but they have. He leaves the question why unanswered." And, once againin Tribune (8 November 1946), he devoted something like half of his 'AsI Please column to a savage discussion of American fashion magazines.4Before we get too excited by even this limited breakthrough, however,a it is important to consider his unchanging attitude toward contraception, birth control and abortion. According to Christopher Hollis, oneof Orwell's deepest beliefs had always been with 'the profound evil ofcontraception. He thought that even the views of the Catholic Churchaon this issue were too weak and that 'people who desired intercoursenwithout children were guilty of a profound lack of faith in life." In hisaThe English People, published in 1947, but written in 1944, he put forwardproposals that were as George Woodcock observes 'probably the mostreactionary he ever made!" In order to counter a declining birth rate, heradvocated the punitive taxation of the childless ('taxation will have to bergraded so as to encourage child-bearing') and more active action to stopabortion, which he complained was today looked on as little more thana peccadillo. The idea that women having abortions, and the abortionsprocured by working-class women would have been dangerous 'backstreet' abortions, regarded it as in any way 'a peccadillo' is positivelyobscene. He even complained about the increase in the keeping of petsas affecting the birth rate! What of Nineteen Eighty-Four? I have argued elsewhere that there hasbeen a neglect in discussion of the book, by both feminist critics andothers, of the powerful stand it takes in favour of the sexual liberation ofwomen, that Orwell attacks the double-standard in his portrayal of therelationship between Winston Smith and Julia."s For Anne Mellor, Julia,'sexually liberated, healthy, a creature of emotion but not intellect, is, 'aman-identified woman', in fact 'the stereotype of the ideal woman inpatriarchal society.4 This is certainly how she might appear in the early1980s, but the battles being fought in the late 1940s were different battles.Placed back in the context of the time he wrote, Orwell's defence ofJulia's defiant and subversive stand in favour of promiscuity and women'ssexual pleasure as demonstrated by Winston Smith's endorsement of thatstand is pretty much unique in the literature of the time. As Smith tellsJulia, 'Listen, the more men you've had, the more I love you.4 Therestill an argument around whether or not and to what extent Julia wasbased on Sonia Brownell, who a very ill Orwell married on 13 Octobera1949. Sonia was by all accounts very much an intellectual whereas Julialfamously falls asleep when Winston is reading The Theory of Oligarchical

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