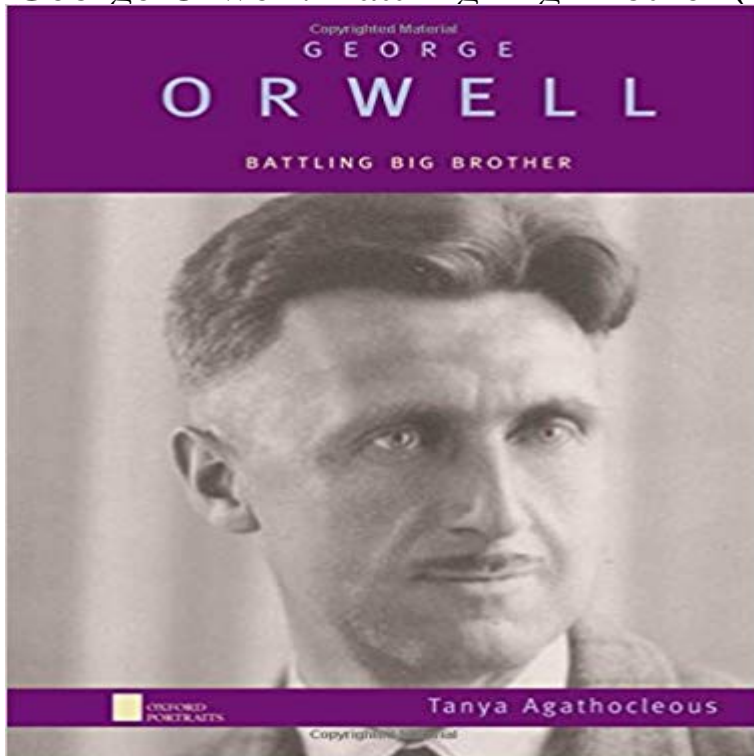


George Orwell: Battling Big Brother (Oxford Portraits)



George Orwell (1903-1950) is remembered mainly as the author of two of the most powerful, cogent social critiques ever written: *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1948). Less known is the turbulent life story of the popular novelist, from his birth in India as Eric Arthur Blair to his struggle to complete *1984* while suffering from tuberculosis, the disease that would kill him two years after the book's publication. An original, independent spirit, Orwell chose an unusual career for an Eton graduate—he joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma. Five years later, he came back to Europe and lived in both Paris and London, investigating the lives of the underprivileged and often sharing their experiences firsthand by living as a tramp. He fought against Fascism in the Spanish Civil War and simultaneously honed his writing skills while working as a journalist. Eventually he turned to writing as a full-time occupation, drawing on his varied experiences to recreate the precise details for which his novels are famous. Tanya Agathocleous's concise biography is enhanced by sidebars and picture captions which include numerous excerpts from Orwell's journalistic and literary writings. A final chapter explores Orwell's cultural legacy—his lasting contributions to freedom of thought throughout the world. Oxford Portraits are informative and insightful biographies of people whose lives shaped their times and continue to influence ours. Based on the most recent scholarship, they draw heavily on primary sources, including writings by and about their subjects. Each book is illustrated with a wealth of photographs, documents, memorabilia, framing the personality and achievements of its subject against the backdrop of history.

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