The philosopher, social scientist, historian and revolutionary, Karl Marx, is without a doubt the most influential socialist thinker to emerge in the 19th century. Although he was largely ignored by scholars in his own lifetime, his social, economic and political ideas gained rapid acceptance in the socialist movement after his death in 1883. Until quite recently almost half the population of the world lived under regimes that claim to be Marxist. This very success, however, has meant that the original ideas of Marx have often been modified and his meanings adapted to a great variety of political circumstances. In addition, the fact that Marx delayed publication of many of his writings meant that is been only recently that scholars had the opportunity to appreciate Marx's intellectual stature.

Karl Heinrich Marx was born into a comfortable middle-class home in Trier on the river Moselle in Germany on May 5, 1818. He came from a long line of rabbis on both sides of his family and his father, a man who knew Voltaire and Lessing by heart, had agreed to baptism as a Protestant so that he would not lose his job as one of the most respected lawyers in Trier. At the age of seventeen, Marx enrolled in the Faculty of Law at the University of Bonn. At Bonn he became engaged to Jenny von Westphalen, the daughter of Baron von Westphalen, a prominent member of Trier society, and man responsible for interesting Marx in Romantic literature and Saint-Simonian politics. The following year Marx's father sent him to the more serious University of Berlin where he remained four years, at which time he abandoned his romanticism for the Hegelianism which ruled in Berlin at the time.

Marx became a member of the Young Hegelian movement. This group, which included the theologians Bruno Bauer and David Friedrich Strauss, produced a radical critique of Christianity and, by implication, the liberal opposition to the Prussian autocracy. Finding a university career closed by the Prussian government, Marx moved into journalism and, in October 1842, became editor, in Cologne, of the influential *Rheinische Zeitung*, a liberal newspaper backed by industrialists. Marx's articles, particularly those on economic questions, forced the Prussian government to close the paper. Marx then emigrated to France.
Arriving in Paris at the end of 1843, Marx rapidly made contact with organized groups of émigré German workers and with various sects of French socialists. He also edited the short-lived *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* which was intended to bridge French socialism and the German radical Hegelians. During his first few months in Paris, Marx became a communist and set down his views in a series of writings known as the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), which remained unpublished until the 1930s. In the *Manuscripts*, Marx outlined a humanist conception of communism, influenced by the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach and based on a contrast between the alienated nature of labor under capitalism and a communist society in which human beings freely developed their nature in cooperative production. It was also in Paris that Marx developed his lifelong partnership with Friedrich Engels (1820-1895).

Marx was expelled from Paris at the end of 1844 and with Engels, moved to Brussels where he remained for the next three years, visiting England where Engels' family had cotton spinning interests in Manchester. While in Brussels Marx devoted himself to an intensive study of history and elaborated what came to be known as the materialist conception of history. This he developed in a manuscript (published posthumously as *The German Ideology*), of which the basic thesis was that "the nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production." Marx traced the history of the various modes of production and predicted the collapse of the present one -- industrial capitalism -- and its replacement by communism.

At the same time Marx was composing *The German Ideology*, he also wrote a polemic (*The Poverty of Philosophy*) against the idealistic socialism of P. J. Proudhon (1809-1865). He also joined the Communist League. This was an organization of German émigré workers with its center in London of which Marx and Engels became the major theoreticians. At a conference of the League in London at the end of 1847 Marx and Engels were commissioned to write a succinct declaration of their position. Scarcely was *The Communist Manifesto* published than the 1848 wave of revolutions broke out in Europe.

Early in 1848 Marx moved back to Paris when a revolution first broke out and onto Germany where he founded, again in Cologne, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. The paper supported a radical democratic line against the Prussian autocracy and Marx devoted his main energies to its editorship since the Communist League had been virtually disbanded. Marx's paper was suppressed and he sought refuge in London in May 1849 to begin the "long, sleepless night of exile" that was to last for the rest of his life.

Settling in London, Marx was optimistic about the imminence of a new revolutionary outbreak in Europe. He rejoined the Communist League and wrote two lengthy pamphlets on the 1848 revolution in France and its aftermath, *The Class Struggles in France* and *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. He was soon convinced that "a new revolution is possible only in consequence
of a new crisis" and then devoted himself to the study of political economy in order to determine
the causes and conditions of this crisis.

During the first half of the 1850s the Marx family lived in poverty in a
three room flat in the Soho quarter of London. Marx and Jenny already
had four children and two more were to follow. Of these only three
survived. Marx's major source of income at this time was Engels who was
trying a steadily increasing income from the family business in
Manchester. This was supplemented by weekly articles written as a
foreign correspondent for the New York Daily Tribune.

Marx's major work on political economy made slow progress. By 1857 he
had produced a gigantic 800 page manuscript on capital, landed property,
wage labor, the state, foreign trade and the world market. The Grundrisse
(or Outlines) was not published until 1941. In the early 1860s he broke off his work to compose
three large volumes, Theories of Surplus Value, which discussed the theoreticians of political
economy, particularly Adam Smith and David Ricardo. It was not until 1867 that Marx was able
to publish the first results of his work in volume I of Capital, a work which analyzed the
capitalist process of production. In Capital, Marx elaborated his version of the labor theory value
and his conception of surplus value and exploitation which would ultimately lead to a falling rate
of profit in the collapse of industrial capitalism. Volumes II and III were finished during the
1860s but Marx worked on the manuscripts for the rest of his life and they were published
posthumously by Engels.

One reason why Marx was so slow to publish Capital was that
he was devoting his time and energy to the First International,
to whose General Council he was elected at its inception in
1864. He was particularly active in preparing for the annual
Congresses of the International and leading the struggle against
the anarchist wing led by Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876).
Although Marx won this contest, the transfer of the seat of the
General Council from London to New York in 1872, which
Marx supported, led to the decline of the International. The
most important political event during the existence of the
International was the Paris Commune of 1871 when the
citizens of Paris rebelled against their government and held the
city for two months. On the bloody suppression of this
rebellion, Marx wrote one of his most famous pamphlets, The Civil War in France, an
enthusiastic defense of the Commune.

During the last decade of his life, Marx's health declined and he was incapable of sustained effort
that had so characterized his previous work. He did manage to comment substantially on
contemporary politics, particularly in Germany and Russia. In Germany, he opposed in his
Critique of the Gotha Programme, the tendency of his followers Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826-
1900) and August Bebel (1840-1913) to compromise with state socialism of Lasalle in the
interests of a united socialist party. In his correspondence with Vera Zasulich Marx contemplated
the possibility of Russia's bypassing the capitalist stage of development and building communism on the basis of the common ownership of land characteristic of the village mir.

Marx’s health did not improve. He traveled to European spas and even to Algeria in search of recuperation. The deaths of his eldest daughter and his wife clouded the last years of his life. Marx died March 14, 1883 and was buried at Highgate Cemetery in North London. His collaborator and close friend Friedrich Engels delivered the following eulogy three days later:

*On the 14th of March, at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest living thinker ceased to think. He had been left alone for scarcely two minutes, and when we came back we found him in his armchair, peacefully gone to sleep -- but for ever.*

An immeasurable loss has been sustained both by the militant proletariat of Europe and America, and by historical science, in the death of this man. The gap that has been left by the departure of this mighty spirit will soon enough make itself felt.

*Just as Darwin discovered the law of development or organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means, and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case.*

*But that is not all. Marx also discovered the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist mode of production, and the bourgeois society that this mode of production has created. The discovery of surplus value suddenly threw light on the problem, in trying to solve which all previous investigations, of both bourgeois economists and socialist critics, had been groping in the dark.*

*Two such discoveries would be enough for one lifetime. Happy the man to whom it is granted to make even one such discovery. But in every single field which Marx investigated -- and he investigated very many fields, none of them superficially -- in every field, even in that of mathematics, he made independent discoveries.*

*Such was the man of science. But this was not even half the man. Science was for Marx a historically dynamic, revolutionary force. However great the joy with which he welcomed a new discovery in some theoretical science whose practical application perhaps it was as yet quite*
impossible to envisage, he experienced quite another kind of joy when the discovery involved immediate revolutionary changes in industry, and in historical development in general. For example, he followed closely the development of the discoveries made in the field of electricity and recently those of Marcel Deprez.

For Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity and a success such as few could rival. His work on the first Rheinische Zeitung (1842), the Paris Vorwarts (1844), the Deutsche Brusseler Zeitung (1847), the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (1848-49), the New York Tribune (1852-61), and, in addition to these, a host of militant pamphlets, work in organisations in Paris, Brussels and London, and finally, crowning all, the formation of the great International Working Men's Association -- this was indeed an achievement of which its founder might well have been proud even if he had done nothing else.

And, consequently, Marx was the best hated and most calumniated man of his time. Governments, both absolutist and republican, deported him from their territories. Bourgeois, whether conservative or ultra-democratic, vied with one another in heaping slanders upon him. All this he brushed aside as though it were a cobweb, ignoring it, answering only when extreme necessity compelled him. And he died beloved, revered and mourned by millions of revolutionary fellow workers -- from the mines of Siberia to California, in all parts of Europe and America -- and I make bold to say that, though he may have had many opponents, he had hardly one personal enemy.

His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work.

Marx’s contribution to our understanding of society has been enormous. His thought is not the comprehensive system evolved by some of his followers under the name of dialectical materialism. The very dialectical nature of his approach meant that it was usually tentative and open-ended. There was also the tension between Marx the political activist and Marx the student of political economy. Many of his expectations about the future course of the revolutionary movement have, so far, failed to materialize. However, his stress on the economic factor in society and his analysis of the class structure in class conflict have had an enormous influence on history, sociology, and study of human culture.
Early Life

Born on April 10, 1870 this son of a Russian nobleman was to have a profound effect on the future of Russia and, indeed, the world. His father had been the son of a serf who had risen to post of inspector of schools in Simbirsk. While his mother was the daughter of land owning physician.

In school he proved himself to be very bright though he suffered alienation because of it. However, he excelled in his studies. He also enjoyed reading and writings of Goethe and Turgenev would affect him for the rest of his life.

Two major tragedies occurred which had an acute effect on the young Lenin (then Ulyanov). In 1886 his father died from a cerebral haemorrhage, the following year his brother, Alexander, was hung for plotting to assassinate Tsar Alexander III. Lenin renounced religion and the political system. Added to this he was the brother of dead revolutionary and found many doors closed to him. He finally managed to be accepted in a Kazan University where he studied law. This was to be shortlived as he was expelled for attending a peaceful protest some three months later. He was ostracised from the academic world. He studied the law on his own and passed the exam, coming first in a class of 124 in 1891.

Rise to Power

He moved to St. Petersburg in 1893 where he practised law. While there he began developing a Marxist underground movement. He grouped members into six member cells. By this means industrial conditions were investigated, statistics compiled and pamphlets written. It was also through these groups that he met his future wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, who he married in 1898.

He travelled to Switzerland to meet like minded Social Democrats in 1895. While there he talked with Georgi Plekhanov. They argued over the means of bringing about change
in Russia. Plekhanov wanted to include the liberal middle class; Lenin favoured the rise of the proletariat. This disagreement led to the eventual split of the Social Democratic party into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks.

When Lenin returned to Russia he carried with him illegal pamphlets, he wanted to start up a revolutionary paper. On the eve of its publication he and other leaders were arrested. He served fifteen months in prison. After this term he was exiled to Siberia and it was there that he and Krupskaya were married. Having finished their period of exile in 1900 they left for Switzerland where they finally managed to establish their paper, Iskra (Spark). During his years in Switzerland he rose to a position of power in the Social Democratic party. His uncompromising views were a core cause for the split in the party.

The 1905 St. Petersburg Massacre spurred Lenin to advocate violent action. The Massacre itself occurred when Cossacks fired on peaceful protesters led by Father Georgi Gapon. This event led to several uprisings in Russia. Lenin returned to Russia for two years but the promised revolution did not happen as the Tsar made enough concessions to mollify the people. Lenin went abroad again.

1917 was to finally see the revolution in Russia. In fact two revolutions occurred in this year. In March steelworkers in St. Petersbourg went on strike. It grew until thousands of people lined the streets. The Tsar’s power collapsed and the Duma, led by Alexander Kerensky, took power. Lenin made a deal with the Germans; if they could get him safely back to Russia, he would take power and pull Russia out of the war. Kerensky was to fall over this same issue. He refused to take Russia out a war in which they were suffering severe losses and causing brutal hardship at home. Lenin came to power in October after a nearly bloodless coup.

Lenin in Power

At age forty seven Vladimir Ilich Lenin was named president of the Society of People’s Commissars (Communist Party). The problems of the new government were enormous. The war with Germany was ended immediately (his battle cry had been “Bread not War”). Though Russia lost the bread basket of the Ukraine to Germany this was soon regained when Germany was ultimately defeated in the war. Land was redistributed, some as collective farms. Factories, mines, banks and utilities were all taken over by the state. The Russian Orthodox Church was disestablished.

There was opposition and this led to a civil war in 1918 between the Mensheviks (Whites) and the Bolsheviks (Reds). Despite being supported by Britain and the U.S.A. the whites were defeated after a bitter struggle.

From 1919 to 1921 famine and typhus ravaged Russia and left over 27 million people dead. To counter these disasters Lenin put into effect the New Economic Plan. This plan embraced some capital ideas (limited private industry) in order to revitalise the flagging economy. However he was never to see the full effect of his measures
Decline and Death

In May 1922 Lenin suffered the first of a series of strokes, less than a year later he suffered a second one. In his two remaining years he tried correct some of the excesses of the regime. He saw that it would be necessary to learn coexistence with capitalist countries and eliminate the inefficiency of his bureaucracy. He also tried to ensure that Trotsky and not Stalin succeeded him. In this endeavour he failed. Stalin was far too clever and astute even for Lenin. 1923 saw him decline further as he had another stroke which left him paralysed and speechless. He never fully recovered and died of a cerebral haemorrhage on January 21, 1924.
Leon Trotsky

1879-1940

Russian Jewish Revolutionary leader and Soviet politician, a close friend of Lenin. Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution' became unpopular after Stalin had gained power in the Soviet Union. Trotsky was assassinated by one of Stalin's agents. Although Trotsky later condemned the Red Terror, he was, perhaps, one of its first proponents.

"Things are not going well. The Greek soldiers landed on the shores of Crimea, according to the reports of Allied diplomats and newspapermen, were mounted on Crimean donkeys, but the donkeys were not able to arrive in time at the Perekop Isthmus. Things are not going well. Evidently even donkeys have begun to shake off the imperialistic harness." (from Trotsky's speech on April 1919)

Lev Davidovich Bronstein (Leon Trotsky) was born in Yanovka, Ukraine, the son of an illiterate Jewish farmer. Trotsky's father, David Bronshtein, had bought land near the small town of Bobrinets, and eventually he became a substantial landowner. During the revolution he lost his estate, but Trotsky set him up as the manager of a flour mill near Moscow. Trotsky's mother, Anna, came from Odessa, where she had received a modest education. "We were not deprived, except of life's generosity and tenderness", Trotsky later said. His mother loved to read to her eight children and encouraged them to acquire a good education. She died in 1910. Only Lev, two sisters and a brother survived beyond childhood. After Trotsky was deported in 1929, his brother Alexander publicly disowned him, but he was shot in 1938. Liza, Trotsky's elder sister, died in 1924. Trotsky's younger sister Olga married an influential Bolshevik leader, Lev Kamenev, but she was shot in 1941. Her two young sons were shot in 1936.

After attending a Jewish primary school, Trotsky studied at a state school in Odessa. He was a very good student, who especially loved mathematics, but was expelled for a year when he fell foul of the French teacher. "I can hardly think of a single teacher whom I might remember with affection", he recalled.
Trotsky joined in 1896 the Social Democrats. Two years later he was arrested as a Marxist and exiled to Siberia. During this period he became interested in freemasonry. In 1902 he escaped and reached England. With him he carried a passport that used the name of a jailer in Odessa's prison, Trotsky.

In London Trotsky met Lenin and other Russian Revolutionary thinkers and collaborated in publication their journal of *Iskra* (The Spark). When the party split in 1903, and Trotsky broke with Lenin, he gained position as a leader of the Menshevik wing of the Social Democratic party, as opposed to the Bolshevik one under Lenin, prophesying that Leninist theory would result in a one-man dictatorship. In the abortive 1905 revolution Trotsky organized the first revolutionary Soviet council in St. Petersburg and was appointed president of the Soviet. About this time he propounded the doctrine of 'permanent revolution,' which implied that revolution in one country must be followed by revolutions in other countries, eventually throughout the world. After the uprising ended he was again exiled to Siberia, and managed once more escape.

"Some time before the war the Austro-Hungarian government received a sharp note from St Petersburg, demanding that a stop be put to the activities of the Russian political emigrants in Vienna. The Minister of the Interior received the note and shook with laughter: 'Who do they think is going to start a revolution in Russia - perhaps that Herr Trotsky from the Café Central?'' (from *Wit as a Weapon* by Egon Larsen, 1980)

Trotsky worked then as journalist in Vienna, and become editor of *Pravda* (truth). With the outbreak of World War I he moved to Zürich in 1914 and then to Germany, where he was imprisoned for opposing the war. During World War I Trotsky led the internationalist wing of the Mensheviks. He denounced Russia's involvement in the war. In 1915 Trotsky moved to Paris, editing the socialist weekly *Nashe Slovo*, but he was expelled from France as a result of his pacifist propaganda. After a short stay in New York as the editor of *Novy Mir*, Trotsky returned to Russia in 1917. He joined the Bosheviks in St. Petersburg and established the magazine *Vperied* (Forward). Trotsky was arrested for a short time by Aleksandr Feodorovich Kerenski's provisional government, but after release he played a major role in the October Revolution.

At the conference in Brest-Litovsk in 1918 Trotsky was leader of the Russian delegate. From 1919 to 1927 he was a member of Politburo. Trotsky was made the Russian Civil War commissar for war (1918-25) and created in this post the Red army. For two and half years, as he explained in *My Life*, he lived in his heavy armored train with two engines, travelling from one front to another. The Red army grew from 800,000 to 3,000,000, and fought on sixteen fronts simultaneously. With his speeches Trotsky encouraged villagers, troops, his illiterate audience who was cut off from the vital news. "These spring months become the decisive months in the history of Europe. At the same time this spring will decide definitely the fate of the bourgeois and rich peasant, anti-Soviet Russia."

In 1921-22 the last remnants of non-Communist socialist parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, were abolished. In May 1922 Lenin suffered a stroke which left him partly paralyzed, in early 1923 another took away his speech and in January 1924 he died. After Lenin's death, among the aspiring successors, Stalin and Trotsky were the leading figures. In his writings Trotsky stressed the peculiarities of the Russian economic and social development. "The insignificance of the Russian cities, which more than anything else promoted the development of an Asian state, also made impossible a Reformation - that is, a replacement of the feudal-
bureaucratic orthodoxy by some sort of modernized kind of Christianity adapted to the demands of a bourgeois society. The struggle against the state church did not go farther than the creation of peasant sects, the faction of the Old Believers being the most powerful among them." (from The History of the Russian Revolution, 1931-33) Russia, lacking the mature capitalist development, could go straight to a dictatorship of the proletariat, but Trotsky believed that it was impossible to build socialism in one country alone. In this he disagreed fatally with Stalin.

"The dictatorship of the Communist Party is maintained by recourse to every form of violence." (from Terrorism and Communism, 1924)

Although Lenin had rejected Stalin as his successor, Stalin strengthened his position. He inclined towards concentrating on the development of a Communist order in Russia, while Trotsky was dedicated to the belief that Russia should catalyze worldwide Communist revolution. Stalin believed that socialism in one country was possible. A schism broke out in Communist ranks. Trotsky's Left Opposition tried to mobilize the Moscow proletariat, but this failed due to the workers' indifference. The failure proved that he was no longer a charismatic mass leader. Trotsky's influence began to decline and Stalin removed him from the commissariat for war.

From 1925 to 1926 Trotsky held relatively minor administrative post, before he was ousted from the party by Stalin. In 1927 Trotsky was exiled to Alma Ata, in Kazakstan, where he devoted himself to writing his memoirs and bitter pamphlets. The 'combined opposition' of Trotsky, Grigory Zinoviev, and Lev Kamenev was unsuccessful. In 1929 Trotsky was totally expelled from the Soviet Union. With this stroke Stalin became the sole and undisputable leader of the Communist Party, and therefore of the Soviet Union.

During the following years Trotsky lived in Turkey (1929-33), France (1933-35), Norway (1935-36), and finally found asylum in Mexico, where he was invited by the socialist artist Diego Rivera (1886-1957). On the death of his elder son Lev Sedov in 1934, Trotsky wrote: "Yagoda [head of the security organs] caused the premature death of one of my daughters, and drove the other to suicide. He arrested my two sons-in-law who simply disappeared without a trace. The GPU arrested my younger son, Sergei... and he then disappeared." In Mexico Trotsky continued his attack on Stalin's leadership and the 'degeneration' of the political system in the Soviet Union. Trotsky regarded the dictatorship he and Lenin had established as justified because it was exercised in the interest of the proletariat, and so it was quite different from Stalin's dictatorship, because the latter acted only in its own interests. In the United States Trotskyism enjoyed support of influential critics and intellectuals, some of whom were associated with the literary and political journal the Partisan Review.

Trotsky's Literature and Revolution (1924), a collection of articles, was his most important contribution to literature criticism. He had sympathy for Russian Futurism and praises Mayakovsky for placing his art at the service of the Revolution. According to Trotsky, "art, it is said, is not a mirror, but a hammer: it does not reflect, it shapes. But at present even the handling of a hammer is taught with the help of a mirror, a sensitive film which records all the movement... The deeper literature is, and the more it is imbued with the desire to shape life, the more significantly and dynamically will it be able to 'picture life...'" Trotsky did not believe that it is possible to create genuine proletarian art at his time. In the 1920s the Bolshevik regime exercised a relatively tolerant cultural policy, and allowed experimentation, if it did not criticize.
the Party or the Revolution. Trotsky did not reject Freud who was blacklisted in the Soviet Union. He showed some understanding of the Formalist school in its attempt to seek criteria for classification and valuation, but emphasized that the verbal art do not end with the word. "Artistic creation is always a complicated turning inside out of old forms, under the influence of new stimuli which originate outside art. In this large sense of the word, art is a handmaiden. It is not a disembodied element feeding on itself, but a function of social man indissolubly tied to his life and environment." Later Formalism became - in the hands of Stalinist censors - a swearword, which ended all kinds of experiments.

In 1938 Trotsky and his followers founded the Fourth International. During the Great Purge (1934-38), a wave of terror by which Stalin aimed at eliminating the opposition, Trotsky was accused of espionage. A supposed family friend, Jacques van den Dreschd, wounded Trotsky mortally on August 21, 1940 with an ice pick. "The vengeance of history is more terrible than the vengeance of the most powerful General Secretary." (from Stalin, 1946)
Joseph Stalin

1879-1953

Russian political leader, who was the undisputed leader of the USSR from 1929 until his death. He helped to convert communism in the USSR from an egalitarian, revolutionary movement into an authoritarian, bureaucratic governmental system. He helped to turn Russia into a great industrial nation, to defeat Hitler in World War II, and, after the war, to establish Communist regimes throughout eastern Europe. At the same time, however, he institutionalized terror and was responsible for the death and deprivation of millions of people.

One of the towering figures in world politics in his time, he still remains one of the least known, primarily because of the traditional secrecy surrounding Soviet leaders. His personality and rule were—and still are—highly controversial, opinion ranging from complete, unbridled adulation expressed in the official Soviet press of his day to widespread denunciation as a pathological despot by many in the Western world.

Early Years

Stalin, whose original name was Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, was born on Dec. 21, 1879 (all dates in New Style), in the Caucasian town of Gori, Georgia. He was the only one of four children to survive infancy. His father, Vissarion Dzhugashvili, an unsuccessful cobbler, entered a factory in Tiflis, took to drink, and died in 1890 from wounds received in a brawl. However, his mother, Yekaterina, kept the family together by taking in washing and sewing, hiring out for housework, and nursing young Joseph through various sicknesses including smallpox and septicemia, which left his left arm slightly crippled for life. An illiterate peasant girl herself, Yekaterina was deeply religious, puritanical, ambitious, and intent on securing for her son training for the priesthood, one of the few careers in which the non-Russian Georgian poor might easily rise to higher station. He was enrolled in the local Orthodox parochial school in Gori in 1888.

Obviously able, he won a free scholarship in 1894 to the Orthodox theological seminary in Tiflis. There he succumbed to the radicalism traditional among the students of the school and in his fourth year joined Mesame Dasi, a secret group espousing Georgian nationalism and socialism. Expelled from the seminary in May 1899, when he was about to graduate, he first tried tutoring and then clerical work at the Tiflis Observatory. But he abandoned his clerical job in May 1901,
when he was about to be arrested. Although he came to reject his church training, it left a mark
on his style, which tended toward the liturgical and was characterized by dry, categorical
assertion.

The Russian revolution of 1905 speeded his rise to local prominence and marked his entrance
into the fringes of the national movement. In 1905 he served as party organizer in Tiflis and as
coeditor of the Tiflis-based Caucasian Workers' Newsheet. For the first time his articles were
readily identifiable by their exegetical style and rabid defense of Bolshevism. Dzhugashvili also
helped to organize robberies of government transports in Georgia, providing the Bolsheviks with
badly needed funds. In 1907 he shifted his base to Baku, where the exploited workers in the oil
industry provided the Bolsheviks with their most extensive support in all of the Caucasus. For
the next four years he alternated between vigorous revolutionary activity and spells in prison and
exile in northern Russia. He entered the national scene serving as delegate from the Caucasus to
the first national conference of Bolsheviks, in Tammerfors, Finland, in December 1905 (where
he first met Lenin) and to the general congresses of the Russian Social Democratic party in
Stockholm (1906) and London (1907).

In December 1911, Stalin was exiled to Vologda. In January 1912, Lenin and his closest
followers, having decided to break with the Mensheviks in the party, met in Prague and elected a
new ruling body or central committee. Although Dzhugashvili was not elected, Lenin personally
co-opted him into that body and also appointed him one of the leaders for underground work in
Russia. In March 1912, Dzhugashvili, having escaped from exile, arrived in St. Petersburg and
helped set up Pravda, the new newspaper of the Bolsheviks, which first appeared on May 5,
1912. He attended party meetings in Cracow in late 1912 and then joined Lenin in Vienna during
January and February 1913 in order to write, under the latter's supervision, an important study,
Marxism and the National Problem, embodying the Bolsheviks' stand on the minority races. On
March 7, 1913, after his return to St. Petersburg, he was arrested and deported to Siberia.

Thus Stalin (the name by which he was to be known henceforth) had reached the inner circle of
leaders of the Bolshevik wing of the party, not by virtue of intellectual brilliance or personal
gifts, but because Lenin wanted an organizer and a self-reliant, fanatical man of action. He was
relatively unknown outside of Lenin's wing of the party and played no important role in Georgia.
Unlike the other leading old Bolsheviks, Stalin had spent little time abroad and preferred to take
even his long exile (1913-1917) in Siberia. Unlike his fellow exiles, he sought seclusion there,
spending his time hunting and fishing.

Stalin in 1917

The Czar's abdication on March 15, 1917, led to even greater social and political chaos in Russia.
In this setting Stalin, overshadowed by Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and many lesser Bolsheviks who
were great orators and creative revolutionaries, moved cautiously and concentrated on party
tasks. After returning from exile to Petrograd on March 25, 1917, he joined the editorial board of
Pravda, which was then headed by Lev Kamenev. As a senior party member, he chaired on April
11 a national conference of Bolshevik delegates at which he, being still uncertain which direction
the revolution would take, urged cautious cooperation with the existing temporary successor
government. For the first time, he was elected one of nine members to the party's central committee, gaining the third-largest vote.

However, after Lenin's return to Russia in April, Stalin accepted the former's view of the necessity for the overthrow of the temporary Russian government, withdrawal from the war, and social revolution. Stalin played a modest role in the unfolding revolutionary drama, however. In addition to intensive party work, he continued as an editor of Pravda, helped organize Lenin's temporary exile after the abortive July uprising, and, in the absence of the more prominent leaders, chaired the sixth Bolshevik party congress. He backed Lenin fully in the great party debates in September and October, urging Bolshevist seizure of power. But he had little to do with preparing and prosecuting the insurrection itself. The central role fell to Trotsky as head of the military committee of the Petrograd Soviet.

**Stalin During the Early Years of the Soviet Regime**

In the new Soviet regime, established on Nov. 7, 1917, Stalin received the relatively minor cabinet post of commissar (minister) for nationalities, which he held for the next five years. In this capacity he issued decrees, handled the affairs of Russia's minority nationalities, and helped draw up the first Soviet constitutions of 1918 and 1924. Like most of the other leaders, he served in a variety of positions after the outbreak of the civil war in June 1918, such as acting inspector general of the Red Army and as a political commissar. With Grigori Ordzhonikidze, a fellow Georgian, he initiated, in February 1921, the brutal reconquest of independent Georgia. These duties imbued him with a lifelong absorption in military affairs, but they also led to an intense rivalry with the brilliant commissar for war, Trotsky.

On March 24, 1919, Stalin married his second wife, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, the 16-year-old daughter of an old Georgian revolutionary friend, Sergo Alliluyev. She bore him two children: Vasili (1919) and Svetlana (1925).

Stalin's real influence during these years derived from his being one of a small number of central committee members who never deviated from Lenin's policies or lost the latter's confidence. He joined Lenin, Kamenev, Trotsky, and Krestinsky in March 1919 on the newly formed inner directorate of the party, the Politburo. While the others concentrated on the making of policy, Stalin increasingly dealt with party affairs and occupied ever more important party posts. Thus he headed, in 1919, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, which had power to investigate every official in the country; in 1921, the Organizational Bureau (Orgburo), which appointed and dismissed party members; and, from 1922, the whole party administration itself, in the newly created post of secretary general. Consequently he was in a powerful position in the intricate struggle for preeminence that ensued after Lenin's death in 1924. Cooperating with Kamenev and Zinoviev, two of the chief members of the Politburo, Stalin managed, by 1925, to oust Trotsky, who had been generally regarded as Lenin's successor, and then, by 1926, Kamenev and Zinoviev themselves.
The civil war from 1918 to 1921 had had a traumatic effect on the new regime. It had led to comprehensive nationalization of the economy and, politically, to the establishment of virtual one-party rule, harsh repression of opponents of the regime, abolition of freedom of expression and association, and the growth of centralized party bureaucracy that dominated the formal organs of government--in short, to the entrenchment of policies and methods of rule contrasting starkly with the revolutionaries' own early aims and traditional egalitarian, Socialist principles. In 1921, Lenin and the party leadership suppressed criticism within the party against bureaucratization and party centralism, and ruthlessly crushed open revolt by the peasants, workers, and sailors, coupling these harsh measures in politics with a sweeping retreat on the economic and social front. The USSR's heroic revolutionary age was over, and from 1921 to 1928 the regime plunged into the more mundane task of running the country from day to day.

Stalin rose to power because he embodied, perhaps more than any of his old colleagues, this new spirit. His colleagues, most notably the brilliant, individualistic Trotsky, who had thrived during the days of storm and stress, were unfitted for the office politics, the patient calculation, and the compromise required to operate a growing bureaucratic regime. Stalin, though unimpressive physically and a man of restless, emotional, vain, cynical, and often vindictive temperament, had internalized so profoundly the role of administrator that he projected everywhere in public (in imitation of Lenin) a humble air, simple dress, personal asceticism, calmness, efficiency, and fatherliness--qualities that appealed to his colleagues, to the public, and, perhaps most important of all, to the new generation of party functionaries of humble origin flooding the party in the 1920's.

Stalin was also careful to back the most popular solutions to the many problems hotly debated in the 1920's, including Lenin's principles of one-party government and internal party unity, the restoration of normal diplomatic relations, and moderate policies for the development of Soviet industry and agriculture. His theory of "socialism in one country, which asserted the possibility of building a complete Communist system in one country, contradicted traditional Marxist internationalism. But it was reassuring to many people who longed for some stability after the years of upheaval. He always appeared as one who implemented the will of the majority. His colleagues did not fear the power of the party machine over which Stalin presided, but rather the attempt on anyone's part to assert the kind of personal authority Lenin had exercised. Stalin exploited this miscalculation superbly, playing carefully on the mutual rivalries and suspicions of his colleagues and helping them to oust one another, while quietly staffing local and central party organs with his own followers. Power was substantially his by 1928.

Stalin as Leader

After a year of drift, and not unmindful of the party's desire for change, Stalin and his men at the end of 1928 struck out precipitately on a set of policies designed to turn backward Russia into a modern state. With his predilection for vigorous and ruthless action and on the basis of what is today recognized as an inaccurate appraisal of the Soviet economy, Stalin launched forced industrialization and collectivization. The momentous series of economic and social measures included the establishment of crude and unrealistic five-year national economic plans, the deportation and execution of hundreds of thousands of the better-off peasants (kulaks) and the forced entrance of the rest into state-controlled "collective farms, nationalization of all industry
and commerce, the regulation and manipulation of all financial instruments for capital accumulation by the government regardless of the people's impoverishment, and the centralization of all social activity. Top leaders such as Nikolai Bukharin, Aleksei Rykov, and Mikhail Tomsky, who urged restraint and more realistic procedures, were swept out of office. Despite the death of millions from famine and goods shortages that these measures caused, Stalin pursued the program relentlessly, meeting resistance and criticism with mass deportations, executions, and show trials of alleged saboteurs.

The enormous tensions engendered by this extraordinary drive, coupled with a growing desire for normalization, produced considerable dissatisfaction that may have led to a secret movement within the party to replace Stalin with Sergei Kirov, a secretary of the central committee and party leader in Leningrad. The murder of Kirov, in December 1934, began a period of purging and terror that lasted until 1939 and was marked by the execution of virtually the entire political and military elite and the incarceration in forced labor camps of millions of Soviet citizens. In this way Stalin, with the help of the secret police, established his personal dictatorship over the party and the country.

The establishment of totalitarian political control was coupled with retrenchment in the social and economic realm, in which Stalin instituted better methods of industrial management, a system of incentives and differential wages and prices, the reestablishment of traditional procedures in the armed forces, more moderate general guidelines in the arts and sciences, and a revival of the family as the basic social unit. In the face of the growing threats from Nazi Germany and Japan, Stalin reverted increasingly to traditional forms of foreign policy, seeking diplomatic alliances with the European powers. Finally, in August 1939, he concluded a bilateral nonaggression treaty with Hitler.

The events of these years profoundly affected Stalin personally. Although habitually choleric and withdrawn, he had lived in the 1920's an outwardly normal life, surrounded not only by many relatives, who spoke their minds freely in the family circle, but also by good personal friends among the Soviet leadership. In the early 1930's, however, his life began to change, especially after the suicide, on Nov. 8, 1932, of his second wife, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, who left a letter indicting him both personally and politically. From the beginning of the purges in 1935 until his death in March 1953, he was extremely suspicious, ready to see others—even those with whom he had been united by many years of personal and political comradeship—not only as personal enemies but as enemies of the state. He was unable to resume his trust in anyone from whom he had once withdrawn it, and he was unshakably convinced that the system of political terror must be allowed to work even if it touched those around him. He spared neither his own relatives (the Svanidzes and Alliluyevs, most of whom came to a tragic end), nor former political comrades, nor even the families of his closest political associates. Polina Molotova, the wife of his foreign minister and closest colleague, was sentenced in 1948 to 10 years in prison.

A complex man, he centered his life wholly in his office, where he indulged the whole range of his feelings, including—when he wanted—a not inconsiderable charm. He also permitted public glorification of himself on a scale hardly matched in any country in the 20th century. But in his personal life he withdrew almost completely, living until his death either in his Kremlin apartment, which his daughter Svetlana shared in the 1930's, or in his new country house at
Kuntsovo, constantly surrounded by NKVD officers and bodyguards who ran the household. He kept away, almost pathologically, from the public, and he was frequently the object of the intrigues of some of the more unscrupulous of the leaders, such as Lavrenti Beria, head of the secret police, who used this terrifying instrument for his own ends.

**Stalin in World War II**

When the German armies attacked the USSR in June 1941, Stalin, after suffering a brief nervous collapse, personally took command of the Soviet armed forces. With the help of a small defense committee (war cabinet), he made all major military, political, and diplomatic decisions throughout the war. He pursued victory with increasing skill, determination, and courage, by staying on in the Kremlin when Hitler's armies stood at the gates of Moscow, ordering a fantastic shifting of industrial plants from European Russia to the east, arranging for lend-lease from the Western powers, selecting more and more first-rate military commanders, and developing increasingly effective military strategy, including the remarkable counteroffensives at Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk. He undergirded the strength and morale of his people by fostering their traditional religious and patriotic sentiments, and conducting adroitly the complicated diplomacy from the Teheran conference to Potsdam. Of course, victory could not have been achieved without the patriotism and fortitude of the Russian people, the quality and skill of the Soviet military professionals, the efforts of the USSR's allies, and the enormous political and military miscalculations of Hitler.

**Stalin's Last Years**

In 1945, at the end of the war, there was a general expectation that in the USSR, which had shown itself to be one of the world's truly great powers, the despotic system of rule and institutional rigidities would disappear or at the least be tempered. Instead, Stalin and his men restored almost completely the pre-war system, molded the occupied countries of eastern Europe in the Stalinist image and placed them under Moscow's control, and entirely isolated the whole bloc of Communist nations from the West. The Soviet leaders evidently were convinced that the USSR, which had only a large land army, a devastated economy, a decimated country, and unreliable populations in the newly acquired territories, was extremely vulnerable, especially given the towering industrial and military superiority of the United States.

By 1950, however, the Soviet Union had recovered, and Stalin, in the last few years of his life, seems to have mediated between those in the leadership who urged significant domestic reform and greater flexibility in foreign affairs and those who feared a departure from the rigid traditional domestic and foreign policies. Once more, in 1952, Stalin began preparing a purge of the old leadership, perhaps to restore his own initiative in making policy. He appears to have met with stout resistance, and before the purge got under way, he died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage, on March 5, 1953, in Moscow.

**Destalinization**

Within a few weeks, the Soviet leaders began a campaign to whittle down Stalin's reputation, which culminated in a devastating attack by Nikita Khrushchev at the 20th party congress in
February 1956. By that time virtually every country in the Communist bloc was in turmoil, and rebellions broke out in Poland and Hungary, largely because of the uncertainty whether destalinization meant the abrogation of key aspects of the Stalin regime or merely reforms designed to dress the familiar features of Stalinism in more attractive garb. It now seems clear that his heirs meant to leave intact many of the basic elements of the system. Stalin's method of personal rule was replaced by group rule and more orderly processes of government, the terror apparatus was largely dismantled, the economy was notably modernized, and foreign policy was conducted with much greater diplomatic initiative and flexibility. But the Soviet leadership continued to cling tenaciously to the authoritarian system of party supremacy that shapes every aspect of life in the Soviet Union and to Soviet dominance over the Communist countries on its western borders.
George Orwell

1903-1950

English novelist, essayist and critic, famous for his political satires ANIMAL FARM (1945), an anti-Soviet tale, and NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR (1949), which shows that the destruction of language is an essential part of oppression. Orwell was an uncompromising individualist and political idealist. V.S. Pritchett called him "the wintry conscience of a generation " Both the Left and Right have utilized Orwell's works in ideological debate.

"The essence of being human is that one does not seek perfection, than one is sometimes willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty, that one does not push asceticism to the point where it makes friendly intercourse impossible, and that one is prepared in the end to be defeated and broken up by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other human individuals." (from 'Reflections on Gandhi', in Shooting an Elephant, 1949)

George Orwell was born in Motihari, Bengal, India, as the second child of Richard Walmesley Blair and Ida Mabel Limonzin. His father was a civil servant in the opium department and his mother was the daughter of a tea-merchant in Burma. In 1904 Orwell moved with his mother and sister to England, where he attended Eton. His first writings Orwell published in college periodicals. During these years Orwell developed his antipathy towards the English class systems. Also Orwell's years at St Cyprian's Preparatory School in Easbourne were not happy. His bitter, barely disguised attack on St. Cyprian's, SUCH, SUCH WERE THE JOYS, was not published until 1968 for fear of libel action.

At the age of seventeen Orwell had his first experiences as an "amateur tramp" in Plymouth, where he was stranded accidentally without much money. After Orwell failing to win a scholarship to university, Orwell went in 1922 to Burma to serve in the Indian Imperial Police (1922-27) as an assistant superintendent. Like his colleagues, Orwell had a native mistresses. Eventually Orwell's mounting dislike of imperial rule led to his resignation. SHOOTING AN ELEPHANT (1950) is collection of essays revealing the behaviour of the colonial officers. One of his most famous early essays is 'A Hanging' (1931), in which a Hindu man is hanged in a hurry, but with a great routine. "An enormous relief had come upon us now that the job was
done. One felt an impulse to sing, to break into a run, to snigger. All at once everyone began chattering gaily."

Orwell returned to Europe and lived as a tramp and beggar, working low paid jobs in England and France (1928-29), where his aunt lived. He picked hops in Kent as a migratory laborer and once Orwell tried to get himself arrested as a drunk to have some knowledge about life in prison. After forty-eight hours he was released. In 1928 he had decided to become a writer, but his first amateurish efforts arose smiles. A poet friend described him "like a cow with a musket."

Orwell's experiences in poverty gave material for DOWN AND OUT IN PARIS AND LONDON (1933). However, the author was never a full-time vagrant, but he stayed every now and then with his older sister or with his parents, and plunged to the lower depths of society like an explorer. "The Paris slums are a gathering-place for eccentric people - people who are fallen into solitary, half-mad grooves of life and given up trying to be normal or decent. Poverty frees them from ordinary standards of behavior, just as money frees people from work." (from Down and Out in Paris and London) From 1930 Orwell contributed regularly to the New Adelphi. In 1933 he assumed the pseudonym by which he would sign all his publications - Orwell was the name of a small river in East Anglia, and George was definitely a British Christian name.

Unable to support himself with his writings, Orwell took up a teaching post at a private school, where he finished his first novel, BURMESE DAYS (1934). In 1936 Orwell married Eileen O'Shaugnessy, a doctor's daughter. KEEP THE ASPIDISTRA FLYING, the story of a young bookseller's assistant, appeared in 1936. From 1936 to 1940 Orwell worked as a shopkeeper in Wallington, Hertfordshire. He was commissioned in 1936 by the publisher Victor Gollancz to produce a documentary account of unemployment in the North of England for the Left Book Club. The result, THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER, is considered a milestone in modern literary journalism.

In the 1930s Orwell had adopted socialistic views. Like many other writers, he travelled to Spain to report on the Civil War. He fought alongside the United Workers Marxist Party militia and was shot through the throat by a Francoist sniper’s bullet. When Stalinists on their own side started to hunt down Anarchists and his friends were thrown into prison, Orwell escaped with his wife Eileen Blair from the chaos. The war made him a strong opposer of communism and an advocate of the English brand of socialism. Special Branch police had monitored Orwell since the late 1920s, but eventually the authorities decided that he was not a threat to the national security. Orwell's book on Spain, HOMAGE TO CATALONIA, appeared in 1938 after some troubles with its publication. The book was coldly received by left-wing intelligentsia, who regarded Communists as heroes of the war. In Orwell’s lifetime Homage to Catalonia sold only about fifty copies a year.

Orwell opposed a war with Germany, but he condemned fascism. During World War II he served as a sergeant in the Home Guard and worked as a journalist for the BBC, Observer and Tribune, where he was literary editor from 1943 to 1945. Toward the end of the war, he wrote Animal Farm, which depicted the betrayal of a revolution. After the war, Orwell went to Germany as a reporter, but in his dispatches he sent to The Observer and The Manchester Evening News he did not mention the extermination camps or Auschwitz.
Aftewr the war Orwell lived mostly on the remote island of Jura in the Western Isles of Scotland. With Eileen he had adopted a little boy. His wife died in 1945 - "Yes, she was a good old stick," Orwell said to his friend. In 1949 Orwell married Sonia Brownell (1918-1980), who had been an editorial assistant on Cyril Connolly’s magazine *Horizon*. Her marriage to Orwell lasted only three months. Orwell died from tuberculosis in London University Hospital on January 21, 1950, soon after the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The biting satire of Communist ideology in *The Animal Farm* made Orwell for the first time prosperous. Another world wide success was *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, one of the classical works of science fiction along with *Aldous Huxley's Brave New World*, and *H.G. Wells* novels *Time Machine, War of The World* and *Invisible Man*. *Animal Farm* was a satirical allegory of the Russian Revolution, particularly directed against Stalin's policies. Orwell's famous works were naturally forbidden in the Soviet Union, but nowadays the novels have been translated even into Chinese.

Led by the pigs, the Animals on Mr Jones's farm revolt against their human masters. After their victory they decide to run the farm themselves on egalitarian principles. Inspired by the example of Boxer, the hard-working horse, the cooperation prosper. The pigs become corrupted by power and a new tyranny is established under Napoleon (Stalin). "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." Snowball (*Trotsky*), an idealist, is driven out. The final betrayal is made when the pigs engineer a rapprochement with Mr Jones. The book was originally rejected for publication in 1944 at Faber and Faber by *T.S. Eliot*, who wrote: "After all, your pigs are far more intellectual than the other animals, and therefore the best qualified to run the farm—in fact, there couldn’t have been an Animal Farm at all without them: so that what was needed (someone might argue) was not more communism but more public spirited pigs."

Since its appearance the book has gained a status of a classic. - Film adaptation from 1955 was a faithful rendition of Orwell's original work, but watered in the end the satire, and presented a socialist viewpoint: the system is good, but the individuals are corruptible.

*1984* was a bitter protest against the nightmarish future and corruption of truth and free speech of the modern world. In the story, Britannia has become Airstrip One in the superstate Oceania, which is controlled by Big Brother and the Party. "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power." (from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*) The Party's agents constantly rewrite history. The official language is Newspeak, and the society is dominated by such slogans as "War is Peace", "Freedom is Slavery", "Ignorance is Strength." Goldstein with his book is supposedly plotting against Oceania, and a target of a hate period. The hero, Winston Smith, a minor Party operative, rewrites the past at the Ministry of Truth. He keeps a secret diary and has a brief love affair with a girl named Julia. He believes that O'Brien, a member of the Inner Party, is not sympathetic to Big Brother. O'Brien enrolls him and Julia in a conspiracy. One day Winston is arrested by the Thought Police, tortured and brainwashed. O'Brien directs Winston's torture and rehabilitation and tells that Goldstein is the invention of the Party. His spirit broken, Winston learns to love Big Brother. Winston and Julia meet briefly one day, they both have gone through the process and have lost their former love for each other. Some critics have related Smith's sufferings to those the author underwent at preparatory school - Winston is finally broken by rats. Orwell has said that the book was written "to alter other people's idea of the kind of society they should strive after."
In 1998 Martin Seymour-Smith listed Orwell's dystopia among 100 most influential books ever written. It has inspired less or more directly a number of other science fiction novels, among them Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Orwell himself implicitly acknowledged his debt to Evgeny Zamiatin's (1884-1937) novel *We* (in Russia My), which was written in 1920 and translated into English 1924. Although Orwell is best-known as a novelist, his essays are among the finest of the 20th-century. He also produced newspaper articles and reviews, which were written for money, but he carefully crafted his other essays for such journals as *Partisan Review*, *Adelphi*, and *Horizon*. Without hesitation he accused that Yeats is a fascist, H.G. Wells was out of touch with reality, Salvador Dali he found decadent, but he defended P.G. Wodehouse. In 'Why Write?' and 'Politics and the English Language' (1948) Orwell argued that writers have an obligation of fighting social injustice, oppression, and the power of totalitarian regimes.