

The Spanish 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. It seems to me nonsense, in a period like our own, to think that one can avoid writing of such subjects. Everyone writes of them in one guise or another. It is simply a question of which side one takes and what approach one follows. And the more one is conscious of one's political bias, the more chance one has of acting politically without sacrificing one's aesthetic and intellectual integrity.

What I have most wanted to do throughout the past ten years is to make political writing into an art. My starting point is always a feeling of partisanship, a sense of injustice. When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, 'I am going to produce a work of art'. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing. But I could not do the work of writing a book, or even a long magazine article, if it were not also an aesthetic experience. Anyone who cares to examine my work will see that even when it is downright propaganda it contains much that a full-time politician would consider irrelevant. I am not able, and do not want, completely to abandon the world view that I acquired in childhood. So long as I remain alive and well I shall continue to feel strongly about prose style, to love the surface of the earth, and to take a pleasure in solid objects and scraps of useless information. It is no use trying to suppress that side of myself. The job is to reconcile my ingrained likes and dislikes with the essentially public, non-individual activities that this age forces on all of us.

Evaluation

6. In the lecture [5:43], Dr Waddell quotes from Orwell's book *Homage to Catalonia*:

"...One realized afterwards that one had been in contact with something strange and valuable. One had been in a community where hope was more normal than apathy or cynicism, where the word 'comrade' stood for comradeship and not, as in most countries, for humbug. One had breathed the air of equality."

a) Using the internet, research and make notes (you should aim for around a page) on Orwell's experiences during the Spanish Civil War. You may want to use the following links to help you:

<https://hekint.org/2020/06/02/george-orwells-near-fatal-wounding-during-the-spanish-civil-war/>

<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/05/george-orwell-spain-barcelona-may-days>

<https://spartacus-educational.com/spartacus-blogURL114.htm>

b) Based on what you have learnt, would you say Orwell's experiences in Spain were overall positive or negative? Why?

Glossary

- **Autocratic** – Relating to a ruler who has absolute power.
e.g. The autocratic leader was untouchable.

- **Tyrannical** – Like a tyrant; exercising power in a cruel and oppressive way.
e.g. Macbeth could be described as a tyrannical king.
- **Despotism** – The exercise of absolute power; a country or political system under a dictatorship.
e.g. Some nations are democracies, others are despotisms.
- **Illegitimacy** – Not being authorised or in accordance with laws.
e.g. They rioted about the illegitimacy of the election results.
- **Propaganda** – Information, usually of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.
e.g. Propaganda is a powerful weapon in wars.