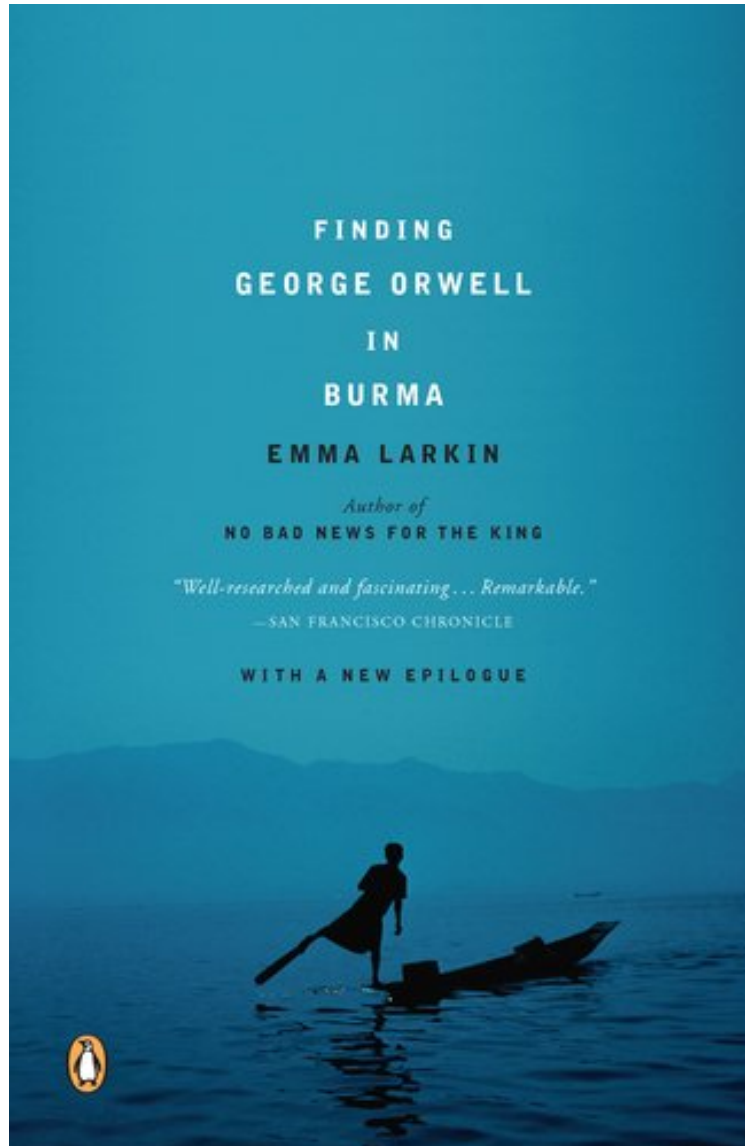


## Finding George Orwell in Burma

Emma Larkin

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**Emma Larkin : Finding George Orwell in Burma** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Finding George Orwell in Burma:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well writtenBy FreeSpiritedThis is a well written beautiful book. I loved this book! The author used George Orwell's writings about Burma as a canvas to her present-day travels in the same country, now known as Myanmar. Having read George Orwell other books, I really appreciate this book. Even if you haven't read any of Orwell's other books, you will still come away with a grand new appreciation for how people

cope living under dictatorship. Go read it! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book has more than met my expectations - it exceeded them! By Kersi F. Munshi This book has more than met my expectations - it has exceeded them. Emma Larkin has done her research. And she did it before she went to Burma. She has looked at the full Burmese experience, from the standpoints of the ordinary Burmese, the victims of violence perpetrated by the brutal military junta, the equally-brutal British empire, and before, to the (British) bureaucrats who ran the country in Orwell's time and until they packed up and left, as well as that of a visiting foreigner. Rarely does one come across a better-written travelogue, so well researched, so rich in detail, so descriptive of experiences, and so complete in the space it took to write in it. Hats off to Ms. Larkin. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very well Written Book By Mr. R This is a very useful and informative narrative for anyone interested in George Orwell or his ideas. The authors ability to define Orwell's Burma experiences and put them in to context is done extremely well. Modern Burma is the definition of Orwell's fears of a government out of control ruthlessly oppressive. The authors courage traveling Burma and documenting The relationship between Orwell and the people there is a great achievement. I really enjoyed this book and highly recommend it.

A fascinating political travelogue that traces the life and work of George Orwell, author of 1984 and ANIMAL FARM, in Southeast Asia Over the years the American writer Emma Larkin has spent traveling in Burma, also known as Myanmar, she's come to know all too well the many ways this brutal police state can be described as "Orwellian." The life of the mind exists in a state of siege in Burma, and it long has. But Burma's connection to George Orwell is not merely metaphorical; it is much deeper and more real. Orwell's mother was born in Burma, at the height of the British raj, and Orwell was fundamentally shaped by his experiences in Burma as a young man working for the British Imperial Police. When Orwell died, the novel-in-progress on his desk was set in Burma. It is the place George Orwell's work holds in Burma today, however, that most struck Emma Larkin. She was frequently told by Burmese acquaintances that Orwell did not write one book about their country - his first novel, *Burmese Days* - but in fact he wrote three, the "trilogy" that included *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. When Larkin quietly asked one Burmese intellectual if he knew the work of George Orwell, he stared blankly for a moment and then said, "Ah, you mean the prophet!" In one of the most intrepid political travelogues in recent memory, Emma Larkin tells of the year she spent traveling through Burma using the life and work of George Orwell as her compass. Going from Mandalay and Rangoon to poor delta backwaters and up to the old hill-station towns in the mountains of Burma's far north, Larkin visits the places where Orwell worked and lived, and the places his books live still. She brings to vivid life a country and a people cut off from the rest of the world, and from one another, by the ruling military junta and its vast network of spies and informers. Using Orwell enables her to show, effortlessly, the weight of the colonial experience on Burma today, the ghosts of which are invisible and everywhere. More important, she finds that the path she charts leads her to the people who have found ways to somehow resist the soul-crushing effects of life in this most cruel police state. And George Orwell's moral clarity, hatred of injustice, and keen powers of observation serve as the author's compass in another sense too: they are qualities she shares and they suffuse her book - the keenest and finest reckoning with life in this police state that has yet been written.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . The author, an American journalist fluent in Burmese, writing under a pseudonym, notes that there's a joke in Burma (now Myanmar) that Orwell wrote not one novel about the country, but three: *Burmese Days*, *Animal Farm* and *1984*. The first takes place during the British colonial days, while the latter two, Larkin argues, more closely reflect the situation there today. " 'Truth is true only within a certain period of time,' " she quotes a regime spokesman saying after a 1988 uprising. " 'What was truth once may no longer be truth after many months or years.' " Indeed, providing an accurate representation of Burmese life proves daunting, as Larkin encounters a nation bristling with informants and paranoia. Her language skills, however, allow her to glean information and mingle with the country's reserved and cautious intelligentsia. In addition to Larkin's depiction of the political landscape, the book also features wonderfully vibrant descriptions of the land and people. Larkin's prose is striking and understated, and she allows the people she meets to speak their parts without editorializing. In this way, she comes across not as an idealist but rather as an inquisitive and trustworthy guide to the underlying reality of a country whose leaders would rather have outsiders focus only on their carefully constructed veneer. "All you had to do, it seemed," Larkin writes, "was scratch the surface of one of the town's smiling residents and you would find bitterness or tears." Her efforts have resulted in a lucid and insightful illustration of truly Orwellian circumstances. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Larkin (a pseudonym), an American journalist based in Bangkok, believes that it was George Orwell's stint as an imperial policeman in British-ruled Burma during the 1920s that turned him into a writer of conscience. To prove her theory and assess what imprint if any he left on the culture, she bravely journeyed throughout the now brutally totalitarian state to visit the places Orwell lived and worked. A meticulous observer, she captures the masked spirit of a people monitored by military spies and constantly threatened with incarceration and torture. As her risky conversations with Burmese intellectuals, writers, teashop waiters, and students reveal, censorship is severe, yet Burma remains a profoundly literary country as

people harbor secret libraries and talk passionately about books. Writing with admirable suppleness and understatement, Larkin reports that Orwell is known as a prophet in Burma, so closely do *Animal Farm* and *1984* reflect what has happened in this beautiful yet tragically oppressed land. Her quest for the past illuminates the grim present in this true-life Orwellian world. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved

"Well-researched and fascinating...Remarkable." *San Francisco Chronicle* "One of the most unusual travelogues to come out of Southeast Asia in some time, and a truer picture of authoritarianism than anyone has written since, perhaps, Orwell himself." *Mother Jones* "[This] mournful, meditative, appealingly idiosyncratic book is a hybrid, an exercise in literary detection but also a political travelogue that uses Burma to explain Orwell, and Orwellespecially the Orwell of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to explain the miseries of present-day Myanmar (as it is now known)." *The New York Times* "This is one of those rare books, a beautifully crafted account of a journey which actually takes the reader somewhere new and unusual. Emma Larkin did not just go searching for Orwell, she found him. Along the way, she made the chilling discovery that in modern-day Burma, the totalitarian tyrannies he evoked in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are horrifyingly alive and well." Jon Lee Anderson "Combining literary criticism and solid field reporting, [Larkin] captures the country at its best, and more often, its worst." *San Francisco Chronicle*