George Orwell and the American Conservatives

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Recommended Citation
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For almost four decades, George Orwell has been near the center of popular American political discourse. "Orwellian" and the familiar Orwellianisms of *Animal Farm* and *1984* are deeply rooted in the popular mind as symbols of state terror and tyranny, even among people who have never read Orwell. The enduring relevance of Orwell's warning and the almost universal fear of Big Brother no doubt reflect our growing fear that we may no longer be in control of the advanced technology we have created. Yet we never seem to locate Big Brother, and the manner in which we interpret, misinterpret, and reinterpret *1984* nearly always reflects the ebb and flow of the American political climate. This accounts for the strange fact that there are several politically incompatible American George Orwells. There is the usually ignored socialist George Orwell, and there is George Orwell, the cult figure of the liberal anti-Communist Left. And, only in America, there is the conservative or neoconservative George Orwell.

Orwell was virtually unknown in this country when he first burst upon the American literary scene in 1946 with the success of *Animal Farm*. When *1984* appeared three years later, the political "message" seemed obvious: Orwell was presenting his readers with a terrifying vision of Russian Communism triumphant. He was quickly pressed into the service of the American Right, unwittingly drafted, one might say, to lead a literary crusade not only against Communism, but also against all forms and manifestations of democratic socialism. Lest American businessmen miss the point of *1984*, Joseph Evans of the *Wall Street Journal* assured his readers that "Orwell's savage indictment of totalitarianism is directed as much against British socialism as it is against communism or fascism."11 Irving Howe, Lionel Trilling, Philip Rahv, and others presented more balanced interpretations of *1984*, but it was pretty largely the conservative view of Orwell that drifted down into the political consciousness of the general public as *Animal Farm* and *1984*.
gradually became required reading in American high schools and universities. The crude manner in which he was attacked by Marxists and Soviet apologists further strengthened the image of the conservative cold war Orwell.

Senator McCarthy was finally discredited, and a measure of political sanity returned to the land, bringing with it, among other things, a more accurate view of George Orwell. The enormous commercial success of *Animal Farm* and *1984* gradually brought his lesser known novels, essays, and journalism back into print. Americans were now presented with the Orwell who had gone to Spain to fight against Franco in the ranks of a revolutionary army of the extreme Left. American conservatives had to confront the Orwell who was convinced that only a socialist revolution could save Britain from defeat in World War II and the Orwell whose fervent anti-Communism was rooted in the suspicion that Communism was "merely a particularly vicious form of state capitalism."2 He openly supported such radical socialist measures as the nationalization of "land, coal mines, railways, public utilities and banks" and demanded a strict "limitation of incomes, on such a scale that the highest tax-free income in Britain does not exceed the lowest by more than ten to one."3 American conservatives have long admired the British ruling classes, whom Orwell accused of having deliberately escaped "into stupidity" during the disastrous interwar years.4 They had declined, he insisted, to the point where "stuffed shirts like Eden and Halifax can stand out as men of exceptional talent." Stanley Baldwin was dismissed as "simply a hole in the air,"5 Chamberlain was beneath contempt, and even Winston Churchill received little respect.

The false image of the conservative Orwell faded quickly in the face of such revelations. American critics and academics now began to argue over precisely where he belongs on the broad spectrum of the democratic socialist Left. But his political journalism and the scholarly studies of the socialist Orwell never really reached the general public, where the old McCarthyite image of the cold war Orwell lay dormant, waiting to be dramatically resurrected in Mr. Reagan's America.

The America of 1985 would certainly present the liberal Wellsian time traveler with a depressing sense of historical déjà vu. The moralistic posturing of John Foster Dulles has returned to guide our foreign policy of bluster and drift. Herbert Hoover appears to be in charge of our social welfare programs, and electronic Elmer Gantrys have returned to lead the moral majority down the paths of Christian righteousness. Creationist monkey trials have returned to the South, and the Rosenbergs have again been tried in print and found guilty. Richard Nixon is staging yet another political comeback, and his old friend Whittaker Chambers has been posthumously awarded the Freedom Medal.

The political climate in which Orwell first appeared on the American scene is ironically similar to that of his dramatic revival today. The hoary image of the conservative Orwell has been dusted off and resurrected. Robert Nisbet rather incongruously links Orwell, the revolutionary atheist, with Edmund Burke, Bonald, Southey, Tocqueville, and Christian apologists C. S. Lewis and Malcolm Muggeridge.6 Norman Podhoretz assures us that Orwell "never showed much interest in the practical arrangements involved in the building of socialism."7 Robert de Camara concludes his antisocialist *National Review* essay with a pas-

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4. Ibid., 2:70.

5. Ibid., 2:69.


sionate plea for conservatives to look to Orwell for inspiration: "The forces of darkness have huge armies, a bigger and better arsenal, liberation movements, and the whores' allegiance. The forces of light have Orwell on their side and draw strength from it." 8

Orwell was dying of tuberculosis while the first American conservative crusade gathered momentum, but the unintended use of 1984 did not go unnoticed. In a letter to Vernon Richards, dated 22 June 1949, he observed with annoyance that "I am afraid some of the U.S. Republican papers have tried to use 1984 as propaganda against the Labour Party, but I have issued a sort of démenti which I hope will be printed." 9

Orwell’s démenti took the form of a press release in which he explained the intended "moral" of 1984 and the use of the term "Ingsoc." Here is the full text of that release.

'It has been suggested by some of the reviewers of NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR that it is the author's view that this, or something like this, is what will happen inside the next forty years in the Western world. This is not correct. I think that, allowing for the book being after all a parody, something like NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR could happen. This is the direction in which the world is going at the present time, and the trend lies deep in the political, social and economic foundations of the contemporary world situation.

Specifically the danger lies in the structure imposed on Socialist and on Liberal capitalist communities by the necessity to prepare for total war with the U.S.S.R. and the new weapons, of which of course the atomic bomb is the most powerful and the most publicized. But the danger lies also in the acceptance of a totalitarian outlook by intellectuals of all colours.

The moral to be drawn from this dangerous nightmare situation is a simple one: Don’t let it happen. It depends on you.

George Orwell assumes that if such societies as he describes in NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR come into being there will be several super states. This is fully dealt with in the relevant chapters of NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR. It is also discussed from a different angle by James Burnham in THE MANAGERIAL REVOLUTION. These super states will naturally be in opposition to each other or (a novel point) will pretend to be much more in opposition than in fact they are. Two of the principal super states will obviously be the Anglo-American world and Eurasia. If these two great blocks line up as mortal enemies it is obvious that the Anglo-Americans will not take the name of their opposition and will not dramatize themselves on the scene of history as Communists. Thus they will have to find a new name for themselves. The name suggested in NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR is of course Ingsoc, but in practice a wide range of choices is open. In the U.S.A. the phrase "Americanism" or "hundred per cent Americanism" is suitable and the qualifying adjective is as totalitarian as anyone could wish.

If there is failure of nerve and the Labour Party breaks down in its attempt to deal with the hard problems with which it will be faced, tougher types than the present Labour leaders will inevitably
take over, drawn probably from the ranks of the Left, but not sharing the Liberal aspirations of those now in power. Members of the present British government, from Mr. Attlee to Sir Stafford Cripps down to Aneurin Bevan, will never willingly sell the pass to the enemy, and in general the older men, nurtured in a Liberal tradition, are safe, but the younger generation is suspect and the seeds of totalitarian thought are probably widespread among them. It is invidious to mention names, but everyone could without difficulty think for himself of prominent English and American personalities whom the cap would fit.10

Orwell also attempted to communicate to Americans the intended meaning of 1984 in a letter to Francis A. Henson of the United Auto Workers. The pertinent portions of the letter appeared in Life and The New York Times Book Review:

My recent novel is NOT intended as an attack on socialism or on the British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralised economy is liable and which have already been partly realized in Communism and Fascism. I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily WILL arrive, but I believe (allowing of course for the fact that the book is satire) that something resembling it COULD arrive. I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences. The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasize that English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, IF NOT FOUGHT AGAINST, could triumph anywhere.11

In the summer of 1946, reflecting on the political content of a decade of work, Orwell concluded: "The Spanish Civil war and other events in 1936–37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it."12

When so much is known about the historical George Orwell and with nearly all of his political writing in print in this country, why does the strange image of the conservative Orwell persist in the United States? One is tempted to attribute this curious misinterpretation of Orwell’s work to intellectual dishonesty on the part of the American Right. But if we look a little deeper into this conservative affinity for the old left-wing socialist, we might learn something about the state and nature of American conservatism. There are in fact at least three misunderstood themes in Orwell’s work that American conservatives find irresistible. First of all, there is his strident anti-Communism. American conservatives usually assume that an anti-Communist must be, consciously or unconsciously, a conservative defender of some variant of capitalism and the social and political status quo. They tend to see nothing to the left of Communism but anarchy and the flower children.

Yet the nature of Orwell’s opposition to Communism was always revolutionary and never conservative. His bitter condemnation of the Communists was based on the conviction that they were dangerous reactionaries, dedicated to the suppression of any genuine social and

12. Orwell, Collected Essays, 1:5.
economic revolution. This view of Communism stemmed directly from Orwell’s experiences in the Spanish civil war. The Communists in Spain, he insisted, betrayed the workers by deliberately preventing a real revolution from taking place: “The whole world was determined upon preventing revolution in Spain. In particular the Communist Party, with Soviet Russia behind it, had thrown its whole weight against the Revolution.” 13 The conservative press, “with its tales of red revolution financed by Moscow, was even more wildly wrong than usual. In reality, it was the Communists above all others who prevented revolution in Spain.” 14 Orwell’s moving memoir of the Spanish civil war, Homage to Catalonia, was written largely with the intention of exposing the Communist betrayal of the revolution in Spain. Yet he emerged from that war less disillusioned with socialism than conservatives generally assume. “I have seen wonderful things,” he wrote Cyril Connolly shortly before leaving Spain, “and at last really believe in Socialism, which I never did before.” 15

Another attraction Orwell presents to American conservatives is his cranky attitude toward social deviants. This is the Orwell of The Road to Wigan Pier, who complained that “one sometimes gets the impression that the mere words ‘Socialism’ and ‘Communism’ draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex maniac, Quaker, ‘Nature Cure’ quack, pacifist, and feminist in England.” 16 But even here Orwell is writing in the service of socialism. On the page preceding the above quotation, he warned the reader that he was “arguing FOR Socialism, not AGAINST it.” He was simply admitting that “as with the Christian religion, the worst advertisement for Socialism is its adherents.” Orwell feared that the Marxists and the crank elements of the English socialist movement were discrediting the cause of socialism in the eyes of the common people he celebrated in his novels.

In Coming Up for Air, his last novel before the war, we are presented with a complete shopping list of Orwell’s personal complaints about the “ersatz” world of the thirties. The list of horrors is long and varied: modern architecture and modern frankfurters; watered-down beer; Left Book Club socialists; “spook-hunters and simple-lifers”; nudists; and, of course, the inevitable “enlightened” vegetarian in sandals “tee-heeing” in front of his fake Tudor house. “God rot them and bust them,” exclaims George Bowling, the earthy central character of the novel, “doesn’t it make you puke sometimes to see what they’re doing to England.” But he knows there is nothing he can do about it, “except wish them a pox in their guts.” 17

Now all this unintentionally panders to the prejudices of a broad range of socially rigid American conservatives. It appeals to the aristocratic conservative who decries the loss of collective taste and the disintegration of social standards. Further down the social ladder, it strikes an even more sympathetic chord with the alienated small businessman in the soulless American version of Bowling’s Ellesmere Road. Only their wives, who contribute to all of Phyllis Schlafly’s campaigns against the twentieth century, understand them. If Coming Up for Air could be culturally translated for the boys down at Archie Bunker’s bar, maudlin Budweiser toasts would be raised in Orwell’s memory.

Class differences aside, these cultural conservatives all share Orwell’s
pessimism, and they sense that even Ronald Reagan and Jerry Falwell are not going to roll back the tide of social change. Working women are not going back to the kitchen and the nursery. Homosexuals are not going back into the closet, and blacks will never return to the cotton fields. Weird people, abortions, and open sexuality are here to stay and probably without even the solace of the school prayer. But in Orwell—the pessimistic, sanitized, Reaganized Orwell that drifts down to them from the Reader's Digest, the National Review, and the syndicated columns of Jeffrey Hart—these harried social conservatives think they have found an ally in their losing battle against the frightening forces of modernity. They take comfort in Orwell's knowing pessimism and his witty, colorful, undignified crankiness.

Given the conservative mood of the country, it is only a small step to link disturbing social change with liberalism and Orwell's nightmare of 1984. This, in effect, is what Podhoretz is doing when he warns his followers in the Reader's Digest against the subversive dangers of "publicity experts, sociologists and journalists" of the "new aristocracy" who see "no significant differences between the communist world and the free world. Today this misinterpretation has spread far beyond radical circles." Walter Cronkite, of all people, is singled out as an especially dangerous member of the "new aristocracy." Podhoretz concludes with a sinister warning calculated to make one rally to the banner of Jesse Helms and Richard Viguerie: "Can reason and common sense prevail even in a free society over the distortions of journalists and academics? In the real world of 1984, that is the question that should be troubling our sleep."18

A more sophisticated erroneous connection conservatives make with Orwell is the persistent nostalgic longing for the vanished past that runs through so much of his work. American conservatives have never been satisfied with a defense of the status quo. They long, like today's moral majority, to turn the future into some imaginary golden age of the past. Like the utopian socialist ideal of the Left, it is a dream that never comes true but never quite dies in the hearts and minds of true conservatives. Longing for the past and strident anti-Communism are the twin pillars of American conservatism. But Orwell's sense of the past is as misunderstood as his anti-Communism.

Most of Orwell's lifetime (1903-50) easily qualifies as the most inhuman, evil period in modern European history. A preference for the pre-1914 England, the England where "the Grantchester church clock stood at ten to three," was simply the natural impulse of a civilized man and not necessarily the mark of a conservative. As Orwell put it in 1935: "I dreamed I dwelt in marble halls/And woke to find it true/I was't born for an age like this/Was Smith, Was Jones, Were you?"19

In Coming Up for Air, Orwell's most sentimental ode to the vanished Edwardian past, George Bowling-Orwell is speaking for as well as to the generation a little older than himself when he cries in a moment of exasperation: "Christ! What's the use of saying that one oughtn't to be sentimental about 'before the war'? I am sentimental about it. So are you if you remember it."20 But even in this most nostalgic of Orwell's works, there is none of the romanticizing of an imaginary golden age that characterizes the conservative vision of the past. Bowl-
ing readily admits that life wasn’t
*softer than now. Actually it was harsher. People on the whole
worked harder, lived less comfortably, and died more painfully.
... You saw ghastly things happening sometimes. Small
businesses sliding down the hill, solid tradesmen turning gradually
into broken-down bankrupts, people dying by inches of cancer
and liver disease, drunken husbands signing the pledge every
Monday and breaking it every Saturday, girls ruined for life by
an illegitimate baby. ... The back streets stank like the devil
in hot weather, and the churchyard was bang in the middle of
town, so that you never went a day without remembering how
you’d get to end.*

Yet Orwell’s preference is still for the past, when there was “a feel­
ing of continuity,” when people “didn’t feel the ground they stood
on shifting under their feet,”22 when Hitler and bombing planes could
scarcely have been imagined. There is always a keen sense of the times
in Orwell’s best work, and he was acutely aware of living in an evil age
of danger and disintegration; but his attitude toward the past is much
more realistic than the American conservative’s instinctive longing for
the golden age of Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover.

In his recent essay, “1984 and the Conservative Imagination,” Robert
Nisbet readily admits that “liberal democratic socialist” probably
“comes closest to describing Orwell’s political views.”23 But he never­
theless attempts to transform Orwell into a modern disciple of Edmund
Burke. He then goes on to connect Orwell intellectually and
temperamentally with a whole host of conservative reactionaries. But
the key figure is Burke, because the Burke of the Reflections on the
Revolution in France is a kind of benchmark figure for modern conser­
vatives. Burke and Orwell: one might as well try to link Burke with
Karl Marx or Bertrand Russell.

Edmund Burke based his ideal society on the foundations of an
established, state-supported church, a landed aristocracy, and a
hereditary monarch. Orwell seems to have been intent on destroying
nearly all of the vestiges of Burke’s England. He called for the immediate
disestablishment of the Church of England, and his personal view of
religion was pure eighteenth-century éclaircissement, with an
occasional dash of Marx. Few modern English writers took such un­
disguised pleasure in attacking the Roman Catholic church (which Burke
defended), and in 1940 Orwell insisted that “religious
belief, in the form in which we had known it, had to be abandoned. By the nine­
teenth century it was already in essence a lie, a semi-conscious device
for keeping the rich rich and the poor poor. ... Ten thousand a year
for me and two pounds a week for you, but we are all children of God.
And through the whole fabric of capitalist society there ran a similar
lie, which it was absolutely necessary to rip out.”24

Burke tended to fawn over Britain’s landed aristocracy, but to Orwell
they “were simply parasites, less useful to society than fleas on a
dog.”25 As late as 1945, Orwell concluded that any Labour govern­
ment that really “meant business” would abolish the titles of the “so­
called aristocracy” and close the House of Lords.26 He rather grudg­
ingly favored retaining Burke’s sacred royal family, but only because
“modern people can’t, apparently, get along without drums, flags, and
loyalty parades” and “it is better that they should tie their leader­
worship onto some figure who has no power." 27

Perhaps the most important issue in any consideration of Burke is the question of violent revolutionary change. It is here that the gap between Burke and Orwell is at its widest. Horror over the consequences of violent revolution leaps from nearly every terror-stricken page of the Reflections. But it will be remembered that Orwell fought and nearly died in the defense of a violent, leveling revolution and his revolutionary zeal was by no means limited to Spain. During the dark days of the Battle of Britain, Orwell declared that "only a revolution can save England," and he did not shrink from the possibility of violence to achieve it: "I daresay the London gutters will have to run with blood. All right, let them, it is necessary. But when the red militias are billeted in the Ritz I shall still feel that the England I was taught to love so long ago for such different reasons is somehow persisting." 28

Nisbet also thinks that the "iron relationship Burke saw between revolution and the militarization of a country" is the same point that "is highlighted by Orwell's treatment of Oceania's wars," which lead in both cases to "the reinforcing effects of military propaganda and terror." 29 There would seem to be grounds for comparison here, but was Orwell the revolutionary really trying to tell us that all revolutions lead to war, dictatorship, and the terror state? This dubious assertion is closely related to another of Nisbet's arguments for the "conservative" Orwell, namely, that "the theory of history implicit in 1984, one in which the present reality of a totalitarian state is made a more or less continuous outcome, not a reversal, of an increasingly socialized mass democracy in the recent past is quintessentially conservative." 30 The notion that socialism and social democracy lead inevitably to a totalitarian state is indeed a "quintessentially conservative" assumption, but it was certainly not Orwell's; nor, as we know, was it his intended meaning of 1984. Orwell was convinced from approximately 1936 on that democratic socialism was the only real alternative to totalitarianism. Whether he was right or not, remains to be seen. But it is worth remembering that in the industrialized West, from Mussolini to Hitler to McCarthy, the major internal threats to freedom and democracy have come from conservative, nationalistic leaders of anti-Communist, antisocialist crusades.

If we can safely dismiss the case for the "conservative" Orwell, there remains the more recent American idea of the "neoconservative" George Orwell. This thesis turns largely on admitting that Orwell was a socialist but insisting that he would have learned the error of his ways if he had lived into the present. Podhoretz assures us that, if "Orwell were alive today, he would be taking his stand with the neoconservatives and against the Left." 31 After having rather disingenuously detached Orwell from his socialist roots, Podhoretz is proud to proclaim that "the Committee for the Free World, an organization made up mainly of neoconservative intellectuals . . . publishes material under the imprint 'Orwell Press' and in general regards Orwell as one of its guiding spirits." 32

Careless speculation about where a deceased political writer would have stood on the issues of another era is a kind of fantasy game that has always attracted amateur intellectual historians. It is also a common tactic of dishonest political activists who seek to trade on the reputa-
tion of a revered figure of the past. As for Orwell, all that can be said with certainty, thirty-five years after his death, is that if he had lived to see 1984, he would have been eighty-one years old in June of 1984. Still, he has left us some indication of where he might have stood in relation to the modern neoconservative movement. We now turn to the rather comic political career of the Duchess of Atholl and the brief and unsuccessful neoconservative attempt to recruit Orwell in 1945.

During the Spanish civil war, as Orwell was later to recall, "the Red Duchess as she was affectionately nicknamed" was "the pet of the Daily Worker and lent the considerable weight of her authority to every lie that the Communists happened to be uttering at the moment." 33 But by 1945, the ex-Red Duchess had shifted sharply to the political Right and was leading a belated campaign against the Russian domination of Eastern Europe. That is, she had taken the dramatic left-to-right political shift that characterizes the modern neoconservative. The duchess was one of the founding figures of the anti-Communist League for European Freedom, an earlier, less ambitious version of Podhoretz's Committee for the Free World. Although Orwell attacked the League for European Freedom, he was nevertheless asked to join and speak at one of its rallies. Podhoretz and other neoconservatives who seek to attach themselves to Orwell would do well to ponder the implications of his response to the duchess:

Dear Duchess of Atholl,

I am afraid I cannot speak for the League for European Freedom. I could easily get out of it by saying that the date is impossible or what is quite true—that I know nothing about Jugoslavia, but I prefer to tell you plainly that I am not in agreement with the League's ultimate objectives as I understand them. . . . I cannot associate myself with an essentially Conservative body which claims to defend democracy in Europe but has nothing to say about British imperialism. It seems to me that one can only denounce the crimes now being committed in Poland, Jugoslavia, etc., if one is equally insistent on ending Britain's unwanted rule in India. I belong to the left and must work inside it, much as I hate Russian totalitarianism and its poisonous influence in this country.

Yours truly
George Orwell 34

Orwell was to the end a man of the Left and there is no real case for the "conservative" or the "neoconservative" George Orwell. But if we continually wage war over him in strictly ideological terms, we are in danger of missing the enduring significance of his political message. Unlike so many of the ideologically blinded political activists of his generation, Orwell clearly perceived the totalitarian dangers emanating from both sides of the political spectrum. He was never "duped" by the Communists, and he quickly saw through the dangerous hypocrisy of the conservative reactionaries. The real issues for Orwell were always human decency, social justice, individual freedom, and intellectual honesty. As he pointed out in his review of Bertrand's Russell's Power: A New Social Analysis in 1939: "Where this age differs from those immediately preceding it is that a liberal intelligentsia is lacking. Bully-worship, under various disguises, has
become a universal religion, and such truisms as that a machine-gun is still a machine-gun even when a 'good' man is squeezing the trigger ... have turned into heresies which it is actually becoming dangerous to utter.”

Like Russell, Orwell realized that “the essential problem of today is 'the taming power' and that no system except democracy can be trusted to save us from unspeakable horrors.” Orwell also insisted that “democracy has very little meaning without approximate economic equality and an educational system tending to promote tolerance and tough-mindedness.”

This is the Orwell that we should take to heart in an age when all political ideologies are still at least partially infected by the totalitarian disease.

We must also realize that the threat of a totalitarian future may have passed beyond the realm of conventional ideological warfare. In an age of advanced technology and mass psychological manipulation, the world of 1984 could slowly emerge out of a carefully conditioned need for ‘'managerial’ protection and expertise, irrespective of political ideology. Such a state of affairs might be initially justified and gradually institutionalized in the name of protecting a nominally democratic society from environmental disaster or some imaginary threat of foreign domination. We live in an age when the deliberate manipulation of political symbols has become very sophisticated and the manner in which we currently conduct our national elections is not a good sign. Candidates are now obviously “packaged” and sold to a psychologically unsophisticated electorate with the same successful techniques that are used to sell soap and cereal. Elections in which the real or imagined issues are ignored or abandoned in favor of competitive image manipulation, television cartoons, and mindless slogans do not serve the hopes and needs of a democratic society or contribute to its survival. In the long run, the only protection we have against the horrors of 1984 is a free system of education and a free press determined to confront political realities, which we must combine with a firm commitment to democratic procedures operating within the framework of a broad range of stubbornly defended individual rights. As for George Orwell, he was, as he once said of Dickens, “a nineteenth-century liberal, a free intelligence, a type hated with equal hatred by all the smelly little orthodoxies which are now contending for our souls,” — a “type” that grows rarer and rarer as we move into an iron age of computerized conformity.

35. Ibid., 1:375.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., 1:460.