

GEORGE ORWELL, AUTHOR, 46, DEAD

British Writer, Acclaimed for
His '1984' and 'Animal Farm,'
Is Victim of Tuberculosis

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Jan. 21—George Orwell, noted British novelist, died of tuberculosis in a hospital here today at the age of 46.

The author of "Nineteen Eighty-Four" and "Animal Farm," he had been virtually an invalid for the last three years and most of his recent writing had been done in sanitariums, to which his illness forced him to retreat. Last October he married his second wife, Sonia Brownell, assistant editor of the literary magazine, Horizon, at his bedside in a hospital.

George Orwell was the pen name of Eric Blair, whose father and grandfather were members of the Indian Civil Service. Born in India, he attended Eton College and later joined the Burmese police service, seeing duty in remote stations for several years. These experiences resulted in "Burmese Days," which was recently reprinted in Great Britain and the United States.

Mr. Orwell knew hunger and poverty in Europe, and his later books, "Down and Out in London and Paris," among them, were reflections of his personal adventures and observations. They showed an unconventional attitude toward left-wing politics and a burning passion for truth.

He fought on the Republican side in the Spanish civil war, but chose to join an anarchist unit in preference to the Communist-led International Brigade. He was severely wounded.

During World War II, he broadcast to India for the British Broadcasting Corporation, served in the Home Guard and did part-time night work in a factory until his health failed.

His first wife, the former Eileen O'Shaughnessy, died in 1945. He leaves an adopted son, Richard, in addition to his second wife.

Two Novels Popular Here

Although his literary reputation in this country rested largely on two novels published within the last four years, Mr. Orwell was considered one of the leading British novelists of the day.

The enthusiasm with which the American reading public greeted "Animal Farm" in 1946 and "Nineteen Eighty-Four" last year led Mr. Orwell's local publishers to reissue three of his earlier books. Appearing two days before his death, they formed a tribute to an author whose biting satire and vivid prophecy had earned him literary comparison with Jonathan Swift and Aldous Huxley. (The three volumes are reviewed on Page 4 of today's Book Review section.)

Both of Mr. Orwell's most popular novels were grounded in his personal distrust and hatred for any form of totalitarianism, in government, in society or in the arts.



GEORGE ORWELL

"Animal Farm," a brief, trenchant allegory in which most reviewers saw an indictment of Soviet communism, traced the rise of a dictator by using animals as its characters and a barnyard as the locale. The novel was also praised for its wit and charm, independent of any political implications.

Distaste for Imperialism

Mr. Orwell's second major success, "Nineteen Eighty-Four," by contrast was a frontal attack on the "super-state," in which the author described in frightening detail the gray, oppressive machine-life under an imagined dictatorship of thirty-four years hence.

Curiously, although many reviewers read into Mr. Orwell's novels a wholesale condemnation of left-wing politics, he considered himself a Marxist and a member of the non-Communist left wing of the British Labor party. His experience with the police in Burma gave him a distaste for imperialism that he never lost, a feeling that influenced his anti-Franco activities in the Spanish civil war.

During his early career Mr. Orwell worked variously as a dishwasher, a tutor and a bookshop clerk before his writing began to produce sufficient income to support him. Since 1937 he had lived on a farm in Hertfordshire, writing critical essays for Horizon, The London Observer and The London Tribune, in addition to his novels.

Beside "Burmese Days," his works just republished were "Down and Out in London and Paris" and "Coming Up for Air." Among his other books were "A Clergyman's Daughter," written in 1935, and "The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius," 1941.