

The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism

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Summary:

“The essence of oligarchical rule is not father-to-son inheritance, but the persistence of a certain world-view and a certain way of life, imposed by the dead upon the living.”

This book explains the how and why of the current government of Oceania. This state of existence is not natural in any way or predestined; it is the result of the concentrated efforts of a select group who placed into motion a chain of events designed to perpetuate their own power.

Chapter 1: Ignorance is STRENGTH

The three states essentially coexist with limited contact; that contact is primarily through WAR. As long as they maintain the same level of skill, TECHNOLOGY and RESOURCES no one state will win over the other. Because there is no contact between the citizens of the states, the superstates are able to rule as DICTATORSHIPS.

In the history of man, society has always divided itself into three classes: upper, middle, and lower. The high class wants to remain in power. The middle class wants to REPLACE the upper class. The low class wants a society that has no CLASS DISTINCTIONS. When revolution occurs, THE LOWER and MIDDLE classes join forces. After the revolution, the original LOWER class is in the worst position. The people who founded Oceania and the other states wanted to stop the PENDULUM which swung back and forth determining which people had power. Typically, the upper class has fallen because of four reasons. They are CONQUERED FROM THE OUTSIDE, THE MASSES REVOLT, MIDDLE CLASS REBELS, and THE UPPER CLASS LOSES THE WILL/CONFIDENCE TO GOVERN.

IngSoc was founded with the explicit agenda of perpetuating INEQUALITY and unfreedom. In order to do this, they realized they must control not only the ACTIONS of the citizens but their MINDS as well. The philosophy they adopted was called COLLECTIVISM. Essentially, the power base is shaped like a PYRAMID. BIG BROTHER is at the apex, followed by the inner party, the outer party, and the proles. You were not born into a class; instead when you were 16, you WERE TESTED in order to determine your placement within the society (though this is typically the class you were born into). If you were excessively SMART/GIFTED then you would be eliminated. If instead you were merely talented and therefore likely to think independently, you would be placed in THE OUTER PARTY. To maintain the system, IngSoc is supported by a controlling group known as the THOUGHT POLICE. The worst and only crime that a citizen can commit is to THINK (not act) differently than what the party desires.

Chapter 3: War is PEACE

There are three superstates which occupy specific geographic locations. They are: Oceania which occupies the lands of THE AMERICAS, BRITAIN, AND AUSTRALIA, Eastasia which occupies CHINA, SOUTH ASIA AND JAPAN, and EURASIA which occupies the Northern part of Europe and Asia from Portugal to the Berlin Strait. Consequently these states do constant battle over THE POLES and AFRICA. Each state has a different belief system. For example, Oceania believes in IngSoc or English Socialism. Likewise, Eastasia believes in OBLITERATION OF SELF/DEATH WORSHIP and Eurasia in NEO-BOLSHEVISM. Despite these very different states, they all function pretty much the same. They wage battle in the “no-man” lands in order to gain a limited amount of physical resources and LARGE “SLAVE” POPULATIONS. This also helps the states because they are able to rid themselves of SURPLUS GOODS which is necessary if they are going to keep their populations at a low comfort-level. A low comfort-level denies people the opportunity to think and question society. Scarcity allows for a few small LUXURIES like chocolate, tobacco, and servants which allows the people to see themselves as members of the high, middle, or low class. A state organized as a HIERARCHY/OLIGARCHY/TOTALITARIANISM with different classes must be in a constant state of war. Because the war is constant, it has essentially stopped being DANGEROUS. No country wants to or intends to WIN the war.