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The Battle for the Mind of Europe: The Ideological Warfare of Orwell, Stalin and Mussolini

For almost an entire century, the world has withstood unprecedented levels of destruction and chaos. Powerful regimes have risen and fallen; new and terrifying weapons like mechanized tanks and bombers slaughtered men and women by the tens of thousands, and the threat of global destruction became a reality across the entire world. The 1930s and 1940s were defining periods of the 20th century, fragmenting the world into alliances made from fear and desperation. World War II broke out because Western civilization was trying to decide the question of which Western ideology would control the future of Europe and the West. The military posturing and war-mongering by the leaders of Europe were fueled by their ideas, as they wanted to prove their ideology was superior to all other creeds. Social democracy clashed with fascism and communism in the works of George Orwell, Joseph Stalin, and Benito Mussolini, fueling the passions of Europe's leaders and driving them to war. World War II was driven by a conflict of ideas between the leaders of Europe, as the opposing ideas of democracy, communism and fascism clashed during World War II. This war of ideas was played out over the thousands of battlefields across the world, and through the hearts and minds of the world's people.

In the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin developed his communist ideology of what later came to be totalitarianism while he came to power after Lenin's death in 1924, slowly consolidating power as General Secretary of the Central Committee in Moscow.¹ Stalin's ideology was based

on Lenin's brand of Marxism in its sense of ideological origin, but it quickly began to deviate from Lenin's philosophy and he began to adopt a totalitarian approach to ruling a communist Russia.² Using economic programs like the Five Year Plan, Stalin converted the Soviet Union into an industrial power by organizing collectivist work farms. He also began to create the KGB, a secret police force, and other systems of control that allowed him to silence dissent and root out 'enemies of the state', or those who didn't adhere to the party line. Although policies like the collectivist work farm were communist in name, in practice they were part of the apparatus of totalitarian power Stalin used to become the sole power in the new Stalinist Soviet Union.³

Stalin adopted Lenin's ideology when he took power in 1924, but changed his policies to fit his own goals when he gained leadership of the Soviet Union. In his essay *The Foundations of Leninism*, Stalin outlines Lenin's theory of Marxist communism, which focused on the revolution in Russia and its particular variables which had given rise to the Russian Revolution in the first place.⁴ Marxism focuses on the rise of the proletariat working class as a political force, one that could use revolution to seize power and implement a communist or socialist state. However, Russia at the time of the revolution was not an industrialized nation and the working class was weaker and less established than other countries in the traditional Marxist definition. There were fewer factory workers or urban city populations that could rise up in Russia as opposed to Western European nations or the United States. Instead of focusing on the working class, Leninism and Stalin in *The Foundations of Leninism* focus on the importance of the exploitation of the peasants by the tsarist government.⁵ Stalin calls the tsarist government imperialistic and capitalist, and because of this, was in line with the Western European countries and their capitalist ideologies. Stalin writes that it is because of this 'capitalist alliance' that the tsarist government was able to fund its army in World War I, which resulted in the needless

deaths of millions of Russian peasant soldiers. This betrayal was one of the causes of the revolution in Stalin's eyes.⁶ By gaining the support of the Russian peasant population, the proletariat and the Russian communists gained an important ally in the fight against the tsar.⁷ This early battle with capitalism and imperialism in the form of the Russian Revolution was the foundation for bringing the war of ideas to Russia in the 1930s and 1940s. By creating a power vacuum after the initial revolution and then after Lenin's death, Russia was open to the totalitarianism of Stalin.

Stalin's initial views on the Russian Revolution and basic Marxist ideology matched the ideology of Lenin for the most part. However, on the concept of ruling a nation, Stalin began to move closer and closer towards totalitarianism, as seen as early as his writings in *The Foundations of Leninism*. Stalin believed in the need for a "new party, a militant party, a revolutionary party, one bold enough to lead the proletarians in the struggle for power".⁸ Stalin wanted this party to be an advanced detachment of the working class, an official leader that would lead the working class against the other classes. Already Stalin is seen preparing for a class war against the other classes in Russia for the sole reason of silencing dissent and asserting totalitarian control over the Russian population. This class war escalated to the point of the destruction of the middle-class Kulak peasants under the guise of eliminating capitalist elements in the countryside.⁹ By eliminating so-called outsiders and enemies of the state, Stalin was able to come across as a powerful and just leader, when in reality he was only solidifying his hold on the country and fueling his own cult of personality. Stalin's loyalty to the party line and his own ideology to the point of class warfare and deportation of citizens is why Stalinism draws strong comparisons with the fascist states of Germany and Italy during the 1930s, some even going so far as to call Stalinism "Red Fascism".¹⁰

The Soviet Union, England and France were the three most powerful countries in Europe before the rise of Nazi Germany, a country all three nations viewed as the future enemy in a likely war. When the Soviet Union failed to reach a nonaggression pact with France and England against Germany, it was because their conflicting ideologies could not be put aside in the face of imminent war.¹¹ England and France viewed the Soviet Union and Stalinism as a monument to the Russian Revolution and its Marxist policies, which threatened their democratic systems of government. The Marxist revolutions of the 19th century were not forgotten, and while strong liberal ideas were leaving a mark on capitalist democracies in the Great Depression, such as the New Deal, leaders were still wary of potential communist uprisings. On the other side, democratic societies that adopted some socialist programs were viewed with disdain by Stalin. In his interview with H.G. Wells, Stalin comments on the New Deal programs of the United States, saying that planned economy programs like the New Deal could not work in a capitalist system.¹² Stalin saw these New Deal agencies as an attempt to repair the capitalist foundation of America, a foundation he saw as flawed and doomed to destruction again. Stalin was clearly trying to compare the success of his Five-Year Plan with the modest gains of the New Deal, attempting to create a favorable comparison between the two ideologies. These rival ideologies, Orwellian robust democracy and Stalin's communism through revolution and totalitarianism, ruined any chance of cooperation before the war, and was only overlooked when fascist victory looked inevitable. The overt war of ideas between Stalinism and democracy did not reach a fever pitch until the final stages of World War II due to the combined fear the West and Stalin had of the emergence of fascism.

The era of fascism arrived in Europe when Benito Mussolini took power in Italy in 1922 as the 27th Prime Minister of Italy and established fascism as the Italian system of government by

1925. He is credited as being the father of fascist ideology, and in *The Manifesto of the Fascist Struggle* of 1919, he laid out the guiding principles of fascism that were adopted by his own government as well as the Nazi Party of Germany. Although *The Manifesto of the Fascist Struggle* contained many progressive policies and democratic principles, these were abandoned little by little as Italian fascism moved towards a dictatorial state.¹³ Mussolini embraced *The Manifesto of the Fascist Struggle* as a response to the perceived failure of socialism in Europe, as well as to promote his nationalist goal of transforming the Italian nation into a new Rome. Mussolini believed that to achieve this goal, uniting the government under the rule of a dictator and establishing a shared nation goal with the people of Italy were essential policies of fascism.¹⁴

Mussolini outlines his fascist ideology in his 1932 article 'The Doctrine of Fascism' in *Enciclopedia Italiana*.¹⁵ Although the article was essentially co-authored by Giovanni Gentile, Mussolini's essential points are consistent with his own ideas on fascism, revolving around the idea of fascism creating an all-encompassing state inside of which all the same values and ideas of a society exist.¹⁶ Fascism is clearly designed to create a system of totalitarianism; however, as opposed to Stalinism, the state does not hide behind labels of communism or other more mild labels of government power used to deceive the people. Where Stalin used 'communism' to give credit to his totalitarian actions, a fascist state would instead praise the use of absolute power because in the eyes of a fascist state, the best way to govern is through absolute control. The state embraces the idea of having all power concentrated into the fewest amount of government officials, believing that this system will create equality for the classes of the state due to the strength of the government and the state leaders.¹⁷ Fascism promised an end to class warfare, directly challenging the failings of socialism in Europe.

Fascism's answer to class conflict present in socialist and democratic governments was creating a state where the ideas and values of the people of the state would synthesize and become the same values of the government.¹⁸ The state would accomplish this goal by controlling the economic interests of the country for the purpose of eliminating economic class conflict. Mussolini acknowledges that trade unionism and working class activism were necessary and logical reactions to class inequality in a capitalist economic system.¹⁹ However, instead of transferring power to the working class in the form of a Marxist revolution, Mussolini believed that a fascist state could control corporate interests and use that power to solve economic inequality with the power of the state.²⁰ The government would use a quasi-guild system of economic control, where the state created governmental restrictions and controls on the country's corporations, affording the state complete control over a country's economy. Mussolini believed that the ultimate power of the state in the economy would result in a cessation of class conflict, as the state could intervene and solve class conflicts without the need for unionization or revolution. By denying the working class the ability to enact socialist change without the help of the government, Mussolini believed fascism was essentially a negation of Marxist socialism.²¹ Mussolini is explicit in this revocation of socialism, just as he is adamantly against democracy.

In addition to his anti-socialist stance, Mussolini denies the democratic principle that the majority can rule a people simply because it is a majority.²² Mussolini's idea of what made a country strong and vital was concentrating the decision-making power of a state into the hands of its leaders, not distributing this power to the rest of the country's people. Mussolini did not deem this distribution necessary, because in an ideal fascist government, the leaders would promote the best interests of the people due to the synthesis of the population's goals with their leader's goals. Fascism would render democracy irrelevant because there would in effect be no dissenting

opinions amidst the populace; there would be no need to vote because the outcome would theoretically be a forgone conclusion due to overwhelming adherence to the party line. However, the only way a fascist government could assert the kind of control that would result in a unification of goals between the leader and the people is to silence dissenting ideas through the terror inducing tactics of a secret police and the cult of personality, hallmarks of a totalitarian regime.

Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin all shared similar statuses in their respective countries in the sense that they each crafted a cult of personality that was used to elevate themselves to demi-god status in the minds of their people. All were adept at giving politically charged and nationalist speeches which were used to prove how vital and powerful their countries were in relation to the democratic states. They used press spins to absolve themselves of any misdeeds or failings of their state, instead pushing the blame to either other members of their government or when possible to a hated minority.²³ This allowed them to stir up popular disdain of either vocal minorities like the political rivals of Stalin or racial minorities that didn't fit into their countries plan like Hitler's Final Solution. The cult of personality was used to brainwash a nation's people to create artificial support in the same way secret police removed anti-totalitarian obstacles amongst the people. The cult of personality allowed totalitarian leaders to attempt almost any political action or policy without losing public support, which allowed policies like the Holocaust and the Siberian work camps to go on for as long as they did. Totalitarianism relies on the support of the people like any other government. However, in a totalitarian government, that support can be created through fear and punishment without straying outside of the acceptable ideology of the state.

Mussolini's fascist ideology can only exist in a country where the people cede all of their rights and goals to the nation's leadership, in effect trusting the government to solve all of their problems.²⁴ This kind of participation by the people was only obtained in Italy and later Germany because of the unique set of circumstances that the 1930s provided. The Great Depression forced the people of the world to look towards their government for answers and support in the face of hopeless poverty and starvation. In addition, the Italian and German peoples were frustrated with the apparent lack of strength of the Kingdom of Italy and the Weimar Republic respectively. Alone, these factors allowed the fascist leadership to gain control of their countries through democratically held elections, but they did not create the uniformity required for a strong fascist central government that *The Doctrine of Fascism* called for. This was accomplished through the use of fear and the Blackshirt and Brownshirt secret police, which silenced those who opposed the regimes.²⁵ This artificial uniformity was able to bring about a fascist state in both Italy and Germany, but only due to the intimidation and the abuse of power on the part of the state, destroying the credibility of the fascist theory of government. Totalitarianism in Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union was defined by secret police, brainwashing through the cult of the personality and the execution of undesirable political or ethnic members of society, all of which were directly opposed by George Orwell's democratic socialism and anti-totalitarian stances.

The war of ideas in the 1930s and World War II had two distinct sides; the established ideology of capitalist democracy and socialist reform against the emerging threat of totalitarianism. This line was drawn in the hearts and minds of the politicians and people of the world when World War II began, which was initially seen by the West as a challenge to the democratic freedom of the world. Western countries saw the war as a real threat to hundreds of

years of democratic progress, as fascism would eliminate the personal freedoms valued so highly in the West. This was why the West fought against totalitarianism; to preserve freedom through democracy, and this was why Orwell developed his own ideology of anti-totalitarianism.

The concept of democratic socialism as defined by Orwell is in direct contrast to the Stalinism brand of socialist democracy as well as Mussolini's fascism. Orwell believed that socialist policies would be enacted through the democratic practices of government, for the same reasons as his Marxist counterparts. The exploitation of the working class through industrialist and capitalist policies were cause enough to bring about talk of revolution in a country like England. Where Orwell finds fault with Stalin's ideology lies in Stalin's usurpation of the working class to fight a war against the middle class and other capitalist elements of Russian society.²⁶ Stalin's takeover of the country goes against the democratic principles that Orwell still believed in, no matter how frustrated he was with the lack of progress in socialist policies.²⁷ Stalin's totalitarian policies are what caused Orwell to view him as an enemy of democracy, adding to the suspicion and fear that led to World War II.

Orwell's rejection of Stalin's totalitarian government is on the same grounds as Orwell's distrust of fascism in Europe. When covering the Spanish Civil War as a journalist, Orwell observed how fascism's core ideology was the glorification of the state and the wholehearted embrace of totalitarianism. Mussolini's promise of a solution to class conflict through syndication of corporate entities flies in the face of Orwell's belief in the power of democracy to bring about socialist reforms. Orwell's belief in democratic socialism left no room for totalitarian abuses of liberty, and unlike Mussolini, Orwell believed in the power of the majority to govern and bring change to a country.²⁸

Orwell's ideological viewpoint is classified as democratic socialism, a form of socialism in which the working class brings about socialist revolution through democratic process. Orwell believed that a country, England in particular, could be ruined through a strict adherence to capitalism. In *Coming Up for Air*, Orwell reminisces about the English countryside through the eyes of his character George Bowling, who looks upon the changes that industrialization and capitalism brought to England and is overcome with nostalgia and disdain for unregulated capitalism.²⁹ Orwell uses Bowling as a spectator for the social and economic changes that were coming over England and the rest of Western Europe during the early 20th century. Places like Bowling's childhood pond have disappeared into cesspits created by industrialized capitalist enterprises, pushing out smaller businesses with sheer capitalist power.³⁰ It is from this background that Orwell offered an alternative to the democratic capitalist model England was using at the time. His alternative became democratic socialism.

Socialism was a desirable outcome for England in Orwell's eyes because of the conditions of the English working classes in the 1930s. While *Coming Up for Air* is a nostalgic tour of England before capitalism took over, Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* is a description of the working class in England during the 1930s. Orwell describes the English working class through a study of coal miners and their living conditions in the northern industrialized areas of England.³¹ Despite being malnourished, poor and unemployed due to the brutal effects of unregulated capitalism, these miners and other English citizens were opposed to the ideas of socialism, something Orwell did not understand. Orwell questions this hesitance, claiming that English middle and working class people are being caught up in the ideological orthodoxy of socialism, and should instead focus on the message of common decency and fair shares of socialism.³² Orwell believes that if people were honest with themselves, they would all support

socialism, but they are being held back by a combination of class prejudice and negativity toward the movement. Orwell makes an appeal to the English people that socialism represents liberty and equality, and believes that the answer to the problems England faces is in democratic socialism.³³

Democratic socialism can be seen as an opposing theory to revolutionary socialism, differing in the way a country reforms their government. Revolutionary socialism is exemplified by the Russian Revolution of 1917, where Lenin and his Bolshevik followers overthrew the Russian czar and instituted a communist government structure. Lenin followed the Marxist doctrine in that when a state “withers away” it is the responsibility of the working class to begin a revolution that will convert the state into a communist government.³⁴ By contrast, Orwell did not believe a worker’s revolution was essential to bring about social change in a country. Democratic socialism for Orwell is a belief that workers and socialists can bring about change in a capitalist democracy by using the democratic apparatus to bring socialist policies into place. The ultimate goal for Orwell was to roll back the capitalist government of England in favor of a reformed socialist democracy.³⁵

Orwell began to understand that an ideological crisis was going to occur in Europe during the Spanish Civil War. In his essay, *Inside the Whale*, Orwell discusses Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* and its depiction of everyday people on the street during the Spanish Civil War. Orwell remarks that he sees the trends of academic writing moving towards the left, as writers become more and more fascinated with communism and its new message of equality.³⁶ This movement towards communist and political writing is in Orwell’s mind a response to the debunking of Western civilization during the Great Depression. Writers during the Spanish Civil War were focusing on the political angle of the war more than writers during World War I had done, partly

out a need to fill the ideological gap that existed in Europe in the 1930s.³⁷ Orwell studied this view of communism and found that in addition to its ideological conflicts with fascism, communism was being used as an alternative to Catholicism as an escapist ideal.³⁸ In a Great Depression era world, people began to abandon traditional belief structures due to their apparent failures and moved towards radical ideology to solve their problems. Orwell saw this adoption of communism by the writers of the 1930s as a result of the softness of English society and its distance from the secret police and summary executions that existed across Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union, as distance that opened a potential door for totalitarian abuses. Orwell was concerned that writers were using the Spanish Civil War like a crucible for political writing in the same vein as World War I, creating a real possibility of the popularization of communism. Although socialism was a mutually acceptable ideology shared by Orwell and the communism of the 1930s, Orwell was wary of the authoritarian potential of a weak communist government, such as Stalin's totalitarianism in Russia.

Orwell's reaction against totalitarianism is documented in two of his most famous works, *1984* and *Animal Farm*. Orwell's *Animal Farm* is his most accusatory work, but Orwell states that all of his works across his career were opposed to totalitarianism.³⁹ In 1942 he stated that all the appeasers "have switched their allegiance from Hitler to Stalin" alluding to the fact that Stalinism was certainly as great of an evil as Nazism in Germany.⁴⁰ *Animal Farm* was published in 1945 and is an allegory to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent rise of Stalinism and totalitarianism. The animal uprising against the humans is a metaphor for the rise of Lenin and the Communist Party in Russia. The takeover by Napoleon as leader of the pigs is a commentary on how Stalin took control of the government from Trotsky.⁴¹ Orwell's concern with the Russian Revolution revolves around the usurpation of the power of the working class by

Stalin to further his own powers, changing the initial communist ideology of the revolution to a totalitarian state, complete with secret police and work camps. Orwell's intention with *Animal Farm* was to show how "revolutions only effect a radical improvement when the masses are alert...", and that when the masses are fooled by leaders like Stalin, a perversion of the original goals of the revolution will come into being.⁴² Stalin and the Communist Party of Russia were in power because the people of Russia looked to the party for stability after the Revolution of 1917, and in turn, gave up their freedom to gain what they thought was safety and stability. Orwell sees the possibility of totalitarianism as a failing of the masses to keep their leaders accountable to the goals and principles of a revolution and as a result they begin to lose their rights and freedoms to an authoritarian government they used to believe in.

1984 is Orwell's projection of an authoritarian government that has gone unchecked, a vision of the possibility of an unchecked totalitarianism realized by Stalin. With cameras and microphones always watching the citizens of Oceania, Orwell paints a picture of government where individual freedoms are being taken from the people because of the complicity of putting the government into power in the first place.⁴³ Orwell is stating that authoritarianism is a slippery slope, where weakness and inaction by the people can lead to the abuse of civil rights by the government, going as far as changing the history of a nation to suit the purposes of the regime. Stalin's involvement in rewriting the history of the Russian Revolution and his institution of the KGB secret police force show how real this possibility is. *1984* is a warning of how Stalinism and fascism could ultimately change society and were incompatible with Orwell's belief in democratic socialism, because both ideologies are dependent of the strength of the government and its control over every aspect of life in their nations.

Orwell's ideology is one opposed to the idea of totalitarianism, painting a picture in his novels and essays that totalitarianism must be stopped in Europe before it begins to infringe on the rights of the citizens. The idea of fighting totalitarianism and dictatorship to make the world safe from perceived evils was one of the driving messages in the United States and England as the countries entered World War II. Even as late as D-Day in June 1944, General Eisenhower referred to the conflict in Europe as a "Great Crusade", referring to the fact that the Allies were on a crusade against the fascist tyranny of Hitler and the Axis nations.⁴⁴ Orwell understood that democracy may move towards socialism at its own pace, although he was impatient with the British reluctance to adopt socialist beliefs.⁴⁵ However, he was not advocating a revolution on the scale of Russia's Bolshevik revolution or the rise of the Italian National Fascist Party. Orwell believed in the democratic process to bring Europe around towards democratic socialism. His staunch opposition to totalitarianism was part of the ideological battle being fought in the lead up to World War II.

The historiographical consensus of writers and thinkers throughout the 20th century varied with the national identity of the author as well as the allegiance of their country during the wars of the 20th century. However, a common theme is that there was a failure on the part of ideals such as socialism, progressivism and communism to achieve their goals and to create well-governed nations. Eric Hobsbawm in his *Age of Extremes* sums up this view as he believes fascism, capitalism and communism failed disastrously during the 20th century, citing events such as the Great Depression as evidence. All three sides failed to uphold the goals set out in their ideology, although Hobsbawm focuses on the conversion of communist Russia into Stalin's totalitarian state. Arthur Schlesinger agrees with Hobsbawm on this point, arguing that the communist principles of the Russian Revolution were replaced with Stalinism due to the failing

of progressivism. Schlesinger argues that interventionist style liberalism like the New Deal was the most practical and robust approach to governing.⁴⁶ Both these historians saw the conflict of ideas in World War II as a part of the continuing debate over which political system was best suited to ruling Europe. Some systems had failed and lost the war of ideas during World War I; now came the next battle, a synthesis of new and old ideas. The overwhelming consensus on how World War II further fueled this debate was that totalitarianism betrayed the liberal ideology of the 20th century by replacing existing political ideology with totalitarianism.

Arthur Schlesinger in *The Vital Center* focuses on the concept of the failure of the free-market system of capitalism and the solution to this failure being robust, progressive government policies like the New Deal. Schlesinger argues that “we must defend and strengthen free society” by abandoning the “Doughface” progressivism that would give rise to totalitarianism.⁴⁷ “Doughface” progressivism is the term Schlesinger uses to describe progressives who, in his opinion, blindly believe in progressive ideas, not questioning where the ideas came from or where they will lead the country. This blindness is what Schlesinger believes could lead the United States into totalitarianism, just as Orwell believes complacency could lead to totalitarianism. Schlesinger argues that a progressive must use robust and impactful policies to bring about positive change, citing the New Deal as a method of jumpstarting the United States economy.⁴⁸ He cautions against the failure of the left and the right, citing the result of these failures as communism and fascism during World War II respectively.

Schlesinger sees the failure of the left as an embrace of “Doughface” progressivism as opposed to a humanistic approach to liberalism. “Doughface” progressives surrendered the vitality of liberalism by believing in ideals and goals without acknowledging the possible limitations of those ideas due to human nature. Schlesinger uses the appeasement policies of

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain as an example of a failed liberal ideology. While hindsight bias after World War II does influence Schlesinger's opinion, these weak liberal policies such as appeasement focused on creating peace in the face of clear aggression and warfare, showing a clear misunderstanding of the human nature of Hitler and Nazi Germany. Since no country was willing to stop Germany's expansion, Hitler continued to expand with threats of violence until he was stopped with violence. The naivety of "Doughface" liberalism is what Schlesinger warns against; instead he argues that liberalism must become more radical and robust to create effective change. The New Deal was a prime example of strong liberal policies for Schlesinger, due to the effect it had on society in the United States. Even though the New Deal wasn't extremely effective in ending the Great Depression, the vitality of the liberal left was shown as government created policies that had a real effect on real people.

Schlesinger's views match Orwell's and Hobsbawm's to the degree that he calls for a warning against totalitarianism and how ideologically complacency would lead to totalitarian states like Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union. Hobsbawm viewed the failure of socialism as the reason the Soviet Union fell to totalitarianism, while Schlesinger argues it was the failure of 'Doughface' liberalism. Both historians views stem from the same source, as leftist policies like socialism and progressivism were betrayed and replaced with totalitarianism. The power of leftist ideas in Russia was overwhelmed by the strong armed tactics of Stalinism, the same point Orwell makes in *Animal Farm*. Although the Russian Revolution's leftist policies were intended to bring positive change, those policies were rejected and corrupted by Stalin. Whether those policies failures were due to naivety or flaws within the ideology itself, liberal socialism and progressivism failed.

Eric Hobsbawm's most recognized set of historical writing is his quartet of *Age of Revolution*, *Age of Capital*, *Age of Empire* and *Age of Extremes*. Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes*, focuses on the 'short' 20th century, the time between 1914 and 1991, where Hobsbawm focuses on the failures of the governmental systems and ideologies of Europe. He described the failure of communism in Russia as a betrayal of the international and socialist vision that Marxism promoted because of the lack of democratic principles present after the Russian Revolution.⁴⁹ Lenin, and later Stalin, "concluded from the start that the liberal horse was not a runner in the Russian revolutionary race" according to Hobsbawm, as evidenced by the implementation of Stalinism as opposed to a truly socialist or communist government.⁵⁰ Hobsbawm's idea that socialism during World War II in the Soviet Union ignored liberal democratic notions supports Orwell's claims that Stalinism was a perversion of socialism, effectively just a mask for the totalitarian government that Stalin personally lead.

Orwell and Hobsbawm focus on the 'betrayal' of socialist principles by Stalin and the Soviet Union and the fascist governments of Italy and Germany. Orwell's belief in the eventual triumph of socialism through democratic reform is directly opposed by the actions taken by Stalin to seize power and establish a totalitarian regime. The original goals of the Revolution that the people rallied behind and supported were usurped by Stalin, as equality and fair government were replaced by unilateral control by the Communist Party. Secret police enforced the will of the government, regardless of whether the people democratically supported the government. The secret police of Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union created artificial backing for the government, meaning that control over the countries people was obtained through fear and intimidation, hallmarks of a totalitarian state. Hobsbawm sees this as a failure of socialism because socialist policies were being outcompeted and replaced by totalitarian ones.

Hobsbawm also addresses the fascist doctrine of Mussolini and its failure as a system of government during World War II. Hobsbawm believed that the theory behind fascism was inherently flawed because Mussolini constantly cites the superiority of instinct and will over the power of reason and rationalism.⁵¹ The support for the fascist movement came from the technocratic achievements of the Italian and German governments, as both used recovering economies from the Great Depression as a way to gain popularity. However, the war-mongering and military buildups that did help stimulate the economies of both nations was surrendering to the instinct and will of the country as opposed to rationalism, which Hobsbawm believes contributed to the failure of those regimes. Essentially, by giving into the instinct to gain *lebensraum* or *spazio vitale*, fascism doomed itself by dragging Europe and the rest of the world into the most destructive conflict in human history. Fascism was based on creating a war of ideals to test the strength of a fascist country against the democratic and socialist countries of Europe. A lack of rationalism allowed ideas such as the Holocaust to come to fruition, showing how fascist ideology lacked sustainability in the 20th century.

In the war of ideas, Orwell was the most articulate in drawing the ideological lines of battle. His belief in democracy and liberalism was directly opposed to fascism and totalitarianism, which was the impetus that started World War II. Democrat leadership in the West had failed to prevent war through the use of appeasement, and now the credibility of democracy as an ideological theory was called into question and challenged by fascism. Fascist ideology was already eager to prove the vitality and will of the state; appeasement gave fascism the opportunity to prove itself as a powerful force of ideology. It wasn't until the invasion of Poland that democracy and fascism came to blows to determine what would rule Europe. Even Stalinism and fascism fought against one another to determine which kind of totalitarianism was

more legitimate than the other, along with the desire for self-preservation on the part of Stalin and the militaristic need for the democratic West to open a second front in Europe. The battle of ideology between fascism and democracy was ultimately won the instant the world realized the Holocaust had occurred. The most horrific genocide the world has ever seen occurred with the blessing of a fascist state. In no way could Germany or Italy ever claim ideological superiority anymore, and fascism fell due its rabid belief in the infallibility of the state.

The war between Stalinism and democracy extends even past World War II. As mentioned, the battle was already occurring before the start of the war, and the temporary alliance between the Soviet Union and the Allies was for military mutual self-preservation. Stalin needed a second front and the economic support of the West to fend off Hitler's invasion, and the Allies needed a second front to give American resources the time to halt Hitler's advance in England and North Africa.⁵² Outside of the military realm, neither side wanted to acknowledge the other as ideological equals. Stalin viewed the West with distrust after the Allies actions in supporting the White Army during the Russian Revolution, and the Allies soon embraced Orwell's anti-totalitarian stance as soon as World War II ended. Orwell was the most visible and proficient at denouncing Stalin, and with the popularity of *Animal Farm*, proved that the democratic Western states agreed with him.

Stalinism ultimately lost the battle with democracy with its condemnation by Nikita Khrushchev in his secret speech to the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25th 1956.⁵³ Khrushchev referenced the deportations of political enemies to the Siberian work camps and the cult of personality Stalin created around himself as despotic abuses of power that did not fit in with the Leninist ideology Khrushchev was trying to identify with. Although Khrushchev was using the speech to gain political support and to

discredit his Stalinist political rivals, the effects were far reaching. The 'Khrushchev Thaw' began to dismantle the harshest aspects of Stalinism and his cult of personality such as the work camps and historical revisions, while leaving the economic effects of the Five-Year Plan intact. As the Soviet leadership began to move away from Stalinism, Orwell could claim a victory against totalitarianism, as the threat of a society like Oceania in *1984* began to fade. As with fascism, the world rejected the legitimacy of Stalin's policies when the horrors of the reality totalitarianism were seen by the world. Khrushchev was forced to move the Soviet Union away from Stalinism if his country was to rival the United States and gain support around the world. The war of ideas in Europe was won by democracy as threat of totalitarianism was moved to North Korea and the developing world.

The war of ideas was a battle which challenged the existing ideology of democracy and socialism by presenting totalitarianism as an alternative method of governance. Fascist Germany and Italy attacked the democratic West to prove the strength of the will and instinct that existed in their countries, demanding that the West acknowledge this strength to validate Mussolini's fascist ideology.⁵⁴ Although Stalin fought against the fascist threat militarily, Stalinism was at war with the democratic and socialist ideology throughout World War II and into the Cold War. Stalin's failure to see eye-to-eye with the democratic Allies is evidence of the war of ideas occurring with speeches and essays as opposed to soldiers and bombs. Ultimately, the war of ideas was won by the democratic western states. The failures of fascism and totalitarianism in Europe that are detailed by Schlesinger and Hobsbawm paved the way towards the reestablishment of democracy as the leader of global ideology. Totalitarianism in the end was a violation of the right of the people to choose their own ideology, forcing them to ignore the other ideologies of the world in favor of the state controlled system of government. The blind and

sometimes terrified will of the people allowed totalitarian governments to abuse the trust of the people, forging a country and a world to be ruled by the government leaders instead of the people. Totalitarianism is an affront to the rights of independent peoples of the world, and cannot function in a world where freedom is so highly valued. The responsibly for millions upon millions of deaths lie at the feet of totalitarian governments, and now serve as a warning to the world to never reignite this war of ideas again. Democracy defeated the ideology of totalitarianism in the hearts and minds of the people of the world, giving the people the tools to make their own ideological decisions and to start the next war of ideas.

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² T. B. Bottomore, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Malden, Massachusetts, USA; Oxford, England, UK; Melbourne, Victoria, Australia; Berlin, Germany: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991, 54.

³ "Lenin: Individual and Politics in the October Revolution". *Modern History Review* 2 (1): 1990, 16–19.

⁴ Joseph Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism, Works*, Volume 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 71-196.

⁵ Joseph Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism, Works*, Volume 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow Section I.

⁶ Joseph Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism, Works*, Volume 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow Section I.

⁷ Joseph Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism, Works*, Volume 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow Section III.

⁸ Joseph Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism, Works*, Volume 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 85.

⁹ Joseph Stalin, "Concerning the Policy of Eliminating the Kulaks as a Class", *Itrasnaya Zveda*, No. 18, January 21, 1930.

¹⁰ Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, New York, New York, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 33-37.

¹¹ Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939–1953*. Yale University Press, 2006.

¹² Joseph Stalin, interview by H.G. Wells, July 23, 1934, Red Star Press Ltd, London 1978.

¹³ Benito Mussolini, *The Manifesto of the Fascist Struggle, Il Popolo d'Italia*, 1919.

¹⁴ Stanislao G. Pugliese. *Fascism, anti-fascism, and the resistance in Italy: 1919 to the present*. Oxford, England, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004. 43–44.

¹⁵ Benito Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism*, Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1935.

¹⁶ Benito Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism*, Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1935, 14.

¹⁷ Benito Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism*, Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1935, 15.

¹⁸ Benito Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism*, Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1935, 17.

¹⁹ Benito Mussolini, *The Corporate State*, New York: H. Fertig, 1975

²⁰ Benito Mussolini, *The Corporate State*, New York: H. Fertig, 1975.

²¹ Benito Mussolini, *The Corporate State*, New York: H. Fertig, 1975, 31.

²² Benito Mussolini, *The Corporate State*, New York: H. Fertig, 1975, 31.

²³ Nikita Khrushchev, "On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences", "Great Speeches of the 20th Century", The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/series/greatspeeches>.

²⁴ Benito Mussolini, speech delivered at Pisa, May 25, 1926, *Discorsi del 1926*, Milano, Alpes, 1927.

²⁵ R.J.B Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915-1945*, Penguin Books, 2005, 117.

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- ²⁶ George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1945.
- ²⁷ George Orwell, *Coming up for Air, The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968.
- ²⁸ George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, London: V. Gollancz, 1937.
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