

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

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AS

George Orwell

British author and journalist



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Context

British author and journalist Eric Arthur Blair, known by his pen name George Orwell, wrote the famous dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1948. The book explores the dangers of totalitarianism, constant surveillance, and strict control over people's lives. Orwell drew inspiration from the authoritarian socialism of Stalin's Soviet Union and the censorship and propaganda of Nazi Germany.

The novel delves into the manipulation of truth and facts within society. It is set in a fictional future where the world is split into three superstates (Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia) that are always at war. The story focuses on Oceania, ruled by Big Brother, a dictator who is worshipped like a god. In Oceania, the Thought Police monitor citizens through telescreens, and arrest them or make them disappear if they are caught committing "thoughtcrimes" (thinking against Big Brother).

A new language called "Newspeak" is introduced in Oceania. Its purpose is to simplify the English language, making it impossible for people to express thoughts that go against Big Brother's principles.

This speech is given by Orwell, who is still alive today. He has written a book called *Twenty-Four Hours* as a follow-up to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and he is presenting it to the member states of the United Nations at the UN General Assembly as a special guest. While he wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a reflection on the past, the sequel is meant as a warning about what could happen if world powers continue on their current path.

Speech

War is Peace. Seventy-six years ago, I wrote these words. Until today, war is used as a tool for stability by those in power, while ordinary people pay the price with their lives for this so-called ‘stability’. Wars are claimed to be necessary for the survival of states and the peace of their citizens. But in reality, they drain resources and keep societies in a constant state of fear. Look at the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, (gestures towards the representatives), Israel and Palestine (gestures towards the representatives). The economic and political goals of the powers in this room are often disguised as peacekeeping efforts. But let’s be honest – these actions are not about peace; they are about control and influence.

This is one of the key ideas I explore in my new book, *Twenty Forty-Two* (show book).

My other major concern is the growing divide in the world. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, I imagined the world split into three superstates. Now, I don’t need to invent divisions. If things continue as they are, the world will naturally split into two: East and West.

Today, the Western powers are often seen as the ‘good guys’. But I don’t agree with that. There are no good guys anymore. I see your concerned faces – allow me to explain.

Let’s start with the West. There is a ‘West over the Rest’ mindset that dominates not only this room but the world at large. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, I wrote about ‘doublethink’ and the Thought Police. Today, we see a similar control of ideas, something I, and with me many scholars, would call the coloniality of knowledge. Western institutions decide what should be considered the norms and values of the world, and everyone else is expected to follow.

I align with scholars like Dr. Burlyuk who talks about ‘Westsplaining’ – where the West explains global events through its own biased lens, ignoring the voices and experiences of those directly impacted. The West’s ‘universal ideas’ have become a dictatorship, silencing dissent in the name of liberal values.

(Pause)

Now let's turn to the East. I'll keep it brief, as I know many in this room already see the East as the enemy. But the truth is, the East suffers from the same coloniality of knowledge – just in reverse. Propaganda dominates, fueled by an anti-West narrative. Where the West risks becoming a totalitarian regime of 'Western ideas', the East is already a totalitarian regime of 'anti-West ideas'. The manipulation of the truth and facts is rampant in both 'camps', and the people on both sides are the ones suffering: either physically or by becoming victims of propaganda.

Most painful is the ease with which we seem to forget about the achievements of our predecessors through centuries – thinkers, philosophers, humanists, revolutionaries, politicians. Achievements, which gave us the opportunity to enjoy freedom, equality, human rights, and hope for a fair world order. The apparent continuity of dedication to their ideals only emphasises this global crisis.

I am not a political scientist. I am a novelist, a journalist, and an observer. But from what I've seen, I have written *Twenty Forty-Two* (show book) as a warning – a glimpse into the future, born out of fear and sadness.

(Pause)

Thank you for inviting me to speak today. My only wish is that you use these thoughts – not for power, not for division – but for the good of the world, for the good of humanity.

Thank you.