

GEORGE ORWELL



Eric Arthur Blair (1903-1950), better known by his pen-name, **George Orwell**, was born on 25 June 1903 in eastern India, where his father worked for the Civil Service. He was educated in England and, after he left Eton, joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma, then a British colony. He resigned in 1927 and decided to become a writer. In 1928, he moved to Paris where lack of success as a writer forced him into a series of menial jobs. He described his experiences in his first book, 'Down and Out in Paris and London', published in 1933. He took the name George Orwell, shortly before its publication. This was followed by his first novel, 'Burmese Days', in 1934.

Between 1941 and 1943, Orwell worked on propaganda for the BBC. In 1943, he became literary editor of the Tribune, a weekly left-wing magazine. By now he was a prolific journalist, writing articles, reviews and books. Orwell was one of the most prominent and influential figures in twentieth-century literature. His unique political allegory *Animal Farm* was published in 1945, and it was this novel, together with the dystopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), which brought him world-wide fame. 'Animal Farm' was published. A political fable set in a farmyard but based on Stalin's betrayal of the Russian Revolution, it made Orwell's name and ensured he was financially comfortable for the first time in his life. 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' was published four years later. Set in an imaginary totalitarian future, the book made a deep impression, with its title and many phrases - such as 'Big Brother is watching you', 'newspeak' and 'doublethink' - entering popular use. By now Orwell's health was deteriorating and he died of tuberculosis on 21 January 1950.