

# The New Criterion

## Features

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## The visions of Orwell & Waugh

by [David Pryce-Jones](#)

On David Lebedoff's *The Same Man: George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh in Love and War*.

The 1930s was the last decade in which Britain was recognizably its historic self, a country where people expected to live their lives as best they could and with a sense that they were free to do so. The balance between undoubted social inequality and the acceptance of the identity left by previous generations was a matter for all to resolve for themselves.

The writing was on the national wall, however. British politicians had no idea how to steer through the Age of Dictators. Hitler, Stalin, even Mussolini, flummoxed them. So did Gandhi or Haj Amin, the Mufti of Jerusalem, as in their different approaches they and their kind set about destroying the empire on which the sun was not supposed to set. Britain was fast ceasing to be an independent actor on the world's stage, and this was bound to affect the way its citizens thought about the fate of the country and themselves. Churchill was the last British politician to take it f ...

**David Pryce-Jones** is a senior editor at *National Review*. He is also a regular or occasional contributor to *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Independent*, *London Evening Standard*, *The Spectator*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Washington Times*, *Commentary*, *The New Republic*, *World Affairs*, and *The New Criterion*. He was born in Vienna in 1936. Novels by David Pryce-Jones *Owls & Satyrs* (Longmans, 1961) *The Sands of Summer* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963) *Quondam* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965) *The Stranger's View* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967) *Running Away* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971) *The England Commune* (Quartet, 1975) *Shirley's Guild* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979) *The Afternoon Sun* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986) *Inheritance* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1992) Non-fiction by David Pryce-Jones *Graham Greene* (Oliver & Boyd, 1963) *Next Generation: Travels in Israel* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965) *The Hungarian Revolution* (Benn, 1969) *The Face of Defeat* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972) *Evelyn Waugh & his world* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973) *Unity Mitford* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976) *Vienna* (Time-Life Books, 1978) *Paris in the Third Reich* (Collins, 1981) *Cyril Connolly: Journal & Memoir* (Collins, 1983) *The Closed Circle* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989) *You Can't be Too Careful* (Workman, 1992) *The War that Never Was* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995)

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