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Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life by Eric ...

Hypatia was the daughter of the mathematician Theon of Alexandria (c. 335 – c. 405 AD). According to classical historian Edward J. Watts, Theon was the head of a school called the "Mouseion", which was named in emulation of the Hellenistic Mouseion, whose membership had ceased in the 260s AD. Theon's school was exclusive, highly prestigious, and doctrinally conservative.

Eric Hobbsawm is considered by many to be our greatest living historian. Robert Heilbroner, writing about Hobbsawm's The Age of Extremes 1914-1991 said, "I know of no other account that sheds as much light on what is now behind us, and thereby casts so much illumination on our possible futures." Skeptical, endlessly curious, and almost contemporary with the terrible "short century" which is the subject of Age of Extremes, his most widely read book, Hobbsawm has, for eighty-five years, been committed to understanding the "interesting times" through which he has lived. Hitler came to power as Hobbsawm was on his way home from school in Berlin, and the Soviet Union fell while he was giving a seminar in New York. He was a member of the Apostles at King's College, Cambridge, took E.M. Forster to hear Lenny Bruce, and demonstrated with Bertrand Russell against nuclear arms in Trafalgar Square. He translated for Che Guevara in Havana, had Christmas dinner with a Soviet master spy in Budapest and an evening at home with Mahalia Jackson in Chicago. He saw the body of Stalin, started the modern history of banditry and is probably the only Marxist asked to collaborate with the inventor of the Mars bar. Hobbsawm takes us from Britain to the countries and cultures of Europe, to America (which he appreciated first through movies and jazz), to Latin America, Chile, India and the Far East. With Interesting Times, we see the history of the twentieth century through the unforgiving eye of one of its most intensely engaged participants, the incisiveness of whose views we cannot afford to ignore in a world in which history has come to be increasingly forgotten.

Eric Hobbsawm has been widely acclaimed as one of the greatest living historians. Called "a lyrical, pungent, and provocative memoir" by Publishers Weekly, Interesting Times offers a personal tour through what Hobbsawm terms "the most extraordinary and terrible century in human history." The book takes us from his birth in Alexandria, Egypt, and early schooling in Weimar Berlin to his student days as a Cambridge Red and Apostle at King's College. Hobbsawm took E.M. Forster to hear Lenny Bruce, demonstrated with Bertrand Russell against nuclear arms, translated for Che Guevara in Havana, and inaugurated the modern history of banditry. With Interesting Times, we see the making of one of the Left's most important intellectuals, and the history of the twentieth century through the unforgiving eye of one of its most intensely engaged participants.

Born in 1917, the year of the Russian Revolution, the eighty-five years of Eric Hobbsawm's life are backdropped by an endless litany of wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. He has led a remarkably fulfilling and long life; historian and intellectual, fluent in five languages, a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, until it dissolved itself, and writer of countless volumes of history. He has personally witnessed some of the critical events of our century from Hitler's rise to power in Berlin to the fall of the Berlin wall. Hobbsawm has kept his eyes and ears open for eighty-five years, and has been constantly committed to understanding the 'interesting times' (as the Chinese curse puts it) through which he has lived. His autobiography is one passionate cosmopolitan Jew's account of his travels through that past which is another country, where they do things differently, and how it became the world we now live in.

Eric Hobbsawm, who passed away in 2012, was one of the most brilliant and original historians of our age. Through his work, he observed the great twentieth-century confrontation between bourgeois fin de siècle culture and myriad new movements and ideologies, from communism and extreme nationalism to Dadaism to the emergence of information technology. In Fractured Times, Hobbsawm, with characteristic verve, unpacks a century of cultural fragmentation. Hobbsawm examines the conditions that both created the flowering of the belle époque and held the seeds of its disintegration: paternalistic capitalism, globalization, and the arrival of a mass consumer society. Passionate but never sentimental, he ranges freely across subjects as diverse as classical music, the fine arts, rock music, and sculpture. He records the passing of the golden age of the "free intellectual" and explores the lives of forgotten greats; analyzes the relationship between art and totalitarianism; and dissects phenomena as diverse as surrealism, art nouveau, the emancipation of women, and the myth of the American cowboy. Written with consummate imagination and skill, Fractured Times is the last book from one of our greatest modern-day thinkers.

This book is an autobiographical account of George Mandler—born in 1924—who grew up in a middle class Jewish family in Vienna. It details the fears and attempts to find a safe haven when Austria was invaded and absorbed into Nazi Germany in 1938, followed by Mandler's escape to England and residence in a small boarding school. The threat of the holocaust and reaction to anti-semitism are explored and the author describes the life of an emigre youth group run by a branch of the Austrian communist party. Drafted in 1943, Mandler is trained in military intelligence and ends up as a front line interrogator with the 7th army in Germany. The training and function of military intelligence and the role of German and Austrian refugees in it are described for the first time in detail. Military intelligence and counter-intelligence work in post-war Germany follows, including the evacuation of a scientific establishment before the arrival of the Soviets. Returning to New York in 1946, Mandler begins his college training at New York University and the University of Basel, Switzerland. This is followed by graduate training in psychology at Yale and a first position at Harvard for seven years. Highlights of the period include a short episode of peripheral involvement in a Soviet spy scandal. After five years at the University of Toronto, Mandler is given the opportunity of a lifetime—to start a department at the prestigious new San Diego branch of the University of California. He describes the process of building a department and a university in the context of the 1960s, as well as academic life and actions during the turbulent 60s and 70s. Mandler's successful career as a writer and researcher in psychology is described in lay language, as is the professional/scientific bifurcation of the field. The final chapter comments on and describes current academic life and problems.

Eric Hobbsawm's works have had a nearly incalculable effect across generations of readers and students, influencing more than the practice of history but also the perception of it. Born in Alexandria, Egypt, of second-generation British parents, Hobbsawm was orphaned at age fourteen in 1931. Living with an uncle in Berlin, he experienced the full force of world economic depression, and in the charged reaction to it in Germany was forced to choose between Nazism and Communism, which was no choice at all. Hobbsawm's lifelong allegiance to Communism inspired his pioneering work in social history, particularly the trilogy for which he is most famous—The Age of Revolution, The Age of Capital, and The Age of Empire—covering what he termed "the long nineteenth century" in Europe. Selling in the millions of copies, these held sway among generations of readers, some of whom went on to have prominent careers in politics and business. In this comprehensive biography of Hobbsawm, acclaimed historian Richard Evans (author of The Third Reich Trilogy, among other works) offers both a living portrait and vital insight into one of the most influential intellectual figures of the twentieth century. Using exclusive and unrestricted access to the unpublished material, Evans places Hobbsawm's writings within their historical and political context. Hobbsawm's Marxism made him a controversial figure but also, uniquely and universally, someone who commanded respect even among those who did not share—or who even outright rejected-his political beliefs. Eric Hobbsawm: A Life in History gives us one of the 20th century's most colorful and intellectually compelling figures. It is an intellectual life of the century itself.

Winner of the American Sociological Association PEWS Award (1995) for Distinguished Scholarship The Long Twentieth Century traces the epochal shifts in the relationship between capital accumulation and state formation over a 700-year period. Giovanni Arrighi masterfully synthesizes social theory, comparative history and historical narrative in this account of the structures and agencies which have shaped the course of world history over the millennium. Borrowing from Braudel, Arrighi argues that the history of capitalism has unfolded as a succession of "long centuries"—ages during which a hegemonic power deploying a novel combination of economic and political networks secured control over an expanding world-economic space. The modest beginnings, rise and violent unravel-ing of the links forged between capital, state power, and geopolitics by hegemonic classes and states are explored with dramatic intensity. From this perspective, Arrighi explains the changing fortunes of Florentine, Venetian, Genoese, Dutch, English, and finally American capitalism. The book concludes with an examination of the forces which have shaped and are now poised to undermine America's world power.

"The ideas of capitalism's most vigorous and eloquent enemy have been enlightening in every era, the author contends, and our current historical situation of free-market extremes suggests that reading Marx may be more important now than ever. Hobbsawm begins with a consideration of how we should think about Marxism in the post-communist era, observing that the features we most associate with Soviet and related regimes—command economies, intrusive bureaucratic structures, and an economic and political condition of permanent war—are neither derived from Marx's ideas nor unique to socialist states. Further chapters discuss pre-Marxian socialists and Marx's radical break with them, Marx's political milieu, and the influence of his writings on the anti-fascist decades, the Cold War, and the post–Cold War period. Sweeping, provocative, and full of brilliant insights, How to Change the World challenges us to reconsider Marx and reassess his significance in the history of ideas."—Publisher's website.

"An intellectual feast, learned, lucid, challenging and accessible." —San Francisco Chronicle "Ideas crackle" in this triumphant final book of Tony Judt, taking readers on "a wild ride through the ideological currents and shoals of 20th century thought." (Los Angeles Times) The final book of the brilliant historian and indomitable public critic Tony Judt, Thinking the Twentieth Century maps the issues and concerns of a turbulent age on to a life of intellectual conflict and engagement. The twentieth century comes to life as an age of ideas—a time when, for good and for ill, the thoughts of the few reigned over the lives of the many. Judt presents the triumphs and the failures of prominent intellectuals, adeptly explaining both their ideas and the risks of their political commitments. Spanning an era with unprecedented clarity and insight, Thinking the Twentieth Century is a tour-de-force, a classic engagement of modern thought by one of the century's most incisive thinkers. The exceptional nature of this work is evident in its very structure—a series of intimate conversations between Judt and his friend and fellow historian Timothy Snyder, grounded in the texts of the time and focused by the intensity of their vision. Judt's astounding eloquence and range are here on display as never before. Traversing the complexities of modern life with ease, he and Snyder revive both thoughts and thinkers, guiding us through the debates that made our world. As forgotten ideas are revisited and fashionable trends scrutinized, the shape of a century emerges. Judt and Snyder draw us deep into their analysis, making us feel that we too are part of the conversation. We become aware of the obligations of the present to the past, and the force of historical perspective and moral considerations in the critique and reform of society, then and now. In restoring and indeed exemplifying the best of intellectual life in the twentieth century, Thinking the Twentieth Century opens pathways to a moral life for the twenty-first. This is a book about the past, but it is also an argument for the kind of future we should strive for. Thinking the Twentieth Century is about the life of the mind—and the mindful life. Judt's book, Ill Fares the Land, republished in 2021 featuring a new preface by bestselling author of Between the World and Me and The Water Dancer, Ta-Nehisi Coates.

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