

HERCZEG Geza

* 1889

+ Feb. 19 - 1954
Rome, Italy

GEZA HERCZEG, 65, PLAYWRIGHT, DIES

Screen Writer, Collaborator
on 'Zola,' Wrote Original
Musical 'Wonder Bar'

ROME, Feb. 20 (AP)—Geza Herczeg, a Hungarian-born American playwright and screen author, died last night in a hotel here at the age of 65.

He had returned to Rome, where he usually made his home, from Vienna on Monday. Mr. Herczeg was reported to have a heart attack during his visit to the Austrian capital.

Beginning his writing career as a Hungarian war correspondent during the Balkan wars and World War I, he wrote in 1927 the first of many plays, including the successful musical "Wonder Bar," that brought him international attention.

Subsequently he wrote and collaborated on many motion pictures, including "The Life of Emile Zola." During World War II he served with the United States Office of War Information.

Held Hungarian Post

Before coming to the United States, Mr. Herczeg was chief of the press department for the Ministry of State in Hungary. He also had written the book for "Empress Josephine," a musical based on an episode in the life of Napoleon, that was produced in Vienna.

Later he collaborated with Alfred Gruenwald on the story for "Mr. Strauss Goes to Boston," a musical produced in New York in 1944. His reputation in this country, however, was based on his scenarios for Hollywood films.

These included "Florian," "The Burning Bush" and "Wonder Bar," which starred Al Jolson. The Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences cited him for his work on "Zola."

"The Burning Bush," based on a Hungarian court trial of 1882 involving a case of anti-Semitism similar to the Dreyfus affair, also has been presented as a play. Mr. Herczeg wrote the story for "Rapture," an English-language picture produced in Italy in 1950, and for "Women Without Names," which also was made there.

After conducting a seminar on screen writing at the New School, he went to India to prepare the book for a film on the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

Interesting ab. Herczeg:

King, Alexander: May this house
be safe from tigers - 1959
pocket edit. 244-252

(SW
Spec. coll.)