

## Eric Hobsbawm Pushes the Envelope

...but not in a good way. Most **villeepinists** don't say that it is all right for tyrants like Saddam to murder people, just that it is wrong for us to do anything about it other than talk to them sternly (though not so sternly as to hurt their feelings since that would be an act of cultural imperialism).

However, communist 'historian' Eric Hobsawm descended to the next level way back in 1994 when he said that it was **acceptable** for the Communist Party to have murdered millions of people in Russia before World War Two:

HOBBSAWM: You didn't have the option. You see, either there was going to be a future or there wasn't going to be a future and this [the Communist Party] was the only thing that offered an acceptable future.

IGNATIEFF: In 1934, millions of people are dying in the Soviet experiment. If you had known that, would it have made a difference to you at that time? To your commitment? To being a Communist?

HOBBSAWM: This is the sort of academic question to which an answer is simply not possible...I don't actually know that it has any bearing on the history that I have written. If I were to give you a retrospective answer which is not the answer of a historian, I would have said, 'Probably not.'

IGNATIEFF: Why?

HOBBSAWM: Because in a period in which, as you might imagine, mass murder and mass suffering are absolutely universal, the chance of a new world being born in great suffering would still have been worth backing. Now the point is, looking back as an historian, I would say that the sacrifices made by the Russian people were probably only marginally worthwhile. The sacrifices were enormous; they were excessive by almost any standard and excessively great. But I'm looking back at it now and I'm saying that because it turns out that the Soviet Union was not the beginning of the world revolution. Had it been, I'm not sure.

IGNATIEFF: What that comes down to is saying that had

the radiant tomorrow actually been created, the loss of fifteen, twenty million people might have been justified?

HOBBSAWM: Yes.

(Thanks to [Samizdata](#) for the link.)

Of course, it's not at all surprising that Hobsbawm is on the **wrong side** yet again. The US can't win with Hobsbawm, or the rest of the loony left, no matter what happens. If the US wins a stunning military victory against an evil dictator then the evil US empire has again crushed "someone they didn't like" with their iron fist. If a US soldier dies – or even pauses for a rest on his way to victory – then it's the greatest reverse in military history since Stalingrad.

Hobsbawm's views have nothing to do with facts like the number of people who are going to die, or anything like that. Instead they are all derived from an inner sense of morality that is so twisted that a tyrant slaughtering fifteen million innocent people is acceptable while a free society conducting a war against terrorism is evil.

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