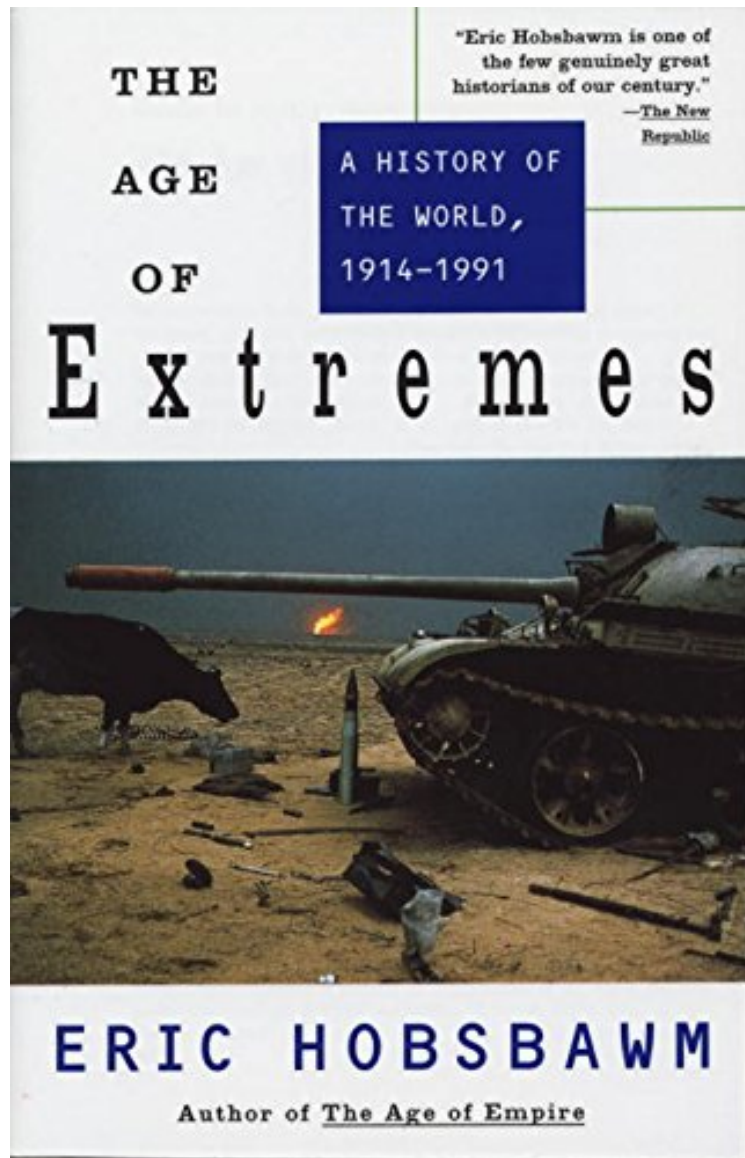


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The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991

Eric Hobsbawm

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Eric Hobsbawm : The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of the most important reads of this century or the last. By Israel Martinez Awesome! Awesome! Awesome! This work is perhaps even more important than the author may have realized. We cannot grasp what lies ahead in the 21st century if we do not come to grips with the 20th. This work is

called a "Short History of the Twentieth Century." The most impactful statement that stuck out to me--I paraphrase--In the 1950's 80% of the world's population came out of the Middle Ages. I never thought about it this way, but it is true. My parents did missionary work in the early 1960's in Latin America. My mother told me of driving 14 hours in a jeep through dirt trails and sometimes no trails to reach a mountain village in Colombia with no running water or electricity. It was a place nearly as remote as that described by the Colombian author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez in "100 Years of Solitude." That town now has a highway nearby and a website. This work is much more important than Fareed Zakaria's "A Post American World." 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent tour through historyBy Al SinghThis is an excellent book, rich in insights and observations on "the Short Twentieth Century" (1914-1991). Nevertheless, like all historians, Hobsbawm has his quirks. He seems positively disappointed that capitalism did not destroy itself as the Marxists predicted it would, and he is clearly distrustful of free market forces. He believes the future well being of the world will require some sort of central planning and cannot be left up to laissez-faire policies. His history ends with 1991, so that he completely misses the most radical transformation of the last decade of the twentieth century, namely the computer revolution. And while he has studied history as deeply as any historian, he seems to have no understanding at all of what makes America special; he seems to regard the success of this country as a mere historical fluke. But this is nevertheless a fascinating tour through the last century, one which I highly recommend. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. bookBy ...Very detailed

Dividing the century into the Age of Catastrophe, 1914-1950, the Golden Age, 1950-1973, and the Landslide, 1973-1991, Hobsbawm marshals a vast array of data into a volume of unparalleled inclusiveness, vibrancy, and insight, a work that ranks with his classics *The Age of Empire* and *The Age of Revolution*. In the short century between 1914 and 1991, the world has been convulsed by two global wars that swept away millions of lives and entire systems of government. Communism became a messianic faith and then collapsed ignominiously. Peasants became city dwellers, housewives became workers and, increasingly, leaders. Populations became literate even as new technologies threatened to make print obsolete. And the driving forces of history swung from Europe to its former colonies. Includes 32 pages of photos.

From Publishers Weekly In a vivid chronicle bristling with unorthodox views and fresh insights, British historian Hobsbawm divides the period from the outbreak of WWI to the collapse of the U.S.S.R. into three phases. The "Age of Catastrophe" (1914-47), marked by two world wars, the crumbling of colonial empires, the spread of communism and the near-breakdown of the capitalist system, ended only after the liberal West and the Soviet Union forged a temporary, bizarre alliance to defeat Hitler. Rivalry between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. dominated the ensuing "Golden Age" (1947-73), yet Hobsbawm (emeritus professor at the University of London and professor of politics at Manhattan's New School for Social Research) argues that despite Cold War rhetoric, the superpowers essentially accepted the division of the world and sought long-term peaceful coexistence. The Golden Age's real significance, he maintains, lies in explosive growth of the world economy, technological revolution and, for most of the globe, a social revolution marked by death of the peasantry, mass urbanization, the spread of literacy and the primacy of individualism over traditional constraints. The "Crisis Decades" (1973-present) have brought mass unemployment, severe cyclical slumps and a widening abyss between rich and poor nations. Hobsbawm weaves into his tapestry scientific advances, the decline of both avant-garde and classic high art and the disintegration of social relationships amid rampant individualism. Photos. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal British historian Hobsbawm is most noted for his three-volume history of the "long 19th century" (1789-1914). Here he turns his attention to what he terms the "short 20th century" (1914-1991), which roughly coincides with his own life. It also corresponds to the lifespan of Soviet Communism, which naturally receives a major share of attention in this account. But Hobsbawm covers ideas more than events in this book, which is international in scope. In a work addressed to "the non-academic reader with a general interest in the modern world," he assimilates mountains of information from all over the century and tries to arrange it into a cohesive whole. The result is certainly not light reading, but it is a book that most libraries will need. Gary Williams, Southeastern Ohio Regional Lib., Caldwell Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist A distinguished German-born historian, professor emeritus at the University of London, summarizes--if a book more than 600 pages long can be a summary!--his thinking on the century with which his own lifetime has coincided. Hobsbawm's specialty is actually the nineteenth century; he writes now about the twentieth not only because it is in essence over and can be pondered in its entirety, but also because he can come to it fresh and see things that authorities on the period may have missed. Worked out in lovely detail (Hobsbawm definitely subscribes to the notion that historians should pay as much attention to how they express themselves as to what they express) is his argument that the twentieth century, particularly from the 1914 outbreak of World War I to the 1991 collapse of the USSR, can be most edifyingly viewed in three distinct parts, a "triptych" he calls it: an age of catastrophe from 1914 to the end of World War II, followed by a golden age up to the 1970s, and then another age of crisis lasting until the 1990s. The characteristics of those three time periods are explained not simply with erudition but brilliance; and in addition to politics, he brings economics, technology, and the arts into his discussions. Any avid

reader well versed in European history will savor every wonderfully presented thought. Brad Hooper