**Revolution on *Animal Farm*: Orwell's Neglected Commentary**

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On *Animal Farm* by George Orwell  
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In the last scene of George Orwell's "fairy tale," *Animal Farm*, the humbler animals peer through a window of the farmhouse to observe a horrible sight: the pigs who rule over them have grown indistinguishable from their temporary allies, the human farmers, whom they originally fought to overthrow.1 The animals' fate seems to mirror rather closely that of the common people as Orwell envisaged it some six years before commencing *Animal Farm*: "what you get over and over again is a movement of the proletariat which is promptly canalized and betrayed by astute people at the top, and then the growth of a new governing class. The one thing that never arrives is equality. The mass of the people never get the chance to bring their innate decency into the control of affairs, so that one is almost driven to the cynical thought that men are only decent when they are powerless."2 Obviously *Animal Farm* was designed to parody the betrayal of Socialist ideals by the Soviet regime. Yet it has also been interpreted by various readers as expressing Orwell's own disillusion with any form of revolutionary political change and, by others, as unfolding such a meaning even without its author's conscious intention. It is time now to challenge both of these views.

Orwell himself commented of *Animal Farm* that "if it does not speak for itself, it is a failure."3 The text does indeed stand alone to reveal Orwell's consistent belief not only in democratic Socialism, but in the possibility of a democratic Socialist revolution, but there is also a considerable body of evidence outside *Animal Farm* that can be shown to corroborate this interpretation. The series of events surrounding its publication, and Orwell's own consistent attitude towards his book provide evidence of its political meaning.4 Meanwhile, of the two extant prefaces written by Orwell, the one designed for the Ukrainian edition, composed in 1947, is of particular political interest.5 Orwell's correspondence with his friends and acquaintances on the subject of *Animal Farm* provides a further source of information. Some of these letters are well known to Orwell scholars, but his correspondence with Dwight Macdonald, with whom he became friends when he was writing for the American journal, *Partisan Review*, does not appear to have been fully investigated. Macdonald himself raised a direct question about the political intent of *Animal Farm*and was given a specific answer by Orwell, yet this fascinating evidence has apparently been neglected, in spite of the generous access now available to his correspondence in the Orwell Archive.6

Commentators on Orwell find it easy to conclude from *Animal Farm* the utter despair and pessimism either of its author, or of the tale itself.7 It must be remembered, however, that through his allegory Orwell plays a two-sided game with his reader. In some ways, he clearly emphasizes the similarities between the beasts on Animal Farm and the humans whom they are designed to represent; at other times, he demonstrates with both humor and pathos the profound differences separating animal from man—differences which in the end serve to limit the former. In doing so, he forces his reader to draw a distinction between the personalities and conduct of the beasts and those of the human world. Of course, the animals are designed to represent working people in their initial social, economic, and political position in the society not just of Animal Farm but of England in general. The basic antagonism between working class and capitalist is also strongly emphasized by the metaphor: pig and man quarrel fiercely at the end of the story. The diversity of the animal class, like the working class, is equally stressed by the differing personalities of the creatures. Just because all have been subjected to human rule, this does not mean that they will act as a united body once they take over the farm. The qualities which, for Orwell, clearly unite the majority of the animals with their human counterparts, the common working people, are a concern for freedom and equality in society and a form of "innate decency" which prevents them from desiring power for any personal gain. While this decency hinders the worker animals from discovering the true nature of the pigs until the final scene, it also provides them with an instinctive feeling for what a fair society might actually look like. Yet Orwell was obviously aware, in using this metaphor, that the animals differ fundamentally from their human counterparts. Unlike men, the majority of the beasts are limited naturally by their brief lifespan and the consequent shortness of their memory. Moreover, their differentiated physical types deny them the versatility of humans. Their class structure is fixed by their immutable functions on the farm: a horse can never fill the role of a hen. The class structure of human society, in contrast, is free from such biological demarcations. These two profoundly limiting aspects of the animal condition, in which men share no part, finally contribute to the creatures' passivity in the face of the pig dictatorship. The metaphor, then, cannot be reduced to a simple equivalence, in the way that the pigs reduce the seven Commandments of Animal Farm to one.8

Evidently the animals lack education and self-confidence in spite of the active role which most of them played in the first rebellion and, in the case of some, are naturally stupid. Orwell is not implying by this the hopelessness of a proletarian revolution: he rather points to the need for education and self-confidence in any working class movement if it is to remain democratic in character. Both of these attributes, he appears further to suggest, must come from within the movement itself. The crude proletarian spirit of the common animals necessarily provides the essential ingredient for a revolution towards a free and equal society, but it needs careful honing and polishing if it is not to fall victim to its own inherent decency and modesty. If this simple, instinctive decency is to be preserved in the transition from revolution—which is all too easy—to the construction of a new society—which is not—other kinds of virtue are also necessary and must at all costs be developed by the working class if it is not to be betrayed again. The text itself, however, hints at disaster for the rule of the pigs. Their single tenet asserting that some animals are more equal than others is in the end a meaningless absurdity. In spite of their great intellectual gifts, the pigs are ultimately the most absurd of all the farm animals, for they are attempting to assume a human identity which cannot belong to them. It is left to the reader to ponder the potential for political change, given the evident weakness and vanity at the core of the pig dictatorship. The final scene of the book, moreover, reveals the disillusionment of the working beasts with their porcine leaders, an essential step in the process of creating a new revolution.9

Evidence external to the text of *Animal Farm* is not required to establish the political meaning within its pages. Yet an examination of Orwell's attitude towards the book during the difficult period in which he tried to have it published only strengthens the conclusions drawn here. Even before *Animal Farm* was finished, Orwell was quite aware that it would cause controversy because of its untimely anti-Stalinist message, and he predicted difficulties in publishing it.10 He was, of course, correct: the manuscript was refused by Gollancz, Andre Deutsch, and Jonathan Cape—in the latter case on the advice of the Ministry of Information. Meanwhile, Orwell declined an offer to publish the book in serial form in Lady Rhondda's *Time and Tide*, explaining that the politics of the journal were too right-wing for his tale, only to be turned down by T.S. Eliot at Faber and Faber, his next choice of publisher. The end of the story is well known to Orwell scholars: Orwell went finally to Frederick Warburg, who accepted the manuscript, and upon its publication in August 1945, it was well received and soon selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club.11 Orwell's interest in the major publishing houses, as well as his reluctance to approach Frederick Warburg as a first choice and his willingness at one desperate point to pay himself to have the work reproduced in pamphlet form show that he wanted it to reach the public at all costs and to address as wide an audience as possible from as unprejudiced a political context as he could find. Naturally, Lady Rhondda's journal would not have been suitable: his purpose was not to congratulate conservatives or even liberals on the failure of the Russian Revolution, however scathing his criticism of the Stalinist regime within the allegory. Furthermore, Orwell stood firmly against any suggested alterations to the text, particularly in the instance of his representation of the Bolsheviks as pigs. He made no excuses for *Animal Farm*—as he would in the case of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*—and must have considered its message to be fairly clear, for he offered no press releases to correct misinterpretations of the book from either right- or left-wing political camps.12 On the contrary, it rather seems that he was proud of the quality, as much as the political timeliness, of the book and expected it to require no external defence or explanation; this opinion did not appear to change.13

Some further indication of Orwell's own view of *Animal Farm* may be found in the two prefaces he wrote for it. Of the two, only the Ukrainian preface was actually published. Its original English version, written early in 1947, has never been found, and only a translation from the Ukrainian is available to Orwell scholars. This presents the possibility that various errors or subtle alterations of meaning might have remained uncorrected by the author when it was first translated from English to Ukrainian.14 Written two years after the English preface, the Ukrainian piece obviously betrays a purpose very different from that of its predecessor, as a result supplying the reader with far more direct commentary on the text. Orwell makes it clear here that he "became pro-Socialist more out of disgust with the way the poorer section of the industrial workers were oppressed and neglected than out of any theoretical admiration for a planned society." His experiences in Spain, he states, gave him first-hand evidence of the ease with which "totalitarian propaganda can control the opinion of enlightened people in democratic countries." Not only were the accusations against Trotskyists in Spain the same as those made at the Moscow trials in the USSR; Orwell considers that he "had every reason to believe that [they] were false," as far as Spain was concerned. Upon his return to England, he discovered "the numerous sensible and well-informed observers believing the most fantastic accounts of conspiracy, treachery and sabotage which the press reported from the Moscow trials." What upset him most was not the "barbaric and undemocratic methods" of Stalin and his associates, since, he argues, "It is quite possible that even with the best intentions, they could not have acted otherwise under the conditions prevailing there." The real problem, in his view, was that Western Europeans could not see the truth about the Soviet regime, still considering it a Socialist country when, in fact, it was being transformed "into a hierarchical society, in which the rulers have no more reason to give up their power than any other ruling class." Both workers and the intelligentsia had to be disabused of this illusion which they held partly out of wilful misunderstanding and partly because of an inability to comprehend totalitarianism, "being accustomed to comparative freedom and moderation in public life." To make possible, then, a "revival of the Socialist movement" by exposing the Soviet myth, Orwell writes that he tried to think of "a story that could be easily understood by almost everyone and which could be easily translated into other languages."15

He claims that although the idea came to him upon his return from Spain in 1937, the details of the story were not worked out until the day he "saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge cart-horse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn." If the horse could only become aware of its own strength, the boy would obviously have no control over it. Orwell found in this a parallel with the way in which "the rich exploit the proletariat," and he proceeded from this recognition "to analyse Marx's argument from the animals' point of view." For them, he argues, the idea of class struggle between humans was illusory; the real tension was between animals and men, "since whenever it was necessary to exploit animals, all humans united against them." The story was not hard to elaborate from this, Orwell continues, although he did not actually write it all out until 1943, some six years after the main ideas had been conceived of. Orwell declines to comment on the work in his preface, for "if it does not speak for itself, it is a failure." Yet he ends with two points about details in the story: first, that it required some chronological rearrangement of the events of the Russian Revolution, and, second, that he did not mean pigs and men to appear reconciled completely at the end of the book. On the contrary, "I meant it to end on a loud note of discord, for I wrote it immediately after the Teheran Conference [parodied by the final scene in *Animal Farm*] which everybody thought had established the best possible relations between the USSR and the West. I personally did not believe that such good relations would last long.…"16

It seems, then, that as much as Orwell wanted to explain how he had arrived at Socialism and at his understanding of totalitarianism, he sought to indicate in this preface to Ukrainian readers how workers and intelligentsia in Western Europe, but especially in England, misperceived the difference between the Soviet Union of 1917 and that of twenty and thirty years later. *Animal Farm* was, according to its author, an attempt to strip away the mythical veil shrouding the Stalinist regime; simultaneously, however, he was trying to renew what had been lost through this deception and to revive the original spirit of the Socialist movement. It seems possible to conclude that Orwell is suggesting the presence of just such a double intention within the allegory. One point in the preface, however, requires clarification. Orwell's reference to the animals' view that the real class struggle lay between animals and humans suggests, in the context of the allegory, the absence of any significant class struggle between members of the ruling class—or humans—since they will readily forget their differences and unite to oppress animals. This appears confusing when applied to Marx's theory, which Orwell claims as the theoretical basis of this insight, and furthermore it does not capture the thrust of the story itself, in which the divisions between animals are exposed in detail, rather than those between humans, or even between humans and animals.17 But Orwell makes it quite clear here that he refers to an animal perspective in defining the class struggle as one between humans and beasts. Certainly the point of departure was, in both the Russian situation and in this particular allegory, the identification and removal of the most evident class of oppressors. In this initial movement, the oppressed class was not mistaken politically; what came afterwards in both instances, though, demonstrated that the first movement of revolutionary consciousness had not been sustained in its purity, since the goals of the revolution gradually began to be violated. Orwell's remark in the preface that "[f]rom this point of departure [the animals' view of the class struggle], it was not difficult to elaborate the rest of the story" cannot be taken as an admission that the animals' perspective was perfectly correct.18 Of course, the book debunks such a simplistic interpretation of the class struggle, in spite of its initial accuracy.

By revealing the divisions within the animal ranks, Orwell is cautioning his reader to question the animal view of the class struggle, for the crucial problem that even the wise Old Major does not predict in his identification of the real enemy is the power-hunger of the pigs. By allegorical implication, this points rather interestingly to Orwell's identification of a flaw

in the Marxian theory of revolution itself. Although its starting point is clearly the animals' partially accurate but insufficient analysis of the class struggle, the allegory in its course reveals more and more drastically the inadequacy of such a view as a basis for post-revolutionary society. Part of Old Major's vision is indeed debunked, while the truth of the initial insight about class struggle is never denied, and the story, as has been seen, ends on a note of hope. Orwell's final point in the preface constitutes the only correction and very mild apology that he would make about the text, even though he had had roughly two years to assess the critical response—and hence the variety of misinterpretations—circulating about *Animal Farm*. Here he is warning his reader about the subtlety of his allegory: pigs and humans may come to look the same at the end, but they are still essentially enemies and share only a greed for power. For it is indeed the dispute between farmers and pigs which completes the transformation of pig to man and of man to pig.

If the Ukrainian preface was written for an unknown audience, the English preface was designed for readers with whom Orwell was much more familiar. Written in 1945, when he was still bitterly upset over the difficulties of printing unpopular political commentary in wartime Britain, the English preface is concerned not with the content of the story but with the question of whether he would be free to publish it at all because of current political alliances, intellectual prejudices, and general apathy over the need to defend basic democratic liberties.19 Attacking as he does here the political toadying of the Left intelligentsia in Britain to the Stalinist regime, Orwell presents *Animal Farm* as a lesson for the well-educated as much as the uneducated.20Meanwhile, the fact that he makes no reference in this preface to the details of the book indicates his strong confidence in its political clarity for English readers, although his bitter tone shows, as Crick suggests, Orwell's acute sense that he was being "persecuted for plain speaking" before *Animal Farm* was published.21 Since the English preface does not actually offer an interpretation of *Animal Farm* explaining Orwell's political intention, it is necessary to look for this information in his more private communications on the subject.

Orwell commented explicitly on his book to his friends Geoffrey Gorer and Dwight Macdonald. Crick states that Orwell gave a copy of *Animal Farm* to Gorer having marked in it the passage in which Squealer defends the pigs' theft of the milk and apples. He told Gorer that this "was the key passage."22 This emphasis of Orwell's is reiterated and explained more fully in a letter to Dwight Macdonald written shortly after *Animal Farm* first appeared in the United States, in 1946. Macdonald was one of a group of American intellectuals who had broken with Soviet Communism as early as 1936 and had gone to work with Philip Rahv and William Phillips on *Partisan Review*.23From January 1941 to the summer of 1946, Orwell had sent regular "letters" to the review and had had cause to correspond with Macdonald fairly frequently. Macdonald was later to move to the editorship of *Politics*, described by Orwell in a letter to T.S. Eliot as "a sort of dissident offshoot" of *Partisan Review*, and had already championed a review written by Orwell that had been rejected for political reasons by the *Manchester Evening News*.24 This shared political understanding soon developed into a literary friendship which lasted until Orwell's death in 1950.25

In September 1944, Orwell had already written to Macdonald expressing his views about the Soviet Union. Given that only a few months separated the completion of *Animal Farm* from this letter, it seems safe to assume that the views expressed in both might be similar. To Macdonald, Orwell stated, "I think the USSR is the dynamo of world Socialism, so long as people believe in it. I think that if the USSR were to be conquered by some foreign country the working class everywhere would lose heart, for the time being at least, and the ordinary stupid capitalists who never lost their suspicion of Russia would be encouraged." Furthermore, "the fact that the Germans have failed to conquer Russia has given prestige to the idea of Socialism. For that reason I wouldn't want to see the USSR destroyed and think it ought to be defended if necessary." There is a caution, however: "[b]ut I want people to become disillusioned about it and to realise that they must build their own Socialist movement without Russian interference, and I want the existence of democratic Socialism in the West to exert a regenerative influence upon Russia." He concludes that "if the working class everywhere had been taught to be as anti-Russian as the Germans have been made, the USSR would simply have collapsed in 1941 or 1942, and God knows what things would then have come out from under their stones. After that Spanish business I hate the Stalin regime perhaps worse than you do, but I think one must defend it against people like Franco, Laval etc."26

In spite of its repressive features and its betrayal of basic human freedoms, then, Orwell still considered the Soviet regime to be vital as an example to the working class everywhere. The real danger lay in the idea that it defined Socialism. What was most needed was a new form of democratic Socialism created and maintained by the people. He offers meanwhile the possibility that such democratic forms of Socialism elsewhere might actually have a benign effect on the Russian regime.27 In the allegorical context of Animal Farm, Napoleon's dictatorship would still seem to be a step forward from that of the human farmers—according to Orwell's letter, the rule of "the ordinary stupid capitalists." For animals outside the farm, it would provide a beacon of hope—so long as the truth about the betrayal taking place within was made plain to them. For it would now become their task to build their own movement in a democratic spirit which might, in Orwell's words, "exert a regenerative influence" on the corruption of the pigs' realm.

When *Animal Farm* finally appeared in the United States in 1946, Macdonald wrote again to Orwell, this time to discuss the book: "most of the anti-Stalinist intellectuals I know… don't seem to share my enthusiasm for *Animal Farm*. They claim that your parable means that revolution always ends badly for the underdog, hence to hell with it and hail the status quo. My own reading of the book is that it is meant to apply to Russia without making any larger statement about the philosophy of revolution. None of the objectors have so far satisfied me when I raised this point; they admit explicitly that is all you profess to do, but still insist that implicit is the broader point.… Which view would you say comes closer to your intentions?"28

Orwell's reply deserves quoting in full: "Of course I intended it primarily as a satire on the Russian revolution. But I did mean it to have a wider application in so much that I meant that that kind of revolution (violent conspiratorial revolution, led by unconsciously power-hungry people) can only lead to a change of masters. I meant the moral to be that revolutions only effect a radical improvement when the masses are alert and know how to chuck out their leaders as soon as the latter have done their job. The turning point of the story was supposed to be when the pigs kept the milk and apples for themselves (Kronstadt). If the other animals had had the sense to put their foot down then, it would have been all right. If people think I am defending the status quo, that is, I think, because they have grown pessimistic and assume there is no alternative except dictatorship or laissez-faire capitalism. In the case of the Trotskyists, there is the added complication that they feel responsible for events in the USSR up to about 1926 and have to assume that a sudden degeneration took place about that date, whereas I think the whole process was foreseeable—and was foreseen by a few people, e.g. Bertrand Russell—from the very nature of the Bolshevik party. What I was trying to say was, 'You can't have a revolution unless you make it for yourself; there is no such thing as a benevolent dictatorship.'"29

Yes, *Animal Farm* was intended to have a wider application than a satire upon the Russian regime alone. Yes, it did indeed imply that the rule of the pigs was only "a change of masters." Yet it did not condemn to the same fate all revolutions, nor for a moment suggest that Farmer Jones should be reinstated as a more benevolent dictator than Napoleon. According to Orwell's letter, the problem examined by *Animal Farm* concerns the nature of revolution itself. Unless everyone makes the revolution for him or herself without surrendering power to an elite, there will be little hope for freedom or equality. A revolution in which violence and conspiracy become the tools most resorted to, one which is led by a consciously or unconsciously power-hungry group, will inevitably betray its own principles.30 Failing to protest when the pigs kept the milk and apples for themselves, the other animals surrendered what power they might have had to pig leadership. Had they been "alert and [known] how to chuck out their leaders"31 once the latter had fulfilled their task, the original spirit of Animal Farm might have been salvaged. The book itself, Orwell makes clear in his letter, was calling not for the end of revolutionary hopes, but for the beginning of a new kind of personal responsibility on the part of revolutionaries. The most important barrier in the way of such a democratic Socialist revolution was the Soviet myth: if people outside still thought that that particular form of revolution could succeed without betraying its goals, nothing new could be accomplished. The final note of Orwell's letter is optimistic: if people mistook his message for a conservative one, it was precisely their problem. They had no confidence in the possibility of an alternative to either capitalism or dictatorship. In a sense, they would be like those animals who, when forced into making a choice between a false set of alternatives by Squealer—either the return of Farmer Jones or unquestioning obedience to the rule of the pigs—failed to consider the possibility of a third choice, a democratic Socialist society. For although Orwell was prepared to provide a fairly detailed explanation of his animal story for his friend Macdonald, his letter makes it quite evident that the burden of understanding *Animal Farm* still lay with its reader.

Given the striking congruity between the text and Orwell's political commentary about it, it would be rash to argue that he had lost control of his allegory in *Animal Farm*. If it takes time and effort to expose the political intricacies behind the stark prose of his animal fable, this must have been partly his intention: the lesson of democracy was not an easy one to learn, and the next revolutionary move towards democratic Socialism could surely not be allowed to repeat the mistakes of Old Major. Still, we may wonder if the grain of hope provided by the final scene of the book is not, in this light, too insubstantial to feed a new generation of revolutionaries. Yet if Orwell had presented an easy political resolution to the horrors of totalitarianism, his warning would lose its force. His reader could remain complacent, detached from the urgent need for personal involvement in political change so emphasized by the animal allegory. If he had designed a political solution for the other beasts, furthermore, he could be accused of hypocrisy: his whole argument both inside and outside the text rested on the proposition that the people had to make and retain control of the revolution themselves if they wanted it to remain true to its goals. The deceit of the pigs was not the only failure on Animal Farm, for the foolish simplicity of the other animals and, indeed, of Old Major's naive idea of revolutionary change were as much to blame for the dictatorship which ensued. Orwell had to warn his readers that their apathy and thoughtlessness were as dangerous as blind admiration for the Stalinist regime. Only when all members of society saw the essential need for individual responsibility and honesty at the heart of any struggle for freedom and equality could the basic goals of Socialism, as Orwell saw them, be approached more closely. Meanwhile, no single revolutionary act could create a perfect world, either for the animals or for the humans whom they represent in the story. Acceptance of the notion of class struggle could not lead to an instant transformation of society unless those who would transform it accepted also the difficult burden of political power, both at the time of and after the revolution. While the most corrupting force on Animal Farm was the deception practiced upon the other animals by the pigs, the greatest danger came from the reluctance of the oppressed creatures to believe in an alternative between porcine and human rule. Yet it was in the affirmation of dignity, freedom, and equality tacitly provided by the nobler qualities of the presumed lower animals that Orwell saw the beginnings of such an alternative. So it is that, in the last moment of the book, he leaves open the task of rebuilding the revolution on a wiser and more cautiously optimistic foundation.

**Notes**

1. George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (Harcourt Brace, 1946), p. 118. Further references to the text are to this edition and are given parenthetically.
2. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, eds., *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (Penguin, 1971), Vol. I, p. 372. (This four-volume collection will be referred to henceforth as *CEJL*). Even when Orwell wrote this, in deep distress after his experience of the Spanish Civil War, he was not completely pessimistic, as he remarked with some surprise: see *Homage to Catalonia* (Penguin, 1984), p. 220.
3. *CEJL*, III, p. 459.
4. Much of Orwell's other writing, particularly that which is contemporary to the creation of*Animal Farm*, also supports the interpretation offered here. See, for example, *CEJL*, III, pp. 83 and 280–82; "Tapping the Wheels," *Observer*, 16 January 1944, p. 3. This is not to mention Orwell's radical writings of the earlier war years, exemplified by his revolutionary enthusiasm in *The Lion and the Unicorn* (see *CEJL*, II, pp. 74–134) and his two essays for Gollancz' *The Betrayal of the Left* (1941), "Fascism and Democracy" and "Patriots and Revolutionaries" (pp. 206–14 and 234–45). After *Animal Farm*, Orwell's position remained unchanged; see, for example, "The British General Election," *Commentary*, November 1945, pp. 65–70, and "What Is Socialism?" *Manchester Evening News*, 31 January 1946, p. 2.
5. For the Ukrainian preface, see *CEJL*, III, pp. 455–59; see also "The Freedom of the Press,"*The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 September 1972, pp. 1036–38.
6. The author would like to thank the staff of the Orwell Archive, University College, University of London for their very kind assistance in searching out the relevant materials for this discussion, as well as for their help in finding resources for the larger work on Orwell's politics of which it is but a small part. She would like to thank the estate of the late Sonia Orwell and Martin Secker & Warburg for permission to publish extracts from their collection of Orwell's correspondence. She would also like to thank the Yale University Library for permission to publish extracts from the Dwight Macdonald Papers and for its generosity in making available to her copies of other letters in their Manuscripts and Archives collection. This article was obviously accepted for publication (28 March 1990) before the appearance of Michael Shelden's *Orwell: the Authorized Biography* (Heinemann, 1991). Shelden's thorough research uncovered the Macdonald correspondence, quotations from which were employed for the purpose of biographical, rather than political, analysis.
7. See, for example, Patrick Reilly, *George Orwell: the Age's Adversary* (Macmillan, 1986), pp. 266–67; Alan Sandison, *George Orwell: After 1984* (Macmillan, 1986), p. 156; Alok Rai,*Orwell and the Politics of Despair* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 115–16; Stephen Sedley, "An Immodest Proposal: Animal Farm," *Inside the Myth* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1984), p. 158; and Alex Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Left* (Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 90–94.
8. A full discussion of the animal–human metaphor and its political purpose is not within the scope of this brief study, but is elaborated upon fully in the author's doctoral dissertation, " 'Free from Hunger and the Whip': Exploring the Political Development of George Orwell" (University of Toronto, 1992).
9. Raymond Williams, in his *George Orwell* (Viking, 1971), shares this view: see pp. 74–5.
10. Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: a Life* (Penguin, 1980), p. 450; for an indication of Orwell's own fears about the unpopularity of his book, see *CEJL*, III, pp. 71–2, 118–19 and 168–70.
11. For a full account of the publication problems and the reception of *Animal Farm*, see Crick, pp. 452–58 and pp. 487–90.
12. For an account of Orwell's own criticism of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the conditions under which it was written, and the statement which he issued in order to correct political misinterpretations of it, see Crick, pp. 546–51 and 565–70.
13. For evidence of his apparent satisfaction with the book, see *CEJL*, I, p. 29. His friend William Empson recalls him complaining when the book first appeared that " 'not one of [the reviews] said it's a beautiful book.' " See Audrey Coppard and Bernard Crick, eds., *Orwell Remembered* (BBC, 1984), p. 183.
14. Peter Stansky and William Abrahams, in their *Orwell: the Transformation* (Granada, 1981), also consider this worth mentioning: see p.185. Peter Davison, at present in the process of editing *The Complete Works of George Orwell*, has already discovered a surprising number of mistakes or changes made during the past publication of Orwell's work in English: it seems logical that the potential inaccuracies of a re-translated translation uncorrected by its original author should be contemplated seriously. For a brief account of Davison's discoveries, see *The Sunday Times*, 2 March, 1986, p. 5.
15. *CEJL*, III, pp. 455–8.
16. *CEJL*, III, pp. 458–59.
17. Stephen Sedley concludes from this that "[t]he muddle is remarkable" and that "the book begins and ends by debunking" the idea of a class struggle between animals and humans, whether it be attributed to the animals or to Orwell himself (Sedley, p. 161). Rai, meanwhile, argues from the Ukrainian preface that "*Animal Farm* had been intended as an allegory of the common people, awaking to a realization of their strength and overthrowing their oppressors," but that "[i]n working out the fable, however, in the winter of 1943–4, the euphoria collapsed" (Rai, p. 115). Rai seems to forget Orwell's own comment at the beginning of the preface that the idea for *Animal Farm* was linked to his experience in Spain and explicitly designed to debunk the Soviet myth. This already suggests a story with a far from idyllic ending. It was only after the idea had been conceived of, according to Orwell, that he decided on the details of the story. It would thus appear likely that Orwell had thought through the political message of his story long before the winter of 1943.
18. *CEJL*, III, p. 459.
19. "Freedom of the Press," pp. 1036–38.
20. Orwell considered that many such intellectuals had substituted for love of their own country a far more slavish regard for the Soviet Union. For his ideas on this issue, see "Notes on Nationalism," *CEJL*, III, pp. 410–31. In other writing of the time, his language was even stronger than that of the English preface: see, for example, p. 263.
21. Crick, p. 463. Orwell was not, however, the only writer to feel this: as his friend Arthur Koestler explains, "George and I were the only anti-Stalinists who could get printed. We felt we were persecuted by the *New Statesman* etc., and what appalled us was not just the refusal to print what we had written, but the systematic suppression of fact so that people simply did not know what was going on. Sources of truthful information were the privately circulated news sheets.… But people like Beaverbrook suppressed a great deal. I remember the 'Beaver' saying how we all liked 'Uncle Joe' and therefore mustn't say too much against him." (Coppard and Crick, eds., pp. 167–68).
22. Crick, p. 490. It is a pity that Crick does not provide here the source of this important information.
23. David Caute, *The Fellow Travellers* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1973), pp. 88–9; see note. See also Crick, p. 392.
24. See letter from Orwell to T.S. Eliot, 5 September 1944 in the Orwell Archive, reproduced by kind permission of the estate of the late Sonia Orwell and Martin Secker & Warburg. For details of the rejected book review, see *CEJL*, III, pp. 169–70.
25. An indication of its depth is that Sonia Orwell, when first considering the possibility of contravening her husband's dying wish and authorizing a biography of him, wrote to Macdonald to see if he would undertake it. He accepted with enthusiasm, but she later withdrew her offer, having decided that it was too early for a biography to appear. See correspondence between Sonia Orwell and Dwight Macdonald in the Orwell Archive.
26. Letter from Orwell to Dwight Macdonald, 5 September 1944, Dwight Macdonald Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; copy in Orwell Archive, reproduced by kind permission of the estate of the late Sonia Orwell and Martin Secker & Warburg. Orwell made a similar point in a later letter to Frank Barber, in which he states: "My attention was first drawn to this deliberate falsification of history by my experiences in the Spanish civil war. One can't make too much noise about it while the man in the street identifies the cause of Socialism with the USSR, but I believe one can make a perceptible difference by seeing that the true facts get into print, even if it is only in some obscure place." (15 December 1944, Orwell Archive), reproduced by kind permission of the estate of the late Sonia Orwell and Martin Secker & Warburg. At this date, of course, Orwell was still waiting for *Animal Farm* to "get into print"; it might be that his comment about "some obscure place" could refer to the book itself.
27. In another letter to Macdonald written at the time that Orwell was involved with his final novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, he argues with an optimism which might surprise some of his critics: "Communism will presently shed certain unfortunate characteristics such as bumping off its opponents, and if Socialists join up with the CP they can persuade it into better ways" (2 May 1948, Dwight Macdonald Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; copy in Orwell Archive).
28. Letter from Dwight Macdonald to Orwell, 2 December 1946, Dwight Macdonald Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; copy in Orwell Archive. The argument to which Macdonald objects is still a favorite with Orwell's critics on the Left: Stephen Sedley offers it in his critique of *Animal Farm* (Sedley, *op. cit.*).
29. Letter from Orwell to Dwight Macdonald, 5 December 1946, Dwight Macdonald Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; copy in Orwell Archive. It is interesting to compare this statement with one made by Orwell in a commentary on Randall Swingler's*Violence* published in *Polemic*, V (September–October, 1946), pp. 45–53: "I do not believe in the possibility of benevolent dictatorship, nor, in the last analysis, in the honesty of those who defend dictatorship. Of course, one develops and modifies one's views, but I have never fundamentally altered my attitude towards the Soviet regime since I first began to pay attention to it some time in the nineteen-twenties. But so far from disappointing me, it has actually turned out somewhat better than I would have predicted fifteen years ago" (p. 53).
30. This is not to argue that Orwell defended pacifism; his fighting in Spain and his urgent and frequent attempts to join the army during the Second World War demonstrate his acceptance of the need for violent combat in order to defend basic human liberties. Yet he was evidently aware of the ease with which violence and conspiracy could be turned against the initial purpose which seemed to justify them. In the text of *Animal Farm*, Boxer's sorrow at the necessity of violence even in the struggle to overthrow human rule suggests a deeper wisdom than he is often given credit for (see pp. 36–7).
31. Letter from Orwell to Dwight Macdonald, 5 December 1946.

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*Source*: "Revolution on *Animal Farm*: Orwell's Neglected Commentary." *Journal of Modern Literature* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 127–37.

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