



On History

Eric Hobsbawm

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In these essays, Eric Hobsbawm reflects upon the theory, practice and development of history and its relevance to the modern world. The wide-ranging papers reflect his concern with the relations between past, present and future. They deal with, among other subjects, the problem of writing history, its abuses and the historian's responsibility; with the history of society and history from below; with Marx and current historical trends or fashions; with Europe, the Russian Revolution and the descent into a world-wide barbarism that, he says, increasing for most of the 20th century, threatens to destroy the civilization we have inherited from the European Enlightenment of the 18th century. The essays reveal the author's passionate belief in the importance of studying history.

On History Details

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Author : Eric Hobsbawm

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Adrian says

In depth historiography by the master, Hobsbawm. Early chapters explain the uses of history to society. He criticizes the breaking down of history into smaller and smaller subsets. Puts down cliometrics. But I met my Waterloo in the chapters on Marx. I couldn't grasp enough of what he was saying and quit.

Manish Saini says

A book which is a collection of Hobsbawm's writing over 4 decades is not an easy one for anyone who is not aware of the European history in detail.

He seems to be talking to experts at various points and is not a non-expert guide to History. But a few chapters like the one on Barbaniasm are certainly the best one can come across.

Would not recommend the book but only a few chapters to the History enthusiasts for the sheer power of the ideas.

Manish Saini

Sinan Öner says

I read Hobsbawm's Book; Hobsbawm's "historiography and method of history writing".

William Cleary says

Maybe I'm just impatient but I find his writing style so tortuous. He's great to read on Marx, economics, and the Russian Revolution which one of the essays is devoted to. The two essays on postmodernism at the end are just so basic and reductive.

Incidentally I love the cover image: http://www.rnz.de/cms_media/module_im...

Tim C says

This is a heavy-weight set of meditations on historiography. Thoughtful and thought-provoking, but in parts it is highly dense and heavy going. Some years ago now I did my first degree in a distinctly Marxist Anthropology Dept., and so I was surprised (and somewhat startled!) to find I could follow and found the chapters on Marx particularly illuminating. Likewise, I found the later chapters on the 'Annales', History from Below, counterfactuals, and, post-modernism/identity history all made very fruitful reading. Hobsbawm

is widely regarded as a formidable historian, and, as a first taster, in reading this book I can well see why!

Jackson Cyril says

A group of essays on historical method and theory by a master historian. Well worth looking at.

Saptarshi says

Reminds me of E.H.Carr's "What is History"...

Greg says

I really wanted to read this after reading a couple things about Hobsbawm and tried over and over again, but it's not history the way I enjoyed reading. Oh well!

Tobias says

Actually only read a couple of chapters of this but it seems well written and I know where I should come if I want a decent collection of essays on the philosophy of history.

Siddharth Shankaran says

If you want to hear the different machinations that history employs on our lives , and the way history evolves , this is a must read . Hobsbawm needs no introduction. He is the historian par excellence .

Kamran Sehgal says

Dusty old Marxist professor gives dusty old lectures and collects them in this published dusty volume of Marxist theory.

I was hoping for something more substantial from one of the UK's most widely read historians

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Excellent collection. Particularly pertinent in its assault on postmodernist theory in sociological and historiographical fields.

The man tells it like it is!