

Orwell wrote 1984 as a warning. explain what he was warning people about essay



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Orwell wrote 1984 as a warning. Explain what he was warning people about. Consider the influence of the political climates in the world during the time he was writing. Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four is as much a reflection of the political climate in which he was writing as it is an exaggeration of it. From the beginning of the 1940s the worldwide political climate was shifting heavily in what appeared to be negative ways. From the outbreak of the Second World War on the 4th September 1939 (with fighting not really starting for several months, leading to a period known as the 'Phoney War') events spiralled continuously, it seemed, out of control.

With the establishment of both Nazi Germany and Communist Russia both in the early part of the 20th century, Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four is both a warning against and a parody of these methods of thinking. First of all, Nineteen Eighty-Four is a warning against the rise to power of people, parties and ideals that Orwell considered a dark path for humanity. His construct of 'The Party' in then novel is very much a reflection or parody, perhaps more of a continuation of, the "totalitarians" as O'Brien calls them. It has been noted that Orwell saw the world of Nineteen Eighty-Four as a potential alternate continuation of the politics at power in his day, "Project this will to power four decades into the future, and you could easily end up with Ingsoc, Oceania and Big Brother. While in O'Brien's case he refers to the "German Nazis and the Russian Communists" but that "they never had the courage to recognise their own motives," The Party can therefore be seen as a warning against regimes such as these by way of showing an exaggerated 'worst case scenario'. It is obvious that in his time Orwell felt strongly against the powers that ended up nearly taking over the world, submitting himself for

military service via the Central Register in 1939 and eventually being declared “ unfit for any kind of military service” in June 1940. Germany’s Blitzkrieg against Poland in 1939 is perhaps even reflected in the takeover of the Party in Nineteen Eighty-Four, as in the novel the change of leadership seems to be a sudden and tumultuous shift. The “ Nazi death camps and Stalinist gulags” and even the burning of heretics by the Inquisition (presumably the Spanish one) are referenced by O’Brien as being the failings of Party-like entities before the Party.

“ They pretended...

that just round the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. ” It is interesting that all of the regimes to which O’Brien refers offered just that, the potential of a higher place than those they were oppressing. Orwell is warning, therefore, that even those with higher ideals for the human race, be they Aryan supremacy or whatever else. Orwell was also warning about the possibility of a wider and wider class divide that would only spread to a wider chasm. As the Proles numbered “ ninety-five percent” of the post-war world and lived in abject poverty, Orwell warns that this sort of divide can only result in the “ stagnation of anti-political ideals” as is evidenced in the Proles. While O’Brien seems to like it this way “ Alone – the human being is always defeated”, it is obvious that the stagnation and seeming contentment of the Proles only comes from them being sated by the Party. In Orwell’s time of writing, with death camps, civil and world wars and the rise of Western Capitalism, the masses were seemingly worth less individually each growing month and year.

The warning, therefore, lies in the treatment of the working classes, and Orwell is obviously against such an obvious sectional divide in the society, with three layers so distinct. The political climate had therefore affected Orwell in his portrayal of society. However it wasn't just the fascists and other right-wing organisations that Orwell warned about. In his Diaries Orwell recounts the danger of English Socialists, the politics of whom obviously influenced 'Ingsoc'. Orwell wrote about the danger of the support this man gained and how any detractors or hecklers were violently cast out of the meeting place in which the man, Mosley, was speaking .

Orwell, as noted by Thomas Pynchon, " seemed to have been particularly annoyed with the widespread allegiance to Stalinism" and himself wrote that " nearly the whole of the English Left has been driven to accept the Russian regime as ' Socialist'" when in Orwell's mind they were anything but. In the same writing Orwell noted " a sort of schizophrenic manner of thinking, in which words like ' democracy' can have two completely different and irreconcilable meanings. This such manner transforms into one of Orwell's greatest warnings, that of the exaggerated principle of ' doublethink'.

The political climate surrounding the English Left was one of both ' proper' Socialism (a main achievement of which can be said is the 1948 commencement of the National Health Service) and acceptance of the Russian Left (indeed there wasn't anything else in Russia but the left), which obviously affected Orwell in his writing so he would warn against such contradictory and utterly nonsensical principles such as doublethink. Aldous Huxley wrote ' Brave New World', which offers a starkly different vision of the future than George Orwell. The political climate led to the two beliefs that in <https://assignbuster.com/orwell-wrote-1984-as-a-warning-explain-what-he-was-warning-people-about-essay/>

Orwell's mind, restriction of the facts and knowledge (for example his work in the propaganda department of the BBC East Service), and in Huxley's mind that an over-bearing focus on too much information would lead to a lack of interest in books and knowledge. The politics affecting Orwell's outlook, therefore, are only one side of the coin, and his own failing health and Jura isolation may indeed have contributed to the bleakness of Oceania.

Orwell's writing was indeed heavily influenced by an inescapable and terrifying new advent of modern technology, the atomic weaponry developed by Project Manhattan at the end of the Second World War. Winston and Julia meet in bombed-out Colchester in Nineteen Eighty-Four, because in the novel there have been land-ravaging atomic wars. At the time of writing the nuclear threat was increasingly prevalent due to fears that the Soviet Union were in possession or development of similar weapons, and the 'arms race' would quickly begin. Orwell's reflection of this is suitably bleak; the world has actually been ravaged by atomic warfare, but in Oceania "where an atomic bomb had fallen thirty years earlier", in Colchester, there is apparently not the same understanding of radiation sickness as there is now. The lingering effects of radiation poisoning were not fully understood for several decades, until after the Chernobyl incident, and so in Nineteen Eighty-Four the atomic weapon is seen more as a symbol of utter destruction and a subsequent poisoned rebirth under the party, and therefore shows how the political climate can affect and did, noticeably, Orwell's writing.

Truly the spectre of atomic warfare proves to be one of Orwell's great warnings against his vision of the future.