

Animal Farm & 1984: Were They Prescient?

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Today's paper topic is "*Animal Farm & 1984: Were They Prescient?*" Although author George Orwell created these two novels as political warnings of what could happen, in recent years, they have gained a renewed popularity because they reflect some of the challenges we face today.

Animal Farm, published in 1945, is modeled after the Russian Revolution, and *Nineteen Eighty-four*, published in 1949, explores a future, brutal Totalitarian Regime, ruled by Big Brother. Before delving further into each novel, let's take a quick look at their creator, George Orwell. By understanding what shaped Orwell as a person, it will become more apparent as to why he created these two works.

George Orwell was born on June 25, 1903, in Bihar, India. His real name is Eric Blair. His father, Richard Blair, was an Official Civil Servant in the British Imperial Opium Service. His French mother, Ida Limouzin, was the daughter of a teak merchant in Burma. Orwell's mother raised him in England, taking him there when he was still an infant. He had a sister, Avril, four years younger. The Blairs were not well off by genteel standards, but they were comfortable.

A scholarship allowed him to attend prep school at St. Cyprian's. In *Orwell Remembered*, by Audrey Coppard and Bernard Crick, they describe it as "A fashionable preparatory school," (Audrey Coppard & Bernard Crick. *Orwell Remembered*. p. 11). In an essay by Orwell published after his death, '*Such, Such, Were the Joys*,' he recalls it as a terrible place and described being beaten for bedwetting. Classmates have suggested it was not Orwell this happened to, but another student. Despite the hardships, real and imagined, he excelled academically.

In 1916 he won a scholarship to Eton. Orwell's average performance as a student at Eton, and his low scores on his final exams, kept him from attending Oxford or Cambridge. Instead, he took the tests for the Imperial Civil Service. He was able to join the service as a part of the Burma Police.

He stayed in the service for five years. It was his experiences in Burma, that led him to write his novel *Burmese Days*, 1934. The book was very anti-imperialistic, Orwell felt it was wrong to impose one man's culture on another. After five years in the service he returned to England and refused to go back. He told his family he would not be a burden but would lead his life his own way. His parents were embarrassed that he left the service and chose the life of a writer. His sister Avril never read his work until she was 44 and was then impressed by his writing.

By 1930 Orwell was describing himself as a 'Tory Anarchist.' Literary critic, Sir Victor Pritchett, described Orwell as a "man who went native in his own country." (Audrey Coppard & Bernard Crick. *Orwell Remembered*. p. 13). He explored the poverty of the working-class and traveled with tramps for weeks. At the same time, he was trying to write novels with little success. He was barely able to survive by writing book reviews. It was at this time that he adopted his pen name, George Orwell. Authors Coppard and Crick suggested he did this to lessen the hurt his parents were feeling by the topics of his early works, *Burmese Days* and *Down and Out in Paris and London*.

To better support himself, he worked at several low paying teaching positions, “bad private schools,” (Audrey Coppard & Bernard Crick. *Orwell Remembered*. p. 13). He also worked as a dishwasher for a period in Paris and then in London, where he had gone to write.

In 1935 he worked part-time in a bookshop in Hampstead. While there, he published his second novel, *A Clergyman’s Daughter*, and wrote his third, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. He also spent time in northern England writing a piece on the conditions of the unemployed. It was during this period he developed his socialist roots.

He was married June 9, 1936, to Eileen O’Shaughnessy, an Oxford graduate. The couple lived in a small cottage in the village of Wellington in Hertfordshire. They were able to subsidize Orwell’s writing income by running a village store. While there, Orwell finished writing *The Road to Wigan Pier*, a book about his journey to the north.

The Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, and at the end of the year, Orwell went to Spain to fight. He wrote about his war experiences in 1938, publishing another book, *Homage to Catalonia*. When first published, the book did not sell very well but is now praised as an excellent firsthand description of the war as seen from the battlefield and is politically critical of the Communist and Stalinist push to use the war for their purposes.

Orwell was wounded in the war. He and his wife, who had followed him to Spain, escaped arrest during a police crackdown on Communism, fleeing into France.

Back in England, he joined the Independent Labor Party, ILP. The party believed in equal rights for all, had libertarian domestic policies, was anti-militaristic, and anti-colonialist. Orwell held with the ILP doctrine until WWII. When war broke out, he changed his mind and declared, “Chamberlin’s England was better than Hitler’s Germany”(Audrey Coppard, & Bernard Crick, *Orwell Remembered*, p.14).

Orwell's deteriorating health kept him from serving away from England during WWII. He was hospitalized in 1934 and spent time in a sanatorium in 1938 for Tuberculosis. The army would not take him. Orwell believed it had to do more with his fighting for the 'red militia' in Spain in 1936 than his health.

Despite his poor physical condition, he was able to join the Home Guard as Sergeant Blair. At this time, he spent two years, 1941-1943, working for the BBC radio, broadcasting messages to India. It was a part of the war effort and came very close to being English War propaganda. (Bernard Crick, *George Orwell A Life*. p. 414).

In 1943 he became the literary editor of *The Tribune*. Although some writers believe the death of an author is through Journalism, writer Sean French, of *The Independent*, wrote in an article in 2006, "both *Animal Farm* and *1984* were written while Orwell was doing a great job as the literary editor and columnist of the left-wing weekly." Every week he wrote a column about anything that interested him. "His swipes against propaganda, the manipulation of crowds, the squalor of wartime, and postwar London life, plus the absurdities of bureaucracy and the growth of the Great Powers, formed the raw material of *1984*."(Sean French. "Orwell in 'Tribune,' Ed. Paul Anderson." *Independent*. 2006).

Early in the war, Orwell came up with the idea of writing a three-volume novel. According to French, "They were to be social analysis and warning which would deal with the social decay of the old order, expose the betrayal of the revolution, and describe what an English Totalitarian state would be like." The project was never finished, but his two books *Animal Farm*, and *1984* could have been parts of this series.

In 1944, his wife died during a hysterectomy. Orwell was in Europe reporting on the end of WWII. He was left to raise their adopted son, Richard Blair, on his own.

Orwell worked on *1984* on Jura, an island in the Inner Hebrides of Scotland. It was remote enough that he had few distractions, and although rainy, the weather was milder. It was a race against time. Author Bernard Crick said some scholars have speculated that the remote, damp location in northern Scotland worsened his already shaky health. He was able to complete half the book before returning to the hospital for seven months.

In 1950, three months before his death, he married Sonia Brownell. The wedding was at University College Hospital. His doctors had given the 46-year-old Orwell a 50 percent chance of living, and the couple had made plans to fly to Switzerland. The night before they were to leave, he had a fatal hemorrhage related to his TB and died.

In a late essay, “Why I Write,” written in 1950, Orwell said, “Every line of serious work I have written since 1936 has been written directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it.”(Alex Zwerdling. *Orwell and the Left*, p. 4-5).

Having briefly examined Orwell’s life and political views, we have a better understanding of the environment and political climate that surrounded him while writing both *Animal Farm* and *1984*. Let’s take a closer look at *Animal Farm* to get a better understanding of the storyline.

Published in 1945, the novel is an allegoric tale related to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the rise of communism. It serves as a warning and depicts the corruption of the original model of Communism by Dictator Joseph Stalin.

The story takes place on a fictitious farm in England where the animals are mistreated by their owner, Farmer Jones. Spurred on by a visionary dream of an animal utopia, from an old pig named Major, the animals are receptive to a plan for a better life. Three Pigs, Snowball, Napoleon, and Squealer, come up with a doctrine called Animalism.

They believe by working collectively; they can overthrow the farmer and run the farm. All of the animals would be equal partners. At first, the plan works very well. The farmer is run off, and Snowball writes down on the wall of the barn the Seven Commandments of Animalism:

- “ 1. Whatever goes on two legs is the enemy.
2. Whatever goes on four legs or has wings is a friend.
3. No animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animal shall drink alcohol.
6. No animal shall kill any other animal.
7. All animals are equal.” (George Orwell. *Animal Farm* p. 27)

But it is not long before the principles of the rules begin to fall. The pigs do not actually work but supervise the others. This behavior is accepted by the workers, as they all believe the pigs are smarter than they are. Napoleon and Snowball soon become adversaries, struggling for power, and eventually, Snowball is chased off. From then on, whenever something goes wrong on the farm, the animals are led to believe it is Snowball sabotaging them.

The power soon goes to Napoleon’s head. The doctrine forbids the animals from dealing with humans, but Napoleon takes it upon himself to do so, under the pretense of getting supplies from other farms. Squealer works between the weekly all-animal meetings, making the rounds, soothing, and assuring the rest of the beasts that all is well, while in reality, feeding them lousy information which the naïve animals believe.

Napoleon breaks every commandment on the wall. The pigs begin wearing clothing, sleep in the house, walk on two legs, drink alcohol, kill other animals they see as a threat to their power, and in the end, they change the seventh commandment to “All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others,” (George Orwell. *Animal Farm*, p. 145). By the end of the story that is the only commandment of Animalism left.

The Pigs have replaced one dictator with another who treats the workers the same way, which was Orwell’s point. The Russian people were no better off after the Czarist régime was destroyed and replaced by Stalin’s brand of Communism.

Orwell had a hard time finding a publisher for this book. He was turned down by three British publishing firms and 20 American publishers before it was finally released in 1945. It was immediately banned in the Soviet Union and is still banned in China and Cuba.

The book continues to be controversial. In 1965 the John Birch Society in Wisconsin, challenged the use of the book because of the words “masses will revolt.” In 1977 it was kept from being displayed at the Moscow International Book Fair. In 1982 it was banned from Bay County’s Middle and High Schools in Panama City, Georgia, and in 2002 the United Arab Emirates banned it from schools on the grounds that it contained written or illustrated materials that contradict Islamic and Arab Values. (Robert P. Doyle, *Banned Books: Challenging Our Freedom to Read*).

Now that we have a grounding on the content of *Animal Farm* let’s dive in and see if Orwell’s writing had foresight.

Orwell was correct in his conjecture; Stalin's Russia was not sustainable. There were many factors that led to the downfall of the Soviet Union, but generally the Marxist-Leninist inefficient economy was never very strong and eventually crumbled, leading to the country's economic collapse in the 1990s. The 1993 Russian Constitution declared Russia as a federative, democratic and law-based state with a republican government.

Currently, there are only five remaining Communist countries in the world, China, Cuba, Laos, Vietnam, and North Korea. North Korea does not call itself a Communist country; they refer to themselves as a "dictatorship of the people's democracy." They are one of the two truly totalitarian regimes in the world. The other is the State of Eritrea, in the Horn of Africa. (www.worldpopulationreview.com).

Another example of Orwell's perceptiveness is the modified rule number seven of Animalism. It can be applied to human behavior in Orwell's time and is still true today. The modified rule stated, "All Animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others." (George Orwell. *Animal Farm*. p.145). There are many examples of this rule in our current culture, but let's look at a few current examples here in the United States. Race and secondly, the gender wage gap.

Despite the best intentions by our founding Fathers who wrote in the *Declaration of Independence*, "that all men are created equal" (www.ushistory.org/declaration document), the United States still struggles with racial equality.

In the 2018 FBI Hate Crime Report, 27% of all hate crimes were motivated by anti-black bias. In addition, 57.5% of all hate crimes were motivated by a race/ethnicity/ancestry bias. Since 2016 racially motivated hate crimes have increased from 917 to 1020 in 2018. The FBI reported there has also been a 14% increase in hate crimes against Latinos.

The Department of Justice believes the number of hate crimes in the United States is vastly under reported by the FBI and is closer to 250,000 a year. The difference is the FBI relies on voluntary reporting system that many local law enforcement agencies do not support. In many cases the victims themselves do not report the hate crimes to the police. This is especially true for minorities and immigrants who are afraid or who have had an adversarial relationship with law enforcement.

This comparison of the Animalism Commandment has been used recently in the media. In a 2017 article in *American Magazine*, writer Brandon Sanchez suggests Donald Trump's treatment of illegal and legal refugees falls under Napoleon's changed rule. Sanchez quotes Donald Trump from a speech given less than a week before the election when he said of legal immigration.

“And by the way, I want people to come in. I want tremendous numbers of people to come in. And we're going to have that big, beautiful door in the wall. But you know what, they have to come in through a process—they have to come in legally.”

(Brandon Sanchez, “*Animal Farm* and Great American Myth Machine.” 2017. www.americanmagazine.org).

The Trump Administration has reduced the number of legal immigrants and refugees the United States accepts annually. In 2017 they lowered the 110,000-level set by the Obama Administration to 50,000. In 2018 they reduced the number to 45,000, and in 2019, to 30,000. In 2020 the number has been cut to 18,000, the lowest amount to be let into the United States since the program was brought up to modern standards in 1980. (www.migrationpolicy.org).

“All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others,” does not only apply to race, it can be applied to women working in the United States. White women, on average, working exactly the same job as a white man only earn, 81.5 % of the wage. African American women only earn 65.3 % of the wage and Hispanic women, make only 61.6 % of it. Although the numbers are not quite the same, the wage gap is global. Women universally make less money than their male counterparts for doing exactly the same job.

(www.iwpr.org/publications/gender-wage-gap-2018).

Today, political writers are using *Animal Farm* as a direct comparison to the Trump administration’s behavior. Having covered politics and watched the rise and fall of world leaders over the years, Orwell had first-hand knowledge of how politicians could baffle and confuse the public. In an opinion piece in the Observer, writer Jonathan Russo points out that the leaders in *Animal Farm* obscure the facts with smokescreens. He said, the allegory is comparable to the Trump Administration’s tactics. “The facade of Governance in *Animal Farm* was meant to appease the animals with “feel-good slogans and false agendas.” He compares this to President Trump’s mantra of “Drain the Swamp.” He also compares the pig’s tactics of creating imaginary threats to control their subjects to President Trump’s alerting us of the threat of Mexican Rapists.

Russo suggests Orwell anticipated the “phenomenon” of fake news. In *Animal Farm*, the historic battle where the animals liberate the farm is told and retold with fake news added to it as the pigs begin to squabble. And finally, he compares the pig Squealer’s spinning of changes in the farm’s policy to former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer’s habit of attacking the media while defending or explaining the president’s larger non-factual statements.(Jonathan, Russo. “ ‘Animal Farm’ and the great American myth machine.” *American Magazine*).

Let's move onto *1984*. Has the novel foretold the present? Or is this a warning of what could be? Let's first take a closer look at what the novel was about.

The novel depicts a bleak future world where a sinister figure known as Big Brother rules the Totalitarian Government of Oceania. The world is split into three massive sectors that are always at war with one another. Oceania, where our main character resides, looks a lot like the cold war Soviet Union but seems to be set in what once was England.

The protagonist, Winston Smith, works for the Government's Ministry of Truth. There is also the Ministry of Peace, the Ministry of Plenty, and the Ministry of Love. It quickly becomes apparent that all of the Ministries have the opposite function of their name. For example, the Ministry of Peace is the Ministry of War. The Ministry of Love is the Ministry of Hate.

Smith's job is to change the facts in published articles and texts to fit the truth as Big Brother wants it spun. He changes numbers, dates, removing people from history, and even substitutes the name of the country they are at war with to another.

The Government's invented language "newspeak," is the spinning of the facts, and the dumbing down of the language, designed to limit freedom of thought. The term "doublethink" means a person given two contradicting facts and believes both are correct. For example, under torture at the end of the novel, Smith comes to believe that two and two make five because that is what he is told, even though he knows it equals four.

The common workers, which make up 85 percent of the population, are called "Proles," which is a spin by Orwell off of proletariat. They are given little education, so they do not question the truth. Those inside the government are under constant surveillance; it is almost impossible to rebel. Those who do, as Winston eventually does, are reprogrammed or executed.

Cameras are everywhere, watching citizen's movements. Giant television screens are outside on the streets and inside everyone's home. They cannot be switched off, spewing propaganda and hate 24-7. The screens are interactive, so they can see and hear everything citizens do and say. Cameras and listening devices are also placed strategically in public so that the government can monitor everyone's movements and behavior. Big Brother is watching.

The government chooses whom one can date and marry. For a few happy weeks, Smith has a forbidden affair with a co-worker. They both believe the government should be overthrown, and eventually, they are found out, separated, tortured, and reprogrammed.

Unlike *Animal Farm*, *1984* was a success from the time it was published. The terms "Big Brother," "doublethink," and "newspeak" have become common place in our language. The term "Orwellian" "is now a universal shorthand for anything repressive or totalitarian." (Robert McCrum. "The masterpiece that killed George Orwell." *The Guardian*. 2009).

According to McCrum of the Observer, Orwell was inspired by the meeting of the Allied Leaders at the Tehran Conference of 1944. An Observer colleague said Orwell was "convinced that Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt consciously plotted to divide the world," at Tehran.

The novel has been translated into 65 languages and sold millions of copies worldwide. In recent history, the sales of *1984* climbed to number one on Amazon's bestseller list January 25, 2017, just after President Donald Trump's inauguration.

So, is this book prophetic of our current times? While the novel shows the future as having technology far advanced from where it was when the book was published in 1949, Orwell was not totally in the dark on making those guesses.

It was 1939 when NBC's David Sarnoff debuted television at the New York World's Fair. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first to use the medium to broadcast presidential messages to the public. By the time Orwell published *1984*, NBC and CBS had been broadcasting television news for nearly two years. Although we do not have jumbo screens blaring at us nonstop, we voluntarily carry a screen on our cellphone. But we are able to turn it off and we can opt out of having our phone listen to us. That said, we each have the power to choose what we read and listen to on it.

We have the technology to do what the Government in the novel *1984* was doing, and laws like the Patriot Act have opened the door to let the government in to lawfully scrutinize our private, personal information from the internet. The act allows the FBI, NSA, and other law enforcement agencies information-gathering authority to, without any judicial review, gain access to telecommunication providers' customer information, including sources of payment, records of Internet activity, addressees and subject lines of emails, websites visited, and search queries. In the name of safety, we are giving up our personal privacy. We are giving up our civil liberties in the interest of the state, a step in the direction of Winston Smith.

For this paper, we are going to look primarily at current democratic governments and if our democratic freedoms and civil liberties are being infringed upon instead of our advanced technology.

Orwell had a belief that the superpowers his day were going to carve the world into three large portions, which is what happens in *1984*. Thankfully, that has not come to pass, and there are only two true totalitarian regimes in the world.

Much more disconcerting than these two totalitarian regimes, we are seeing trouble in Democratic governments around the world: a tightening of civil liberties with challenges to and a muzzling of the free press. These are all things that our protagonist in *1984* lacked, but unlike Smith we have worldwide organizations watching and monitoring the rise and fall of civil liberties, alerting us to what is happening around us.

Founded in 1941, Freedom House is an independent, but right-centered, watchdog organization dedicated to the expansion of freedom and democracy around the world. Freedom House recognizes that “freedom is only possible in democratic political environments where governments are accountable to their own people, the rule of law prevails, and freedoms of expression, association, and belief, as well as respect for the rights of women and minorities, are guaranteed.” They currently calculate more than a third of the world’s population, “2.5 billion people, live in countries that they designate as “not free.”

Twenty thousand eighteen was the 13th consecutive year that they have seen drops in global freedom. They have noted declines in every region in the world, from China to the United States. Although these declines are considerably less than the gains made in the late 20th century, they suggest the pattern is “consistent and ominous.” Freedom House believes “democracy is in retreat.”

Countries with the biggest declines in freedom this year are Hungary, Serbia, Nicaragua, and Uganda. Hungary’s status went from free to not free because of attacks on the country’s democratic institutions by their Prime Minister’s party.

Serbia's rating declined from free to partly free because of problems in how they conduct their elections and attempts by the government and allied media outlets to interfere with independent journalists. Nicaragua went from a rating of partly free to not free because of the repression of an anti-government protest movement. This repression included arrests and imprisonment, and violence by state forces against the demonstrators. Uganda went from a rating partly free to not free due to restrictions by the government on freedom of expression. Some of these tactics have been through the use of surveillance of electronic communications and a tax on social media use.

The United States has long been the gold standard of democracy and a free press. The scoring system by Freedom House places the United States below France, Germany, and the United Kingdom with a score of 86 out of 100 possible points. The cause is "intensifying political polarization, declining economic mobility, the outsized influence of special interests, and the diminished influence of fact-based reporting in favor of belligerent partisan media."

According to Freedom House our current President, Donald Trump, has gone after "essential institutions and traditions, including separation of powers, a free press, an independent judiciary, the impartial delivery of justice, safeguards against corruption, and the legitimacy of elections." (www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-media/freedom-media-2019).

Unlike the world of *1984* there is free press around the world, but it has been under attack for the past ten years. The trend is most serious in Eurasia and the Middle East, where many of the world's worst dictators are located.

Saudi Arabia brutally murdered one of their own journalists, Jamal Khashoggi, in October of 2018, by luring him to the Saudi Embassy in Turkey. Khashoggi, was one of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman biggest critics. Saudi Arabia denied it had ever happened until enough evidence was discovered and they had to respond.

In December of 2019, a closed trial in Saudi Arabia sentenced five people to death for the murder, but the two most senior officials implicated, including an advisor to the Crown Prince, were cleared of any charges.

The *2019 World Press Freedom Index*, compiled by Reporters Without Borders, found hatred for journalists has turned into violence against them. The index discovered the hostility expressed by political leaders towards media in many countries is fueling acts of violence.

Here, in the United States, as a result of Donald Trump's comments towards the media, there is a growing climate of hostility for American journalists. Because of this the United States fell three places in the index to 48th in the *2019 World Press Freedom Index*.

This decline in the media's freedom in the United States started before the Trump Presidency. Surveillance programs such as the bulk collection of communications metadata, the Patriot Act, undertaken by George W. Bush administration, and the Obama Administration's overzealous crackdown on press leaks are just two examples of how past administrations have contributed.

Beyond the overall decline in freedom of the press, it's not hard to draw parallels to *1984* and the current administration. These comparisons have been popping up in the media since President Trump took office in 2017. *Nineteen Eighty-four's* doublespeak is reminiscent of the routine lies discovered by fact-checkers in President Trump's messages to the people. For example, in the 2018 State of the Union Address Trump said, "We enacted the biggest tax cuts and reforms in American history."

It was actually the eighth largest in American History. In 1981, Ronald Reagan signed the largest cut, at 2.89% of GDP. (www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/30/state-of-the-union-fact-check-trumps-address-analyzed). After the President's Inauguration, White House Press Secretary Spicer reported, there was a crowd of 317,000 when in reality, it was 193,000, despite photographic evidence clearly showing otherwise.

In 2017 the New York Times reported President Trump told public lies or falsehoods to the American People every day for the first 40 days of his Office. The Times said, "There is no precedent for an American president to spend so much time telling untruths. Every president has shaded the truth or told occasional whoppers. No other president, of either party, had behaved as Trump is behaving. He is trying to create an atmosphere in which reality is irrelevant." (David, Leonhardt & Stuart A Thompson. "Trumps Lies." *The New York Times*. 2017).

The Washington Post reported in 2019 President Trump has made 16,241 false or misleading claims since the start of his presidency. In 2019 he made twice as many as 2017 and 2018 combined. Although he has said some things are that true, he is headed down a dangerous path, similar to the Ministry of Truth in *1984*.

The world of *1984* has no freedom. Fortunately for us, organizations like the Cato Institute are around to monitor and alert us to what is happening to freedom throughout the world. Since 1977, The Cato Institute, a public policy research organization, has published the Human Freedom Index. According to U.S. News & World Report, “The Cato Institute, is a libertarian, free-market-oriented think tank based in Washington, D.C. It collaborates with the conservative-leaning Fraser Institute in Canada, and the Liberales Institut at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom in Germany to co-publish the report.”(www.cato.org).

The Human Freedom Index looks at 76 different indicators in 162 different countries in the areas of rule of law, security and safety, movement, religion, association, assembly and civil society, expression and information, identity and relationships, size of government, legal system and property rights, access to sound money, freedom of trade internationally, and regulation of credit, labor, and business.

In their 2019 report, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest amount of freedom, they found an average freedom rating of 6.89 for the 162 countries in the study. The United States was ranked 15th, with the top four countries being New Zealand, Switzerland, Hong Kong, and Canada. In 2018 the United States score decreased slightly by a -0.01 margin.

In conclusion, it’s important to remember that both *1984* and *Animal Farm* were not written as a prediction of the future, but as warnings of what could be. Orwell’s background while fighting for the Republic in Spain, alongside the communists, led to his distrust of Stalin’s Communist Régime and his writing of *Animal Farm*. He had some firsthand knowledge of why the Communist system would ultimately fail.

Given the life Orwell led, his belief in Democratic Socialism and the influences of the times he was writing in, it's not surprising that he would have a bleak outlook on the future. He saw first-hand what happened in Germany, the Soviet Union, Spain and Italy, that by giving up our personal freedoms we head down the path to totalitarianism.

Fortunately, we are not there yet. However, there are disturbing downward trends in civil liberties in democracies around the world and the free press is struggling. We are seeing some of the same behaviors displayed by our own current Presidential Administration as in *1984*, such as doublespeak.

We are still struggling with Napoleon's rule number seven from, *Animal Farm*, "all animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others." Orwell was a savvy political thinker and much of what he wrote into his novels is still a good warning and should to be taken seriously.

On the eve of the year 1984, Walter Cronkite wrote an editorial in the New York Times about the novel *1984*, what he said sums it up. "Orwell told us that freedom is too much taken for granted, that it needs to be carefully watched and protected. He did not say his fictional version of *1984* was bound to happen. He said it could happen here. His last word on the subject was a plea to his readers: "don't let it happen. It depends on you." (Walter, Cronkite. "Orwell's '1984' - Nearing?" *New York Times*.1983).

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