



## **The Stalin Society:**

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# **George Orwell**

**Anti-Communist Propagandist,  
Champion of Trotskyism  
& State Informer**

**"What attracted the bourgeoisie to this third-rate writer was not his pretended support for the ideals of the October Revolution, but his real driving hatred for the ideals of communism"**

**"Refute the slanders contained in Orwell's work, arm young people with the knowledge to defend the Soviet Union both in and out of the classroom"**

## George Orwell:



### **Anti-Communist Propagandist, Champion of Trotskyism and State Informer**

Since the publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945, the work of George Orwell has had a permanent place on the school curriculum. He has been much praised as a literary genius, as one who combines talent with principles and continues the great ironic tradition of Swift and others. This is belied, however, by the boredom felt by students who come to a work like *Animal Farm* with no idea about the events it purports to be based on. Although it is much vaunted as a great work of art; a story that stands on its own as a fable about totalitarianism in general, examination questions all refer to the events of the Russian Revolution, and "an ability to regurgitate the equations of a Cold War wisdom is taken for granted in most exams." (*Examining Orwell: Political and Literary*)

*Values in Education*, Alan Brown; *Inside the Myth*, ed. Christopher Norris: London, p.48)

Stephen Sedley points out that the story works only if the reader understands and agrees with the conclusions Orwell is trying to demonstrate *before* starting the novel:

"Orwell's lineage from Swift is frequently spoken of. In background and personality there are similarities. . . but not in *Animal Farm*. It is not only that Swift has humour as well as passion, which Orwell does not. . . you cannot get into the fiction of *Animal Farm* at all without accepting as your starting point the very thing that Orwell has to prove - that in politics people are no better than animals: their traditional rulers may be feckless but ungovern them and a new tyranny will fill the place of the old. Naturally if you are prepared to accept that conclusion as your premiss, the story follows. You can demonstrate that the earth is flat by a similar process". (*An Immodest Proposal*, Stephen Sedley; *Inside the Myth*, ed. Christopher Norris: London, p156)

Orwell has been widely published, in fact, *in spite of* the lack of artistic merit in his work, precisely because he fulfils such a useful political purpose for imperialism. Following Trotsky's model of pretending to defend the October Revolution, Orwell protests at the corruption of communism's ideals in the Soviet Union by Stalin. Thus millions of people around the world remain ignorant of the actual developments in the USSR, since

"Having read anti-communist trash such as *Animal Farm*, they feel sufficiently well-equipped to become experts on the former USSR and to pontificate about the degeneration of the ideals of the Russian Revolution from every platform, and through every medium provided to them courtesy of the imperialist bourgeoisie". (*Lalkar*, September/October 1996)

## Political Bias In Education

Many study guides have been written with the intention of showing students exactly what it is they are supposed to think about the story, and consequently how to write model answers in their exams. These guides are far more candid than Orwell himself was about the anti-communist content of his work.

Contained in the latest edition of *York Notes on Animal Farm* is a succinct, bullet-pointed history of the Soviet Union, written without any untidy reference to the real thing and designed to fit neatly with Orwell's version of events, as presented in *Animal Farm*. It is interesting to note that in 1997, the anti-communist nature of Orwell's work is stressed over all else, far more than was the case 20 years ago. Older study guides are more apologetic, asking the reader not to take too literally the parallels with Soviet history. Obviously embarrassed by the blatant lies and unfounded allegations, they ask the reader to read the story as a fable about dictatorships 'in general'. In part, this may be due to the fact that the generation who lived through the War has become far remote from the classroom, but in the main, we can attribute this to the fact that, whatever the claims of the bourgeoisie, Cold War or no Cold War, the threat to imperialism that communism poses is greater than ever.

It is worth examining the text of this latest study guide, since it makes no bones about the real purpose of Orwell's novel, and the warped version of history that he wanted to spread among the workers:

"Communism was strongly influenced by the ideas of Karl Marx who believed that life could be explained in economic and social terms. The rich *capitalist* class exploited the lower *proletariat*. . . and this situation could only be reversed by revolution. Many of Marx's ideas lie behind Major's speech in Chapter I". (*York Notes, Animal Farm*, Wanda Opalinska: 1997, London, p.12)

The slant in the writing leaves no room for question. The science of Marxism is described as an 'idea', ie. something fabricated out of Marx's head with no particular reference to, or proof from, the concrete world. It is noticeable that the use of the past tense is designed to give the impression that capitalism no longer acts in this way.

"The Communist Party under the leadership of Lenin rose and took power.

"After the Revolution, Trotsky and Lenin established a communist society in the Soviet Union. . . All property, wealth and work was meant to be divided

equally between all individuals" (*ibid.*, p.12).

Having said that Lenin led the Revolution, Opalinska is quick to bring Trotsky onto the scene as an equal partner in leadership. This serves a triple purpose:

1) the names of Trotsky and Lenin are linked in a casual and natural way, as if they were of one mind and purpose - a linkage which is repeated at every opportunity throughout the bourgeois press and the education system, so that it becomes inculcated in the minds of all without the necessity of ever having to find out from a reliable source;

2) it leads quite naturally to the belief that Trotsky must have been the 'next in line' to the leadership of the Bolshevik party - the idea of 'succession' coming far easier to most bourgeois students than that of proletarian democracy;

3) by omitting his name, it denies Stalin any role in the Revolution or its immediate aftermath. By leaving out Lenin from the events of the Russian Revolution, Orwell is able to give credit for all Lenin's achievements and leadership to Trotsky, adding credence to the idea that it is Trotsky, rather than Stalin, who is the defender of Leninism.

Along with this is the statement that a communist society was established straight after the Revolution. Any cursory study of Marxism will show that Communism, which can be defined according to the maxim, 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need', is not possible until the lower stage of Socialism has first been accomplished, in which the state administers the bourgeois right 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work'. The Soviet Union succeeded in building the lower stage, but even this did not begin to take place until after 1928, when the New Economic Policy was abolished, and with it hostile, exploiting classes within society. Opalinska casts aspersions on the quality of this "communism" by then asserting that "property was *meant* to be divided", an insidious phrase, directed at nothing in particular, since no Communist would ever aver that "communism was established" overnight, or that property was divided equally the day after the Revolution. Nor is it the aim of communism to divide property. The Revolution's aim is to establish common ownership of the whole, not individual ownership of tiny parts. The reader, however, is supposed to glean from this that communism was established, but it was already quite rotten, since although property and work were supposed to be divided, in fact, they were not.

"After Lenin's death a struggle for power took place between Trotsky and Stalin. Trotsky, although favoured by Lenin, was ousted by Stalin who tried to

remove all trace of him - even removing Trotsky's image from certain photographs". (*ibid.*, p.12)

One is no longer surprised at the lack of substantiation offered for this staggering assertion, but it is interesting to note the continued stress on the idea of succession over democracy, no mention being made of the facts that:

1) Lenin and Trotsky were in bitterest opposition for almost their entire careers, not only before, but also after, the Revolution. After 1917, Trotsky and Lenin were in constant conflict over the question of the prospects for socialist construction, the question of trade unions, the question of war and peace and questions of party unity and discipline, all with their grave implications on the maintenance of the proletarian dictatorship in the USSR. The only change came after Lenin's death. At that time, Trotsky chose to *renew* his old attack on Leninism under the guise of defending Leninism (really Trotskyism) against 'Stalinism';

2) even if Lenin had ever expressed some kind of preference for Trotsky over Stalin, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union should surely not be chosen on such a basis. It is a fact detested, and therefore ignored, by all Trotskyists, that Stalin was elected to the position he held on several occasions and that he continued throughout his life to have the popular support of the Party and the people of the Soviet Union. Note also the inference of Stalin's "mad paranoia" in the allegations (again unsubstantiated) that he (probably personally!) went around trying to remove all traces of Trotsky's existence. It might be fairer to say that Trotsky blamed Stalin for the failure of all his predictions; the failure of the Soviet Union to collapse as soon as the World Revolution failed to materialise, the failure of the Soviet people to be duped by Trotsky's politics, the failure of the USSR to lose the war with Nazi Germany, and many more.

"The Soviet Union endured several famines as the result of Stalin's economic policies. (*ibid.*, p.13)

"Stalin's power increased so that he had a complete control over the Soviet Union. Napoleon uses a similar combination of terror and propaganda to become dictator.

"Anyone who was a threat to Stalin was executed or sentenced to hard labour in Siberia, often following a 'show trial'.

"Stalin insisted that all farms come under state control (ie. be collectivised). He also tried to modernise Soviet industry. . . Napoleon instructs the hens to

sell their eggs, but they smash them rather than let him sell them, in the same way that the peasants opposed collectivisation". (*ibid.*, p.13)

It is impossible to go into a detailed discussion of events so easily summarised by Opalinska. Suffice it to say that, whereas Trotsky was of the opinion that collectivisation should be forced on the peasantry as early as possible, the Soviet government in fact pursued a very successful policy of voluntary collectivisation. The wrecking and sabotage of the kulaks is presented as a perfectly natural response to such a vile infringement of their right to exploit. The use of language here is again interesting. The CPSU and the government are always ignored, only Stalin has any say over anything. Apparently, he only "tried" to modernise Soviet industry, but no example is given of how the USSR *failed* to modernise its industry. Orwell's symbolism of the hens and their eggs is more than an illustration of the kulaks' rebellion - it is designed to reinforce images of Stalin as some kind of barbaric baby-killer.

"In an effort to protect the Soviet Union from attack, Stalin negotiated with both Britain and Germany. His treaty with Germany was seen as worthless when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941". (*ibid.*, p.13)

Rather than acknowledge the fact that the USSR's ability to prepare itself for the attack it knew to be coming was the decisive factor in the outcome of the war, the inference seems to be that Stalin was both a coward and an idiot. It is a nice touch that the author also insinuates that Britain would never have done such a thing as go back on a treaty.

"At the Tehran conference in 1943, the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States of America presented themselves as allies. Within a few years, the Cold War had begun which placed the Soviet Union against the West. The pigs and men have dinner together but their friendship is destroyed when both sides are discovered to have cheated at cards". (*ibid.*, p.13)

Apart from seeming to blame Stalin for the Cold War, this whole paragraph, along with Orwell's symbolism, is very muddled. At the time *Animal Farm* was written, the Second World War was still going, so it was impossible for Orwell to have been referring to the Cold War that followed. The image of both sides cheating at cards serves several purposes. For a start, it means to imply that the Soviet Government is no better than our own, but it is also the ultimate symbol for one brought up as an English gentleman of dishonourable conduct - Orwell's inference being that it was somehow dishonourable of Stalin to enter into an alliance with any Imperialist powers, even if it was the only way to defeat fascism.

Opalinska's description of "The Soviet Union Under Stalin" deserves quoting in full, since it contains in a nutshell all the hysterical, ridiculous and contradictory abuses which both bourgeois and Trotskyite critics continue to hurl at Stalin ad nauseam, seeming to feel that repetition will make up for the lack of either substance or sense. Certainly, the overall effect is very strong, as long as one does not examine any of the parts too closely.

"Trotsky had been the strategist behind the Red Army's success in the Civil War and was seen as a brilliant speaker. He believed that for the Soviet Union to be safe, the revolution had to be spread throughout the world in a 'Permanent Revolution'. Stalin was far more reticent and had built up a network of support through his patronage of other posts and presented himself as a moderate. In opposition to Trotsky, he felt that the country's security lay in building up her defences, 'Socialism in one Country'. Stalin worked hard to undermine Trotsky and in 1927 the latter was forced to leave the Soviet Union. . . Stalin continually blamed him for any problems the country suffered. He was said to be working with the Soviet Union's enemies to overthrow the government.

"By 1928, Stalin dominated the government, building up a cult of personality. His rule seemed to have little in common with the ideas proposed by either Lenin or Marx. In addition, his own views and policies seemed inconsistent. In 1921 he had opposed Trotsky's plans to industrialise the country - only to do exactly that (with the Five Year Plans) when Trotsky was exiled. These Five Year Plans were extremely unpopular and set unrealistically high targets of production. Another policy to collectivise the farms met with equally strong opposition especially with the kulaks. Many burned their land and killed their animals rather than let the government take them. However, by the end of the late 1930s the Soviet Union emerged as a major industrial power - but the terms in human suffering was huge. In addition, Stalin frequently reinvented his history and that of the Soviet people. Past enemies were presented to the people as allies and vice versa. Propaganda was a frequently used tool which further emphasised the control Stalin had on Soviet life.

"Any opposition to Stalin was ruthlessly and brutally crushed. Those who were thought to oppose him were exiled or executed. In many cases 'show trials' were staged in which people confessed to 'crimes' that they had not committed. These purges decimated Soviet society and created a climate of fear.

"Stalin felt that the communist state was isolated and at risk from other powers. The Soviet Union joined the League of Nations in 1934 and tried to join an alliance against Hitler. This was unsuccessful and Stalin then signed a

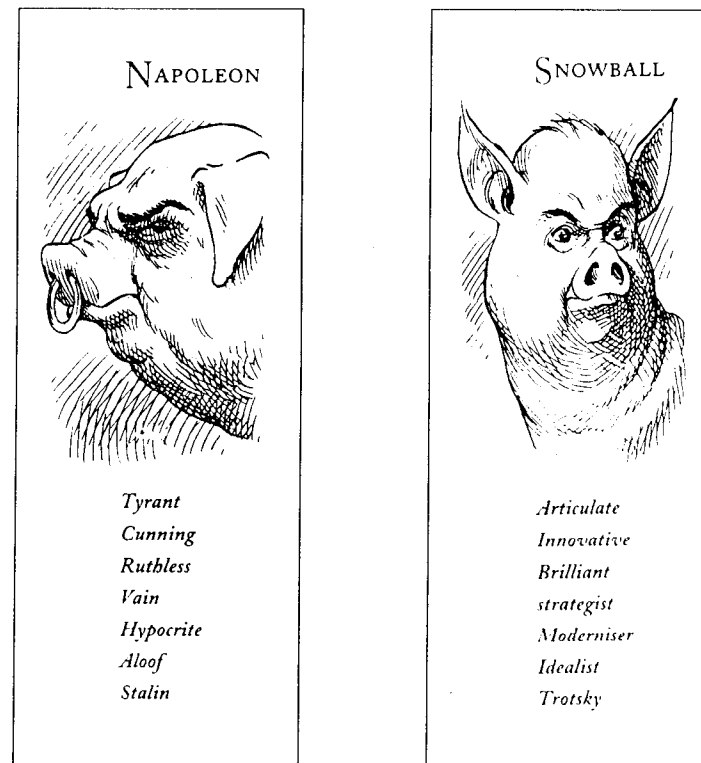
treaty with the German leader in 1939. The Nazi-Soviet pact gave the Soviet Union a chance to build up her defences, even though it seemed to go against all that Lenin and Trotsky had said. In 1941, the Germans invaded and the Russian people again suffered terribly. Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill met at the Tehran conference in 1943. It seemed that the Soviet Union, America and Britain were now allies". (*ibid.*, pp.10-11)

What is noticeable from this is the inherent contradiction contained in so many of Opalinska's (and Orwell's) allegations. In rejecting Trotsky's plans to industrialise at the expense of all else and far too early, Stalin was stupid and short-sighted. In industrialising later, Stalin was stealing Trotsky's idea (having none of his own, of course) and acting against the wishes of the people. Stalin merely "tried" to industrialise the USSR, his policies all met with opposition and caused great suffering, yet somehow the Soviet Union rose, as a result of these failed policies, from a war-torn, impoverished economy to a major world power in the space of less than 20 years. No explanation is given as to how this might have happened. No mention made of the popular support for industrialisation and collectivisation, the daily heroism of the workers or the soundness of economic policy on which the USSR's successes rested.

Anyone familiar with the history of the Civil War in Russia will be well aware that Trotsky, far from masterminding the successes of the Red Army, had to be removed from each front in succession after his strategies had proved to be detrimental to the army's success there. Only Trotsky was of the opinion that he was some kind of military genius. It was he, rather than Stalin, who was guilty of rewriting Soviet history. Opalinska maintains that Stalin rewrote Soviet history, but we are not told how; the Soviet people were controlled by propaganda, but no demonstration is given as to how this was accomplished; all opposition was brutally crushed and the people lived in a climate of fear, but no substantiation of these 'facts' is thought necessary. No reasons are found for the lack of resistance to such barbarism.

Finally, we have the generous, selfless and perfectly neutral bourgeois concern that Stalin was guilty of betraying "Lenin and Trotsky's" proletarian Revolution in signing the Nazi-Soviet pact. It is inferred that Stalin was to be blamed not only for signing this pact, but also for the suffering that ensued when Germany finally did invade; that somehow Stalin was to be blamed for the evil and devastation wrought by fascism. One cannot help wondering why the Soviet people fought at all to protect such a terrible monster and uphold such a feared and hated regime.

In case any student should still be unclear on the issue of Stalin versus Trotsky, we are provided with a drawing [see below] of the main characters and a list of key words associated with each. Napoleon is depicted as a massive, ugly boar, with a bullying expression and described as follows: *tyrant, cunning, ruthless, vain, hypocrite, aloof, Stalin*. Snowball is shown as a younger, earnest-looking pig, with an alert expression and the following attributes: *articulate, innovative, brilliant, strategist, moderniser, idealist, Trotsky*. Can any doubt remain as to the political bias with which young people are forced to study even such seemingly innocuous subjects as English Literature? Can any doubt remain as to the bankruptcy of the Trotskyite fraternity who have applauded this 'artist' with such consistency for the last 50 years?



## The Orwell Myth

Much space, in study guides and in examination papers, is devoted to Orwell himself. His credentials "to act as the voice of an entire generation", as Alan Brown puts it, are carefully established.

"Orwell was sociable and home-loving, believing in family life. . . Orwell was selfless, naturally mild and gentle. . . Orwell loved animals. . . Exaggeratedly perhaps, but significantly, one of his friends called him a 'saint'". (*Brodie Notes, Animal Farm*: Suffolk, 1978 pp. 12-13)

"His idea of himself [was] as the exposé of painful truths, which people for various reasons do not wish to look at; and. . . as a representative of the English moral conscience. . . He was an observer, keeping as fair-minded as possible about what he saw, remaining responsible to objective truth. . . Orwell always put great faith in objective truth. . . The writer, as Orwell sees him, especially the prose writer, is the guardian of simplicity, objectivity and straightforward fact, and so, in our age, he becomes the protector of the human spirit". (*York Notes, Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Robert Welch: Beirut, 1980, pp.7-8)

"In short, throughout his adult life and work, George Orwell remained a fiercely honest man, even with himself". (*Cole Notes, Animal Farm*: Toronto, 1982, p.5)

In his article on Orwell in Examinations, Alan Brown makes the following observations about the way that the Orwell myth is intricately bound up in the teaching of Orwell's texts;

"The 'Orwell' myth involves a type of canonisation. A version of the individual as embodiment of human values leads inevitably to his status as a 'trustworthy guide'. It is a curious rhetorical mixture: moral values of 'bravery', 'honesty', 'sympathy' are linked directly to criteria of 'objectivity' and 'straightforward fact'". (*Examining Orwell*, p.43)

The point of all this is that any hint that events are merely Orwell's point of view is taken out of the equation. By telling the reader that Orwell is neutral, a political point can be made:

"Basing his argument on personal experience and commonsense, but mostly on observed fact, Orwell comes to the conclusion that the socialism of his time was mostly unrealistic and irrelevant". (*York Notes, Animal Farm*, p.8)

As Brown says,

"Who can contradict 'commonsense', 'fact', 'experience'? . . . The total absence of doubt or qualification must incline [students] to swallow opinion and even bigotry as acceptable truth. . . the 'eternal' role of the artist as truth-teller is harnessed to a political function. Experience, common sense, realism and honesty are each facets of a total and manufactured personality. Taken together, they provide a platform from which political attitudes can be put across in education without suspicion of bias or indoctrination. Putting 'Orwell's' point of view (that of reason and decency) is not really putting a point of view at all. It is a way of seeing behind the transience of political conflict to the more basic truths of human nature and morality. . . Orwell as the representative voice of an age is shown to contain the differing and contradictory strands of his time. The conflicting elements achieve a precarious harmony in the 'Orwell' persona: socialist/critic of socialism, idealist/realist, subjective participant/objective observer. It is left to the figure of 'Orwell', finally, to resolve the great debates between left and right, to assert a middle way between ideologies and conflicting forces. . . Having dissolved the contradictions between 'communism' and 'fascism' in either a historical or theoretical form, the way is open for a socialism itself devoid of content. Orwell's socialism can be reduced to a Victorian value of 'concern' and charity towards others, to a moral subjectivism which calls for no more than a sentimental response. . . Socialism as moral piety is perfectly acceptable. . . but any attempt to conceive of society and subjectivity as susceptible to organised change must be perceived solely as 'threat'. Socialism is assimilated to fascism. . . the art of the satire, of common sense, of the 'Orwell' industry is to remind us of what we know already and to resign us to its inevitability. If political change is an illusion, we must derive our comfort from an aesthetics of constancy and inertia". (*Examining Orwell*, pp.46-7)

Turning to the book itself, one can see that the study guide is not a patch on the real thing. Orwell tries to back up some kind of bizarre theory based on a mixture of Trotskyism and the 'human nature' argument to show us why Revolutions in general and the Russian Revolution in particular, cannot work. Major, the pig who is supposed to represent Marx, has a dream which he passes on to the animals as his dying manifesto:

"Man is the only real enemy we have. Remove man from the scene, and the root cause of hunger and overwork is abolished for ever. . . No argument must lead you astray. Never listen when they tell you that Man and the animals have



a common interest, and that the prosperity of one is the prosperity of the others. It is all lies". (*Animal Farm*, George Orwell: Harmondsworth, 1989, pp4-5)

No-one in their right mind could equate the theories of Marx with this babble. Of course man and animals have a common interest. Orwell deliberately sets out to put Marxism in an absurd light by equating it with Major's nonsense. Marxism is presented as a theory of naive idealism, which in practice leads to cynical tyranny. The main tenet of *Animal Farm*, though, seems to be that humans are no better than animals; that 'human nature' decides all. Some people are born to rule and others to be taken advantage of; all efforts to change the system will only lead to something worse, so we should be grateful for what we have. Unfortunately for Orwell, there is a blindingly obvious flaw in the plan. He uses different species to represent the different classes, but while it may be true that some animals are cleverer, quicker, stronger than others, and naturally inclined to prey on those that are weaker, the class structure of our society is a reflection of no such natural difference. Mankind is one species. Any attempt to justify the class divisions of society by saying that the ruling class rule because they are more intelligent and better suited to it, whilst the poor are simply stupid or lazy, is the worst kind of reactionary garbage, worthy of any nazi. Stephen Sedley remarks that,

"Orwell's argument is pitched at a different level: it is that socialism in whatever form offers the common people no more hope than capitalism; that it will be first betrayed and then held to ransom by those forces which human beings have in common with beasts; and that the inefficient and occasionally benign rule of capitalism, which at least keeps the beasts in check, is a lesser evil. That proposition is Orwell's alpha and his omega". (*An Immodest Proposal: 'Animal Farm'*, Stephen Sedley; *Inside The Myth*, p158)

What neither Orwell or Sedley seem to remember is that it is not merely capitalism which we are dealing with, but imperialism. If it appears to Orwell that capitalism in Britain is occasionally benign, this is because a certain section of the workers in this country have been provided for from the super-profits extracted so brutally from the oppressed nations. He himself worked for the imperial police in Burma and must have known exactly how 'benign' British rule was to the colonial peoples.

Much is made by Trotskyites and bourgeois press alike of Orwell's self-proclaimed socialism. Where, though, is the evidence for any such thing? Can one become a socialist without ever having read or understood any of the basic tenets of socialism? The characteristic that shows most plainly in Orwell's

work is his arrogance. Knowing nothing of what was going on in Spain, Orwell had no hesitation in pronouncing on military and political matters there. Knowing nothing about socialism, Orwell felt no bar on criticising all who 'betrayed' that socialism. Having admitted, "I have never visited Russia and my knowledge of it consists only of what can be learned by reading books and newspapers" (*The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, Vol. 3: Harmondsworth, 1970, p.457), he went on to write *Animal Farm* with all the conviction of one fully versant in all the details of the Revolution. In his preface to the Ukrainian edition, Orwell draws a picture of English political life in the late 40s which not only exposes his ignorance and lack of experience in matters of politics, but also his astounding, truly upper-class, public school arrogance. Having blamed the naive notions of the British public on the relative liberality of English political life, he goes on to say:

"Yet one must remember that England is not completely democratic. It is also a capitalist country with great class privileges and (even now, after a war that has tended to equalise everybody) with great differences in wealth. But nevertheless it is a country in which people have lived together for several hundred years without knowing civil war, in which the laws are relatively just and official news and statistics can almost invariably be believed, and, last but not least, in which to hold and to voice minority views does not involve any mortal danger. In such an atmosphere the man in the street has no real understanding of things like concentration camps, mass deportations, arrests without trial, press censorship etc. Everything he reads about a country like the USSR is automatically translated into English terms, and he quite innocently accepts the lies of totalitarian propaganda". (*The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, p. 458)

Orwell quite clearly felt that the British public were too stupid to understand about Russia what he was qualified to pronounce on only from his reading of the bourgeois press! This from a man who obviously had no understanding of the society he himself lived in and certainly no understanding of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, which he pretended to defend.

It is worth noting here that Orwell's understanding of fascism and the threat it posed during the 30s was entirely negligible, as is pointed out by Bill Alexander in his article *George Orwell and Spain*:

"Orwell went to Spain largely ignorant of the background, situation and the forces involved. He admits 'when I came to Spain I was not only uninterested in the political situation but unaware of it.' Unlike many European intellectuals



he had not understood the essential clash between liberty and fascism. Hitler's brutal destruction of democracy in Germany and even Mosley's violence against opponents in Britain in 1934 must have passed him by. Crick, his biographer, could write that before March 1936, when Orwell saw Mosley's black-shirts beating up questioners at a Barnsley meeting, 'there is no indication before this incident of any great concern in Orwell with the nature and spread of fascism. . .

"Orwell had no understanding of the world-wide significance of the struggle in Spain, he knew little of the national efforts of the Popular Front government to achieve a united front against fascism, he had never seen the Republican flag, he did not agree with the actions of the POUM - he took a rifle in the role of an outsider, a journalist looking for experiences to figure in a future book. . .

"His aloofness from the common spirit of Popular Front Spain is strikingly exposed in his cynical dismissal of the fact that wounded soldiers demanded to return to the front. It happened! Without this spirit the Republican forces, outnumbered and outgunned, could not have fought on for eighteen more months after Orwell had gone home. Resistance to Franco would not have persisted despite forty years of terror and repression following his victory. . .

"The fundamental reason for Orwell's attitude to the war - on top of his British upper-class arrogance and overriding personal objective to write a book - was his lack of understanding of anti-fascist feeling. He had visited, with an eye to a future book, the down-and-outs in London. Commissioned to write a book, he had briefly visited the distressed industrial areas of the North of England. But there was no sense of identification with the men and women caught in the capitalist crisis - no sense of 'there but for my family background go I.' The horrors of fascism in Italy and Germany do not appear to have made him angry, emotionally concerned to do something. This lack of deep feeling, almost one of neutrality, shows itself throughout his writing. . . Orwell feels no anger at the man who wounds him - indeed wishes to congratulate him on his good shooting. He is certainly not concerned at his own absence from the battle line. Orwell saw the war as a game, material for a book". (*Inside The Myth*, ed. Christopher Norris: London, 1984, pp.85-97)

Orwell's lack of understanding of politics, combined with his rabid anti-communism, meant that he was trying to get *Animal Farm* published in 1943, just as the future of humanity was being decided and the USSR was sacrificing all at Stalingrad. Publisher after publisher rejected it, until the war ended and

the book's usefulness as a tool in the coming Cold War was recognised. Writing in *The Guardian* in August 1995, Stuart Jeffries says that although

"many of those who read the book were right-wingers eager for a novel which appeared to show an ex-socialist recanting his beliefs. . . the book was chiefly aimed at the faithful, those who believed that the Soviet Union was the way and the truth". (*An Arable Parable*, Stuart Jeffries: *The Guardian*, 9 August 1995)

## Orwell the State Informer

As if more proof were needed of Orwell's anti-communist credentials, it was revealed in 1996 that in 1949, Orwell offered to provide a secret Foreign Office Propaganda Unit linked to the intelligence services with the names of writers who could be trusted to write anti-communist propaganda, and also with the names of writers and journalists whom he regarded as being 'crypto-communist' and 'fellow-travellers'. This unit had been set up by the Attlee government in response to the "*developing communist threat to the whole fabric of Western civilisation*". Well-known writers, such as Bertrand Russell, Stephen Spender and Arthur Koestler were employed to disseminate misinformation about the USSR, the East European Peoples' Democracies and the communist Parties of Western Europe. Papers release also show that the IRD (Information Research Department) actively promoted the foreign language publication of *Animal Farm* in places such as Saudi Arabia, where anti-imperialist activity was threatening the oil revenues of imperialism. Thus we can see that

"What attracted the bourgeoisie to this third-rate writer was not his pretended support for the ideals of the October Revolution, but his real driving hatred for the ideals of communism. Had Orwell's characterisation of Stalin, and the CPSU that he led, corresponded to the truth, that would have made Stalin the darling of the imperialist bourgeoisie; had there been a steady erosion of revolutionary principles and had the dictatorship really collapsed into the dictatorship of a cynical few, Stalin's Russia would have been warmly embraced to the point of suffocation by imperialism". (*Lalkar*, September/October 1996)

It was precisely because Stalin's USSR did *not* conform to the picture painted by Orwell that it posed such a threat to imperialism, and this in turn explains the bourgeoisie's joyful embrace of Orwell's tawdry novels and their continued place as compulsory reading for students the world over. It is the duty of all Marxist-Leninists to refute the slanders contained in Orwell's work

and to arm our young people with the knowledge they need to defend the Soviet Union both in and out of the classroom. Continuing in the vein pioneered by Trotsky of attacking the Revolution from the Left, showing the same all-pervading contempt for ordinary people and demonstrating the same lack of faith in the ability of the working class to free itself, Orwell has served imperialism just as well as many more openly reactionary writers, and has more than earned the honours that have been heaped upon him.

