# A GOOD BOOK TO READ

VICTOR HUGO, A Realistic Biography of the Great Romantic—Matthew Josephson—Doubleday Doran—$3.50.

**(Reviewed by Robert V. Holdt Senior and Assistant in English, Washington College, Chestertown, Md.)**

For the third time, Matthew Josephson has chosen as his subject the life of a prominent French writer of yester-year. ZOLA AND HIS TIMES and JEAN-JAQUES ROUSSEAU were considered masterpieces of the art of biography, but both are eclipsed by the brillance of VICTOR HUGO.

If ever there arose a man whose life and work are worthy of study, that man is Hugo, born in a period in which men were struggling for the right to live as they wished, to speak as they wished, and to write as their consciences dictated. The France of 1820 like the France of 1942, was struggling under the heel of a ruler to whom profit and right were synonomous.

Literature, too, was struggling—struggling against the rules and codes laid down by previous generations. Into this picture of strife stepped a man who was to spend his life fighting for economic freedom, civil freedom, and literary freedom—a man who was to be opposed from all sides by the already great, who was to see his best friend desert him, and who was to die as the most beloved and venerated figure in the French world of politics and letters.

Hugo's early life was a stormy one. His father, a general under the Republic, often betrayed the gracious woman who was his mother, and for whom there grew within the young Victor such a love that the pattern of the rest of his life always displayed elements of her training and influence. The boy who was later to become his country's idol did not fully realize what was going on about him, but the undercurrents of unhappiness and strain could not help but affect a mind as sensitive as his.

Hugo started early to display signs of the genius which was soon to bloom in maturity, for at the ripe old age of fifteen his first poems were received with no litttle attention. Soon he became known as the "Prince of Poets", and by the time he was twenty-five his fame had spread throughout all Europe as the leader of a new vogue of writing—a revolt against the past—Romanticism.

Happily married by this time, and the proud father of several children, Hugo found himself the head of a group of youths who were to go down in the history of French artistry—Foucher, Sainte-Beuve, Delacroix Boulanger, de Musset, and many others. It was Sainte-Bevue who was to become his best friend, and still later, his most critical enemy. The production of "Hernani" and the battle over its merits and faults marked the initial triumph of Romanticism in French literature. From this time on, Hugo was to become the center of a storm of criticism and praise, denunciation and acclaim, and to emerge as "Victor" over all.

Joseph traces with sympathy and understanding Hugo's "affaire du coeur" with the lovely actress Juliette follows him as he leads the French in their fight for freedom, shows him in his first exile when he wrote his masterpiece of prose, LES MISERABLES. We see him as he returns to his native country, is exiled once again, and then comes back to die in the Paris he loves so deeply.

Thus does Matthew Josephson, the master of the art of biography, tell the story of Victor Hugo, "France's prince of poets and lord of language."

**(Any book reviewed in this column will be sent to you postpaid by the Washington College Bookstore Chestertown, Md., upon the receipt of order accompanied by check or money order.)**

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# The Nation At War ★

**A complete coverage of the week's news on the all-out effort of the United Nation's fight for freedom.**

President Roosevelt ordered the Lend-Lease Administration to make available as soon as possible food, clothing and weapons of war to the armed forces and the citizens of the areas in North Africa occupied by U. S. troops. "No one will go hungry or without means of livelihood in any territory occupied by the United Nations," the President said, "if it is humanly within our power to make the necessary supplies available to them. Weapons also will be supplied to the peoples of these territories to hasten the defeat of our common enemies."

By late November 13 Allied forces had extended the Algerian zone of occupation as far east as Bone, just 50 miles from Tunisia. When French destroyers at Casablanca put up strong resistance against American naval units protecting U. S. troup landings where, the U. S. surface forces and dive bombers destroyed an entire flotilla of French destroyers and light craft and left the 35,000 ton French battleship Jean Bart a burning hulk. All hostilities in French North Africa ceased November 11, 77 hours after the U. S. offensive began. In many places the local population and U. S. troops joined in Armistice Day ceremonies. The War Department said American casualties were light.

The President described the African campaign as a smaller second front launched in lieu of a big-scale offensive against the Axis forces across the English Channel. He said that during Prime Minister Churchill's visit to Washington in June it was decided a major offensive across the Channel could not have been started until next year at the earliest. The African offensive was decided upon by the end of June, by late July the number of men necessary and points of attack had been determined, and the approximate date was set by the end of August.

War Secretary Stimson said that despite the fact that the Germans must have been aware some sort of large operation was in immediate prospect in North Africa. Axis efforts to intercept it with numerous submarines were futile. All U. S. forces moved to their points of attack, only one transport was torpedoed, and troops from this ship proceeded in their landing craft more than 100 miles to their destination. Under Secretary of War Patterson reported 700,000 different items of equipment and supplies were required for the North African operation. Navy Secretary Knox said it took five to seven times as many ships to carry men and goods around Africa to the Middle East as it would to carry them straight through Gibralter and into the Mediterranean.

## On Battle Front and Home Front

U. S. Treasury Dept. —Courtesy Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch.

### Other War Fronts

In a 10-hour offensive on Jap shore positions on Guadalcanal November 12, air and surface forces of the Navy destroyed at least 30 and probably more out of 75 landing boats found at Tassafaronga, shot down 30 out of 31 Jap planes attempting to attack U. S. ships, silenced shore batteries and started large fires. The U. S. heavy cruiser San Francisco was damaged and 30 of the crew were killed when a disabled Jap plane crashed into it. The U. S. destroyer Buchanan was damaged and five of her crew killed by a five-inch shell from an enemy shore battery. A Navy communique in the afternoon of November 14 said the naval engagements in the Solomons area were still in progress.

Gen. MacArthur's headquarters reported November 14 that U. S. bombers scored hits on two more Jap cruisers and damaged an enemy transport at their Buin-Faisi base. In New Guinea, Australian troops wiped out the remainder of a Japanese force in the Oivi-Gorari sector and drew within 45 miles of the enemy base at Buna. U. S. submarines reported the sinking of seven more transport and auxiliary ships and the probable sinking of a destroyer in Far Eastern waters. The sinking of five more Allied merchantmen in the Atlantic during September and October was announced.

### Selective Service

The President signed legislation lowering the draft age to 18 years. At the same time he announced a committee of educators, working with the War and Navy Departments, would make a study of steps "to enable the young men whose education has been interrupted to resume their schooling and afford equal opportunity for the training and education of other young men of ability after their service to the armed forces has come to an end." He also said that in the near future a plan will be announced providing utilization during the war of facilities of certain colleges and universities to train a limited number of men of the armed forces for highly specialized duties.

### Navy

Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to President Roosevelt, said aircraft carriers, large and small, escort vessels, landing boats and other kinds of naval units are about to be built "with a timing almost equal to the pre-war mass production of motor cars." He said the U. S. is building submarines in a little more than one year, twice as fast as before the war; aircraft carriers are being built in 17 months; battleships, that used to require five years, now take three; destroyers require six months, one-third of the former time.

### Farm Production and Prices

Economic Stabilization Director Byrnes said the ceiling on farm wages has been lifted until Agriculture Secretary Wickard can determine: (1) effect on farm production in the more critical labor shortage areas, and (2) where increases in farm wages may threaten to cause an increase in the price ceilings on farm products. The first Agricultural Marketing Administration contract for dehydrated pork for shipment overseas—calling for approximately 110,000 pounds, to be processed and delivered within the next few weeks—was awarded to a Midwestern packer. The Agriculture Department said the use of hybrid seed added 300,000,000 bushels to the 1942 corn crop. Marketing quotas will apply to the 1943-44 cotton marketing season if approved by a more than two-thirds vote of cotton growers in a referedum on December 12, Secretary Wickard stated.

### Rationing

The Office of Defense Transportation postponed its mileage rationing program for commercial vehicles from November 15 to December 1, after the Office of Price Administration postponed its nation-wide gasoline rationing program for passenger cars from November 22 to December 1. The OPA also postponed its fuel oil rationing starting date from November 1 to 23. The OPA said all oil-burning equipment in structures other than private homes will be regarded by OPA as convertible to other fuels and therefore ineligible for fuel rations, unless satisfactory proof is furnished to the contrary. The ruling will be enforced after the second rationing period.

### Production and Labor Supply

OES Director Byrnes asked War Production Chairman Nelson to undertake a "vigorous program" to standardize goods produced for civilian consumption and to eliminate all frills and wasteful practices. Mr. Byrnes also asked the Office of Civilian Supply to determine the minimum civilian needs, and said it will be the OES policy to guarantee the American people at least their essentials.

Labor Secretary Perkins, at the request of the War and Navy Departments and Maritime Commission, lowered the minimum age for women employed in war industries from 18 years to 16 years. The war agencies stated the continued inclusion in war contracts of the 18-year provision would "impair seriously the conduct of Government business by retarding essential production....." In ordering the change, Secretary Perkins ruled that a contractor shall "keep on file a certificate of age showing that every girl employed by him is at least 16.... No girl under 18 shall be employed for more than eight hours in any one day or between the hours of 10 p. m. and 6 a. m. or in any way contrary to State laws governing hours of work" .....Any woman worker under 18 must be granted a specific luncheon period of at least 30 minutes.

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## Maryland Musings

Garrett and Wicomico counties, Maryland, are among 11 counties in 10 states announced by the Department of Agriculture on November 2 as being added to the modified accredited Bang's disease-free areas. A county receives official designation as a modified accredited Bang's disease-free area, according to Dr. John R. Mohler, chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, when tests for that disease have been applied to all breeding cattle 6 month of age or older and the percentage of reactors to the last test does not exceed 1 percent of the cattle and when the infected herds do not exceed 5 percent of the total number.

More than 552,000,000 pounds of foodstuffs and other farm commodities were delivered for shipment to the allied nations during September, the largest part consisting of concentrated foods and animal protein products, the Department of Agriculture has announced.

Victory gardens wil probably be more important in 1943 than in 1942 because of difficulties in shipping vegetables long distances.

One way to get organic matter in garden soil is to make a compost heap This can be made from leaves and vegetable waste.

"The only effective way of avoiding disastrous results of inflation and deflation is through using the increased incomes of this period to get debts in shape and to build financial reserves in War Bonds."

Tests conducted at the Maryland Experiment Station show corn silage to be valuable in fattening steers and wintering pregnant ewes.

Weird Experiences In The Philippines

Noted correspondents recounts one of the weirdest of his experiences—his discovery on a little known Philippine island of a maid who could read the future in the magic of fire. Don't miss this astonishing revelation in the November 29th issue of

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