

GEORGE ORWELL

(1903 – 1950)

CHILDHOOD

- Born *Eric Arthur Blair* on June 25, 1903 in India.
- Father Richard Blair served the British Empire in its most prized colony.
- Mother: a British governess living in India. One year after Eric's birth, she moved back to England.

SCHOOL YEARS

- His mother wanted him to have a *public school* education, but his family could not afford the fees.
- In 1911, Eric was admitted to *St. Cyprian, a preparatory school*, whose headmaster allowed Eric's parents to pay only half the normal fees.
- Eric soon recognised that *he was from a poorer home. → the importance of social class and money*

OFFICER IN BURMA

- After graduating from Etan, Eric decided to join the Imperial Police Force in *Burma*, a country of great tension between the British and Indian populations.
- Eric developed a great distaste for the British rule of India and for imperialism.

LONDON & PARIS

- When Erich returned to England, he was *determined to become a writer*.
- To find material for his writing, he went to *London and Paris*, where *he lived among the lower classes* to learn about the lives of the poor.
- He presented his experiences in his book *Down and Out in Paris and London*, for which he used the pen name *George Orwell* in case the book was a total failure. For the rest of his career, he remained Orwell to his readers.

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

- Orwell travelled to *Spain to fight against fascism*. He served in a socialist party and was responsible for training Catalanian soldiers.
- Yet the party was outlawed by the more powerful communist forces that arose as a result of the conflict. This idea of *a revolution betraying its supposed aims* is also the main theme of *Animal Farm*, which was published in 1945.

DEATH

- George Orwell died of tuberculosis in 1950.
- *A 2003 BBC documentary: A Life in Pictures*