was very favorable as it guaranteed directing three revues, performances for six months, room and board at the San Remo Hotel, and a high salary.

While in Tel Aviv, he received the address of Hanka Ordonówna, who lived in Lebanon. They had not seen each other since September 1939. In miraculously surviving letters, he described his situation in the Polish community in London. One of the letters reads:

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<sup>15</sup> Art Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, letter from F. Járosy to B. Horowicz dated May 10, 1947.

<sup>16</sup> APAS, letter from F. Járosy to Marina Járosy-Kratochwil dated September 2, 1947.

<sup>17</sup> See: N. Gross, "W drodze i po drodze – polskie korzenie hebrajskiego kabaretu" [On the road and on the way – the Polish roots of the Hebrew cabaret], *Emigration Archive. Studies – Sketches – Documents* 2000, book 3, pp. 103–111.

Tel Aviv, San Remo Hotel, November 10, [19]47

Dear, beloved Haneczka!

What is there to be ashamed of? I swallowed a few tears and shed a few when, after so many years – each counted as three – I saw your dear handwriting for the first time and the remnants of my graphological knowledge confirmed to me again that you are a nice guy, full of imagination, knowledge of people, faith in God and gods, in a word – as Helena calls you – the last romantic bird of our age!

How much joy in life, how much stimulus I have lost because of the fact that your letters to me – about which you write – did not arrive. I have no doubt whatsoever that it was human deviousness that played a large role in this, that deviousness from which I fled from London all the way here to Palestine, so as not to see people at least a little. [...] I lost all internal contact [...] with Zosia Terne, with Hemar's moral insanity, [...] with all the scum around the Warsaw Government like the buffoons of the second corps.

I understand a murderer who kills in the heat of passion, I understand a thief who steals out of misery, I understand the suicidal truth, the insane intransigence – but I no longer understand and don't want to understand the bread-eaters, the malicious bandits, the café writers, the political *geschaftenmacher*s, and that awful daily hypocrisy. They were the ones who caused the lion, after escaping from the captivity of a zoo – having returned to the free spaces – to still go back and forth, back and forth – as in the old cage.

Oh, with what immense joy, with what a smile in my soul, I would fly at your invitation to join you! Unfortunately, this is impossible at the moment, as I have a premiere on November 25, and I have rehearsals all day to make a real literary theater out of a dilettante *tingl-tangl*. So I don't have a single day off, because depending to whether this experiment succeeds or not, I will judge whether *Járosy* is over or whether I still have something to say to this nightmarish world. I'm doing an uncompromising program, aiming to educate the audience, so the risk is high!<sup>18</sup>

He never saw Hanka Ordonówna again. The first premiere, "Lounge," was successful.<sup>19</sup> As an announcer using both Hebrew and Polish, *Járosy* said, among other things: "Where does the enthusiasm still present among the *émigrés* come from... After a glass or two, a Pole believes that the

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<sup>18</sup> APAS, letter from F. *Járosy* to H. Ordonówna dated November 10, 1947.

<sup>19</sup> Account by Irena Mitelman from Tel Aviv, in the author's collection.

Thames hums like the Vistula, and he walks down Earls Court as if he were walking down Nowy Świat...”

The revue was played fifty times. The second performance, “For Adults Only,” was closed as a result of the warfare operations.<sup>20</sup> The third premiere never took place. Tel Aviv was on the front lines, and both actors and members of the audience were drafted. The city was deserted. The San Remo hotel burned down. The director of the Li-la-lo Theater had no money for the promised director’s salary. Járosy wrote a dramatic letter to his daughter Marina:

Only dogs attend theaters here now. It would be best if I left here as soon as possible, even as early as tomorrow. The theater currently does not pay. I lead a very frugal life. I am waiting for another Járosy’s miracle.<sup>21</sup>

At one point, the situation was truly dire. He simply found himself on the street, without a roof over his head or a livelihood. He was taken care of by Polish Jews living in Tel Aviv at the time, who remembered him from the old days. They organized a collection for a return ticket to London for him and Janina Wojciechowska, who accompanied him on the trip. During the last meeting with his friends, Járosy went to the window, caught the curtain as if it were a curtain in a theater, and said:

Ladies and gentlemen! How is it, actually, am I lucky with wars, or am I not lucky with wars?!

I know that it is very difficult to find happiness in oneself. But to find it elsewhere – it is outright impossible!<sup>22</sup>

After returning to London, in another letter to Bronisław Horowicz, Járosy shared his impressions:

[Can] you imagine how many fantastic encounters I had in Palestine, where after two beautiful months I fell again (it haunts me!) into war trouble – and

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<sup>20</sup> APAS, text in F. Járosy’s notes.

<sup>21</sup> APAS, letter from F. Járosy to Marina Járosy-Kratochwil dated February 22, 1948.

<sup>22</sup> Account by Irena Mitelman.

only by a miracle did I manage to escape from there. Now I'm living my quiet London life again. I earn my livelihood as a reader in a big film company, where I have to read books in five languages and give my opinion on whether they are suitable for filming or not – and why. Now and then I am unable to resist the temptation and perform in theater events, which is actually no longer appropriate for a gentleman of my age.<sup>23</sup>

### Chapter five: Second round! London 1948–1960

These “theater events” Járosy mentioned in a letter to a friend were the premieres of two Felix Konarski's revues. But he could not make a living on his theater income. He unsuccessfully tried to get a permanent job, first at the BBC radio and then at Radio Free Europe. Although his qualifications were appreciated, the refusal to hire him was justified by his age. Hence the dramatic decision to take a job at a biscuit factory. During the night shift. In a letter to his daughter, he wrote about it as follows:

I had to accept a manual job to be able to get even the lowest pension benefit in the future. What do I do? I put biscuits into boxes. But the worst thing is that it is night work, which English workers do not want to do.<sup>24</sup>

In one of the notebooks I found such a comment on this situation:

Just when I would finally have free time to do real, mature, and in-depth work in my favorite trade, life (mocking me!) arranges itself so that I have to leave everything I have achieved, and in view of the fact that I can't make a living from my trade, I have to go somewhere to earn a living, somewhere to turn a wheel, grease an axle in someone else's indifferent body. That's the kind of work I've always hated, and that's probably why I can't find any work. And what kind of work am I capable of doing? Where I can be needed and where they can use me so as not to destroy what constitutes my life, my life task, finally – my duty. Do I really have to let go?<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Art Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, letter from F. Járosy to B. Horowicz dated September 1, 1948.

<sup>24</sup> APAS, letter from F. Járosy to Marina Járosy-Kratochwil dated August 1, 1948.

<sup>25</sup> APAS, from F. Járosy's notes.

He lasted less than a year at the biscuit factory. This was enough for him to receive welfare benefits.

On another page of the same notebook he wrote: "I no longer have the strength to groom artists as I used to do." Despite this tiring work and his not very good mental condition, he wrote. Novels, monologues. Funny scenes for the radio. As part of the "Émigrés" series, the *Thank You, Wilfried Pickles!* radio play was created. Here is an excerpt from it:

If a man circles around the same house about a hundred times in one night, he is either hopelessly in love or... a night guard. In my case – it was the latter. After a long effort, I managed to get the job. I had to present very good and serious recommendations, prove my participation in the World War under British command, and two English friends had to vouch for me. I now have a black uniform and walk with an even stride around the department store every night.

On one occasion, on that nightly round, the protagonist of the story was accompanied by a young English woman. Betty quickly realized that the elderly guard was not her compatriot.

"French?"

"No. A Pole."

"Right! Are you a refugee?"

"Yes."

She sighed and nodded.

"And were you a night guard in your country, too?"

"I laughed cordially: No!"

"And what did you do there?"

"I was a director and an actor."

"Then you are used to the night life!"

"To some extent."

"Were you a well-known artist before the war?"

"Quite well-known."

"Like Wilfried Pickles?"

"More or less."

"Do you know this? She hummed an old song."

"I know it. I once built a grand finale in my theater to this tune."

"Tell me about it!"

I told her about the revues at my theater in Warsaw, described the finale in which we sang to that note, and tried to translate the Polish words of the finale for her. The fog was getting thicker and thicker, but I could see that she

had tears in her eyes and, as if mesmerized, was looking at my lips as I hummed the Polish chorus of the song in my clumsy translation:

There are so many new truths every day –  
The heart knows the oldest truth –  
The heart knows the deepest truth –  
that there is no happiness –  
Unless there we are together!

I paused and laughed out loud: “Yes, it was all in the past! Now it is gone! Now let’s watch out for the burglar!” [...].<sup>26</sup>

Occasionally, however, Radio Free Europe invited Fryderyk Jąrosy to run concerts and special programs with the participation of an audience. In January 1955, he hosted a carnival party, which was broadcast to Poland. In May of that year, when greeting an audience in London and listeners in Poland, he said, among other things:

It is with great emotion and surprise that I always appear before the microphone of Radio Free Europe to address my loyal listeners and friends in Poland. I wonder whether cabaret outside of Poland is supposed to be a current, political cabaret. Whether the modern announcer is to serve the ideals of one party? Should he stand on the state ground with one foot, with the other on the international ground and the third on pure artistry. As an émigré, I feel like a soldier of this great army, to whose commanders we owe the fact that the Polish theatrical art has not died during its wandering in foreign countries. On the contrary, it has developed beautifully. I notice how strange the mixture is in the soul of an émigré is. On the one hand, he experiences a perpetual complex of diminished value, and on the other hand, he has a large portion of megalomania...

I offer words and gestures of gratitude to my faithful friends, fellow compatriots, and I feel caught red handed in the act of social ethics, artistic enthusiasm, and deep commitment to the kind of Poland I dream of and in whose coming I sacredly believe. The heart weeps when you have the country in your heart!<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> APAS, F. Jąrosy, notes.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.



After this statement, the announcer received a round of cordial applause, but the management of Polish Section of Radio Free Europe did not like it. It was considered political, and he had not received a permission for such comments from Director Jan Nowak-Jeziorański.

This was the last public radio appearance of “old Fryc,” as Ludwik Lawiński called him.

On May 12, 1955, in a letter to Bronisław Horowicz, bitter Fryderyk wrote: “Somehow it so happens that since I walked away from the theatrical mess that theatrical people cultivate as émigrés, no one wants to do any business with me.”<sup>28</sup>

He conveyed a kind of farewell, almost a last will, in the last letter I was able to find. He wrote to Anna Antik, a dancer and choreographer, and a friend from his youth in Russia, on July 25, 1960, twelve days before his fatal heart attack:

As the years go by, a person becomes so lonely that he or she begins to envy anyone who is done with it all. Everything can be persuaded, everything can be reconciled with, but what should one do when such a longing for folly, for youth, for memories of the happiest years comes upon a person? I was in Hyde Park today. I recalled various details of our life in Moscow. How a person changes in old age! In all the years since leaving Russia with Naya, I have defended myself against memories of that period, I saw so much crime there that I wanted to forget that period of my life forever. And now I think that our time in Moscow, despite all the complications, was one of the happiest times in our lives. Looking at the very old trees in the park, I said out loud: – You will not forget that a man who had an interesting life once stood here by your side.<sup>29</sup>

Two weeks after his friend’s death, Marian Hemar published a memoir in London’s *Dziennik Polski*, which he titled the most simply: “Fryderyk.”<sup>30</sup> In it, he revealed his most hidden feelings:

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<sup>28</sup> Art Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, letter from F. Járośy to B. Horowicz dated May 12, 1955.

<sup>29</sup> APAS, letter from F. Járośy to A. Antik dated July 25, 1960.

<sup>30</sup> M. Hemar, “Fryderyk,” *Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza*, August 22, 1960, p. 2.

## HISTORY OF LITERATURE

The punishment for those who remain alive is deep regret, irreparable, and remorse, which burns with bitter shame. What a pity that everything in people that is kind to each other and sympathetic, agreeable and reasonable, cheerful and friendly, is obstructed by nervous resentments and childish sulking – childishly empty when measured against the horror and seriousness of death.

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