

Reds Capture Emile Zola; Victor Hugo Already Taken

PARIS (AP)—The Communists today are in the process of annexing their second great French writer within the year.

Emile Zola is the Reds' latest literary captive. The Communists are pulling him into their camp as France observes the 50th anniversary of the author's death.

Last spring they took over Victor Hugo. They found his novel "Les Miserables" right down their alley. The Reds used France's celebration of the 150th anniversary of his birth to give him the bear hug.

How do the Communists annex these writers who died long before the Russian Revolution?

The job is done chiefly by Communist newspapers.

The technique is simple: Start with valid similarities between the writers' times and ours, stress the period of the writers' lives when they were in the minority opposition, forget about the fact they did not take orders from Moscow, and that they died respectable, honored and rich.

It is true that when their moment came, both writers were ardent partisans.

What the Communists particularly like about Zola is his defense of Alfred Dreyfus, the French artillery captain who was railroaded to Devil's Island in 1894 after being erroneously convicted of furnishing secrets to the German military attaché in Paris.

The Communist zeal for Zola is so great that it has led them to praise an American movie, a very rare thing indeed. The movie is the 5-year-old film "The Life of Zola" with Paul Muni in the title role.

The French government has just lifted its ban on the film, indicating that after half a century l'Affaire Dreyfus is still touchy. Previously, French officialdom objected to the picture as a reflection on the French Army. The picture has not yet appeared in theaters, however.

The Communists are just getting warmed up on Zola. As the autumn progresses various French ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of his death will

give the Red press other opportunities to embrace him. Meantime, the non-Communist press is publishing thousands of words of praise for Zola, so the tug-of-war is getting hot.

The Communist press must feel they took Victor Hugo into camp last spring and need not worry any more about him for he is seldom mentioned these days.

Hugo, like some of his fellow writers in the literary romantic movement, dabbled in politics.

He made speeches in favor of a republic—including one from a wagon in the Place de la Bastille—during the French Revolution of 1848 and in following political upheavals. Hotly pursued by the authorities, he once escaped to Brussels in the disguise of a workman.

In the midst of last spring's anniversary celebration, a French cinema director planned to render homage to Hugo by a long film. Hollywood producers were interested and planned to participate in the making of the movie.

Then the word drifted back to Hollywood that the Communist press was making Hugo its literary

hero No. 1. The Americans cooled off and postponed any action indefinitely.

This caused the Conservative Le Figaro to remark: "Let us reassure America: to 'annex' is not to convert—even less so when it deals with a writer who is dead."

Group Wants Tax Repeal

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Former actress Corinne Griffith, a CIO Charles Coburn and others plan a national campaign to repeal federal income taxes.

Bertrand Gearhart of Fresno, Calif., former congressman, said yesterday several persons have formed an organization to work for repeal of the income tax and will file articles of incorporation immediately.

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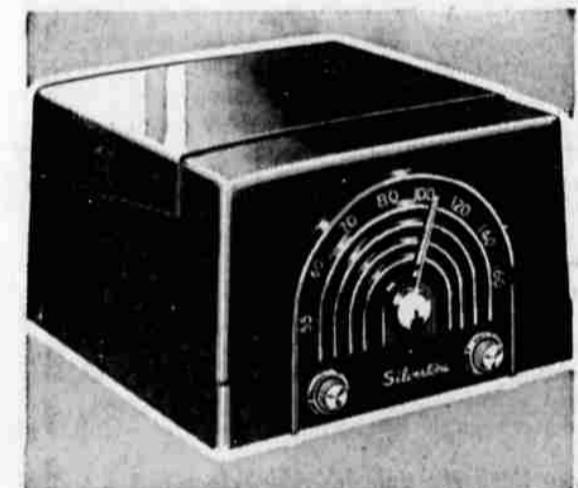


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