

Animal Farm

George Orwell's novel, *Animal Farm*, is a deceitfully simple story about a group of farm animals who, tired of toiling for the benefit of humans, rebel and create their own way of life only to find themselves, several years later, toiling for the benefit of one of their own kind, the pigs. Because of the simplicity of this novel, many people consider it to be a children's story. However, beyond its lighthearted surface, it is truly a satirical attack against Stalinism. "It is also a lament for the fate of revolutions and the hopes contained in them." Adding to the complexity of the book, it also shows man's willingness to compromise the truth. In the short scope of this novel, Orwell expresses many of his ideas about men and politics.

Major, an elderly pig, is the one who plants the seed of rebellion in the minds of the other animals by sharing with them a song which he had learned as a young pig, but which he has just recalled during a dream. This song "Beasts of England" describes a peaceful life where all animals will live in harmony, no longer enslaved by humans.

Riches more than mind can picture,
Wheat and barley, oats and hay,
Clover, beans and mangel-wurzels
Shall be ours upon that day.

Bright will shine the fields of England,
Purer shall its waters be,
Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes
On the day that sets us free. (pp. 7-8)

The character of Major symbolizes the Soviet Union leader, Vladimir Ilich Lennin. Lennin too had caused his comrades to rise up in rebellion against the Czarist form of government in the hope of creating a country where everyone would be equal. Before he saw his ideas fully enacted, he died.

After the death of Major, the power is left in the hands of two other pigs, Snowball and Napoleon. Napoleon, who, without anyone else discovering, had raised a litter of puppies into fierce dogs, now uses them to chase Snowball off the farm. This shares many similarities with the way a leader came into power to succeed Lennin. Lennin's choice was Leon Trotsky, but Stalin, who is represented by Napoleon, uses tactful maneuvers to work his way into government and establish a totalitarian system.

As the only leader, Napoleon quickly begins to abuse his power. Using his superior intelligence, he soon has the other animals doing all the farm work while he and the other pigs take on the roles of supervisors. The attitudes of the animals, especially Boxer, with his motto, "Napoleon is always right," are representative of the way people in a totalitarian state blindly follow their leader. One of the most important reasons for this blind faith is fear. Napoleon creates this fear through the use of his dogs, who make sure there is no opposition to his rule. Fear alone, though, does not keep the animals loyal; rather it is the combination of fear and the hope that their original dreams will still come true.

None of the old dreams had been abandoned.
The Republic of the Animals which Major had
foretold, when the green fields of England
should be untrodden by human feet, was still
believed in. (p. 85)

This is the general feeling of the animals and keeps them working hard to reach their goals.

Over time, we see the pigs becoming more and more like humans. First we see them sleeping in beds, then drinking alcohol, and finally walking on two legs. Everyone of these things is strictly prohibited in the seven commandments; however,

Napoleon has bent the rules to help himself, so when the other animals check the rules, they have miraculously changed. This is a trait inherent in most of mankind... they seem only to follow the truth when the truth suits them. If it does not, they change it to meet their needs.

What begins as a wonderful dream where animals would control their own lives, free of human control, ends with the animals under the control of an even more oppressive ruler. Lennin's overthrow of the oppressive Czarist government, in the end, led to the tyrannical and totalitarian reign of Stalin. As long as there are such beliefs as, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," (p. 88) all rebellions for equality will fail because there will always be some group to fill the role of superiority.