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who still think that the war is academic, a matter for specious debate and canny dealing, in which there is still a comfortable margin for the luxury of being wrong. He shouts that the penalty of being wrong is death. To all those wrapped in habit, clothed in routine, cacooned in the fuzzy ways of peace, he calls, "Believe me! You! You! You will suffer death and slavery if we lose!"

TO MY mind the wonder is that the call is not more frantic. For from Suez to Singapore Brown saw brave men by the thousands die horrible and needless deaths because of a widespread psychology that this war is a private war—one to be fought by professionals, one in which the people may be required to die but one in which they should not otherwise participate.

If this attitude persists, Brown writes, we will lose the war as we lost Malay and Singapore. In writing this he was an accurate prophet as far as the subsequent conquest of Burma was concerned. It is to be hoped that his words will be heeded in relation to India and Africa; though it is to be confessed that resounding statements in Britain to the general effect, "We will keep what we now have," give little evidence that Brown's words have been heeded or that the disasters he describes have taught a lesson.

For the nub of Brown's book, it seems to me, is this: Only through arming the colonial peoples, only through convincing them by concrete action that they are fighting for their own liberty can we win this global war in which more than three-quarters of the inhabitants of the earth are colonial peoples. Unless we really mean, without reserve, that the peoples of Asia, Africa, South America, and Europe, shall be the free arbiters of their own destinies we shall be in mortal danger of losing the war. Unless we really mean this and work with deep purpose for it, any peace that may arrive will be only a lull, only an armistice, only a pause. The world is in its present situation because of unsolved problems. A reactionary peace will solve no problems. It will merely aggravate them—and the problems will remain for solution.

RICHARD O. BOYER.

Literary Giant

VICTOR HUGO, by Matthew Josephson. Doubleday-Doran. \$3.50.

IN THESE days of France's re-awakening it is good to read of Victor Hugo. He is one of the giants of French literature, a truly national poet. He bestrides the rich, troubled nineteenth century in a literal, almost a physical sense. He was born in 1802, when the first Napoleon turned his back on the liberating French Revolution and—crowning himself emperor—overran all Europe with his armies. Hugo witnessed the Bourbon Restoration of 1815, the "three glorious days" of the July 1830 revolution, the barricades of 1848, the criminal despotism of Louis Napoleon—"Na-

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pooleon the Little" in Hugo's scorching phrase—the French debacle of 1870 in the war against Bismarck's Prussia, and the heroic Paris Commune of 1871. He died in 1885, ten years after the formation of the Third Republic. What a rich, full, and comprehensive life!

Hugo was a man of tremendous physical and intellectual energies. His various writings run to some sixty volumes. He was voracious in his appetite for food as well as for literature. Indeed, there was something oceanic in him, an exuberance, a constant ebb and flow, a vast sweep akin to the turbulent waters of the sea which washed the shores of Jersey and Guernsey, two Channel islands where he spent years of exile. He was himself obsessed with this parallel and wrote about it, principally in his novel *Toilers of the Sea*. He was a master of his craft, at home in lyric and epic poetry, in the drama, the novel, and political pamphleteering.

Matthew Josephson's biography is a thorough, solid, and highly readable work. The book is scholarly without being elaborate, musty, or academic. At the same time it is lively without becoming one of those glittering and highly colored "romanced lives" made popular by men like Lytton Strachey and Andre Maurois. It shows a wide knowledge of the period in which Hugo lived, although occasionally the author's interpretations of French nineteenth century history—for example, in his treatment of the Revolution of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871—are open to question.

JOSEPHSON is at his best when he writes of the final four decades of Hugo's life. The earlier portions of the book are too much concerned with Hugo's personal habits, his amours and escapades, the Sainte-Beuve-Mme. Hugo scandal, the affair with Juliette Drouet. But in the second half of the book Hugo's growth in stature is reflected in Josephson's enlarged horizons and richer interpretations. Hugo the man is situated within the framework of his times.

There are moments when his enthusiasm leads Josephson to an excess of praise, a glossing over of some of Hugo's shortcomings. Some of Hugo's literary works are rhetorical, verbose, inflated, over-sentimental. They are not free of the posturing and attitudinizing so common to many of the nineteenth century romantic writers. In retrospect the furious literary controversy about his play *Hernani*, for example, seems a tempest in a teapot. Hugo was at times inordinately vain, self-centered, and inconsistent. Success came easily and early to him. At nineteen his fame as a poet was established in France. He was the "Sublime Child." In the first forty-odd years of his life he indulged in not a few compromises and questionable bids for favor from men in high places. In politics he was changeable. He commenced adult life as an ardent Bourbon Royalist. During the July monarchy after 1830 he was on excellent terms with the reigning Orleans family. He was even

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friendly to Louis Napoleon for a brief space until that usurping despot showed his true colors by staging his *coup d'etat* in 1851, an act grimly foreshadowing—as Josephson points out—the fascist *coups* of our own time.

But the 1848 Revolution seemed to be a Great Watershed in Hugo's life. Previously he had been groping his way toward the people. But his thinking had been muddled and ill-defined, a hodge-podge of doctrines of utopian Socialism, mild republicanism, and vague humanitarianism mingled with a kind of messianic faith in himself as the "man of utopias, his feet upon earth, his eyes turned skyward." But after 1848, particularly after 1851, came bitter years of exile, a deepening of experience, and knowledge born of suffering for a cause. The poet then became a "crystal soul," reflecting the desires and aspirations of his people. These were the years of his greatest literary work; the powerful social novel *Les Miserables*, the stirring political pamphlet *Napoleon the Little*, the savagely satirical poems of *Les Chatiments*, and the grandiose poems of *Legende des Siecles*.

Now Hugo was a world figure, like Zola "a moment in the conscience of mankind." He came close to the people of France and they loved and honored him as *Pere La Republique*. He, the former peer of royalist France, was now Citizen Hugo, a Jacobin in life as well as letters. He threw himself heart and soul into the fight for a French democratic republic. He achieved something of the nobility of a Lincoln, the expansive warmth of a Whitman, the liberating fervor of a Garibaldi. On every crucial issue henceforth—whether in literature, politics, or life—he stood on the side of the people. He fought oppression, tyranny, and privilege. He warmly defended the martyred John Brown. He was not a Communiard, but in Belgium he defended the Communiard's right of asylum in the face of a hostile mob. And his art grew deeper. As he declared in a letter to an old acquaintance, Alphonse Karr:

"For my part, I have always tried, to the best of my abilities, to introduce into that which is called politics the moral question and the question of humanity. On moral ground, I fought Louis Bonaparte; in the name of humanity I raised my voice in aid of the oppressed of all lands and all parties. I feel that I have done right. My conscience bears me out."

So it is heartening to trace, as Josephson has done, Hugo's evolution toward a democratic way of life. He came late to the cause of the people. But once he embraced that faith, he did not falter or lose heart. Victor Hugo is great not only because of the powerful novels and poems he wrote; not only because of his anthology pieces which schoolboys commit to memory. He is great because in the late afternoon of his life he came to know and understand this simple teaching: "Only the people are immortal." He belongs to the human and humanist tradition of our culture.

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Memory—and War

THEN WE SHALL HEAR SINGING, by Storm Jameson.
Macmillan. \$2.50.

MEMORY is one of the secret weapons. Secure in the brain cells of a conquered people lingers the habit of freedom. The future as well as the past lies only half-drowsing in the memory of a nation like Czechoslovakia, the unnamed "conquered province" of this novel. And the word "memory" is the keyword of Miss Jameson's story. Let us imagine that it is five years after the end of the war in the "Protectorate," a country with a long memory for freedom and a people resilient under poverty, skeptical, enduring. We meet the conquered and the conquerors. The conquered are three or four families in a small village that had been taken, as had the whole country, by treachery. It is a village very much like that celebrated by Steinbeck in *The Moon Is Down*. It is any village in Czechoslovakia, Norway, France, the whole of Europe. The conquerors are chiefly the civil governor, his friend, Gen. Helmuth von Lesenow, and Dr. Hesse, whose peculiar mission in the territory is the fly-wheel of this history. They knew, of course, that a man's own tongue is a way back to that store of memories that contains the suffering, pride, and rebellion of his ancestors. But suppression of language was not enough. It was Dr. Hesse who discovered the ultimate technique in suppression. A trifling injury to the forebrain and you can "drop all pretense at educating them, they'll need training, that's all. You can imagine yourself directing a zoo."

LIKE Steinbeck, Miss Jameson is very much concerned, perhaps overly so, with the psychology of the invader himself. This too is a fugue on that unforgettable irony of Lieutenant Tonder's, "Flies conquer the flypaper." And one feels, reading both books, a little indifferent to the psychic difficulties of these men who have come to rob and enslave a peaceful nation.

I think that one should not be afraid to portray brutality, ugliness, moral degradation. These qualities exist in Hitler and his henchmen. What impulse is it that persuades a writer to refine these men—endow them with a sensibility that can only render them touching? So Colonel Lanzer, the commanding officer of an invasion party, remembers "The Apology," and the civil governor of Miss Jameson's province asks, "Will they be happy?" and adds, "It shocks me . . . only as a man with pretensions to knowing something, a little, about the past. I don't like to think of men losing their past. The memory of a nation costs too much to make. Ages of effort, devotion, suffering . . . all ended in a minute by Hesse's instruments. . . ."

Yet the book can be regarded—and so also can Steinbeck's—as something on a slightly different level from reality. It possesses extraordinary unity of tone, that of a fable, perhaps, in which the beasts speak like the philosophers. It succeeds too, in employing Miss

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