

We The People
Program 128
The Thought Police



Listeners will know that I have a penchant for the unusual and the colourful metaphor. Building a story or reporting an opinion using word pictures can be a powerful tool and so reflecting on the work of Eric Blair is fitting today in this context. Eric Blair also known by his pen pseudonym of George Orwell wrote the book called 1984 mid last century. Nineteen Eighty Four was a dark view of life in the then future and was ahead of its time and coined phrases which resonate beautifully today over 60 years later.

The story is set in the then dystopian future of 1984 and a gentleman named Winston Smith who endures a squalid existence in the super state of Oceania under the constant surveillance of the Thought Police. Winston works in a small office cubical of the Ministry of Truth rewriting history in accord with the dictates of the Party and its omnipotent figure head, Big Brother. After falling in love, Winston is arrested by the Thought Police and is rehabilitated in room 101. His crime is the act of Doublethink which is where one holds two contradictory thoughts at the same time. In the end people from outside the Party are vaporized and referred to as non persons. The actual end has a creative ambiguous and timeless twist.

This remarkable novel of thought police and big brother constructs is more relevant today than ever before. The idea of a totalitarian world of suppression and control is almost complete where we the people feel a deep loss of personal freedom and a profound resentment of bureaucracy and useless politicians who neither sow nor reap. In my view Big Brother resides in our legislation today precipitated by minority groups and an apathetic public. So how do you unscramble the omelet. Well it's hard and almost impossible but credit to the current federal government as it promotes change to the Racial Discrimination Act to remove the ill conceived wording which makes it illegal to hurt the feelings of others and how on earth do you measure that in advance. Improbably, offence is proof of freedom of speech when you are peacefully at odds with others in what you say and believe. The Government wants to repeal four sections of the Act, including 18C, which makes it unlawful for someone to publicly offend or insult others. Social and news commentator Andrew Bolt was found guilty under the act by the thought police for simply and reasonably speaking his mind on so called white or light skinned aborigines claiming native indigenous status but falling short in his view. He was right to express his view and his point was relevant to the national voice and to help avoid dystopia forming and the divide it inevitably brings. Big Brother then suppressed his right to speak and vaporised him in the courts through their flawed Orwellian logic as though it was 1984.

Many folk and organisations and the media are welcoming the federal government's decision to try and change the legislation to return a modicum of reasonable freedom of speech to Australia. Governments can legislate all they like on any issue but in the end people will have a view and suppressing that view increases social tension and does not change people for the better. This is why from time to time the pressure within a suppressed society forces its presence to be felt by the Pauline Hanson's of this world. Her voice and ideas resonated after the country was suppressed for years by the likes of Paul Keating's thought police. You simply can't control people or frame a free society by passing endless legislation and signing up for international agreements and protocols which in the end only promote a world government. As time passes this fictional idea becomes more likely by the day and the demand for us to conform on a global scale is now a real and present danger.

We Australians believe our Constitution to be the bedrock of the country and it is in many ways. However its great deficiency is that there is no mention of freedom of speech.....none. The Courts have decided there is an implied freedom with respect to political commentary of sorts but no mention of freedom of speech in the great tome. We need a government willing to tackle that and correct that deficiency else we end up governed by a mismatch of agreements, treaties and half baked legislation which in the end divides and does not promote unity at all. I hope the federal government stays the course with changing the legislation to return common sense and a little freedom to us. In the meantime just watch all the nutters and minority groups step forward with their own micro agendas in their nation of myopia.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley