

Eric Hobsbawm, 1917 – 2012

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Eric Hobsbawn,
1917-2012

“Eric Hobsbawm, who died on October 1 at the age of 95, was perhaps the twentieth century’s preeminent historian and a life-long advocate of social justice. Born in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1917 to a British father and Austrian mother, he was educated in Vienna and Berlin. His family sent him to London in 1933 when Hitler came to power and he lived for the rest of his life in England, where he taught for many years at London’s Birkbeck College.

“As a teenager, Hobsbawm not only witnessed the rise of Nazism but was present in 1936 at the massive popular demonstration in Paris that celebrated the electoral victory of the Popular Front. The events of that turbulent time led him to join the Communist party and he remained a member until its disappearance in the 1990s, mostly, he wrote, out of respect for the memory of comrades who had suffered persecution or death for their political beliefs.” – Eric Foner, “Remembering Eric Hobsbawm, Historian for Social Justice,” *The Nation*, October 1, 2012.

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The BBC has also temporarily made public a radio interview and biographical series on Eric Hobsbawm, entitled “Eric Hobsbawm: A Life in History.

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  Rosemary Feurer is Professor of History at Northern Illinois University. She is the author of *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950,* among other books and essays. She is working on The Illinois Mine Wars, 1860-1940 and a new biography of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones.

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