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Eric Hobsbawm: lying to the credulous

by [David Pryce-Jones](#)

Considering Hossbawm's new book *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life*.

Eric Hobsbawm is no doubt intelligent and industrious, and he might well have made a notable contribution as a historian. Unfortunately, lifelong devotion to Communism destroyed him as a thinker or interpreter of events. Such original work as he did concerned bandits and outlaws. But even here there is bias, for he rescued them from obscurity not for their own sake but as precursors of Communist revolution. His longer and later books are constructed around the abstractions of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the supposedly pre-ordained class struggle between them, capital and capitalism, empire and imperialism—in short the Marxist organizing principles which reduce human beings and their varied lives to concepts handy to serve a thesis worked up in advance and in the library. This material, needless to say, was derived from secondary sources.

The purpose of all Hobsbawm's writing, indeed of his lif ...

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