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**Telescreens - More than Technology
Represent Our Resistance**

By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD

BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board

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Anúncios

Thought-crime was not a thing that could be concealed forever. You might
dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were
bound to get you.

-Winston Smith, [1984](#)

But then it was precisely the amateur spy who was the greatest danger of all.

-Winston Smith, [1984](#)

The American Dream includes the lost and wondering Black young man on some
depressed street in Detroit or Los Angeles or New Orleans. It includes those in run
down apartments, in run down buildings who know the city negotiators and their
corporate partners are coming sooner or late with the good news about "urban
renewal." It includes immigrant workers on the run and in hiding and those captured

and being held for deportation. The American Dream includes those workers earning wages so below the radar it feels like slavery. For some, it's another form of enslavement. These are the "proles" - those dying in the American Dream. In the American Dream, "proles" - the poor, unemployed, and low-wage earner are "losers." The motto of the American Dream is all for one and no one for all!

If others fortunate enough to afford the high gas prices and airline tickets drive or fly to Denver, Colorado to participate in protest outside the Democratic Convention at the Pepsi, yes *Pepsi* Center experience "Freedom Cage" is that any different from Beijing's empty Chinese Ethnic Cultural Park? The spectacle inside repeatedly spoke of the "American Dream" while outside, the people experienced tear gas, harassment, marginalization, and above all, surveillance. Here is change - the same as yesterday and the day before - only worse.

The American Dream is also [1984](#)

Here we are - on the way to the goal of American Empire by way of confining and scrutinizing and compiling lists all as a matter of national - global corporate security. From within the narrative of U.S. imperialism, legislators speak directly or indirectly of corporatism as a necessity to combat "terrorism." And "terrorism" is perceived as "foreign" acts of aggression or resistance to the body politics of American Empire.

Denying privacy and abolishing the concept of freedom is the American Dream today. Telescreens are more than technology; they have a human face and walk on two legs. They listen for signs of thought that differs from the one - Republican Party - narrative distributed to the citizenry by corporate media and educational institutions. The human telescreens mastered the art of deceit: conversation is guileful work.

It is in the national interest of this government and its politicians to honor the wishes of the corporate gods and go after capital through the theft of other people's resources and labor and to then capitalize on their suffering, grief, poverty, hunger or thirst. It's always been about creating an *American*, that is, corporate, Empire. This has been the dream of many. The American Empire controls by knowing what the enemy thinks. If the enslaved desired freedom then *privacy* must be denied. Unilateral spying among the enslaved and eavesdropping on horseback by patrols assisted in the daily operations of surveillance for the benefit of the South's economic growth but also for the rise of the U.S. as a leading industrial power.

Everyday in the U.S., Blacks come under scrutiny from others, white and Black. In the mid-western college town where I once lived, racial, social, cultural, and political difference determined the ordering of people. Those of us *different* people, whether white or Black, experienced the unified attention of the educational institutions, of the law enforcement system, and of the prison-industrial complex. Surveillance is subtle but organized to differentiate difference, particularly within racialized difference.

Africans enslaved in the U.S. were denied their right to privacy and to freedom. The slaveholder and his commune of accomplices relied on gathered information about the bodies of African men and women in order to control the mind. *This one is a good breeder. That one will make a good field worker.* Slaveholder soon discovered the need for surveillance among a population that never relinquished their right to think about freedom and act on their desire to be human despite the inhumane conditions of enslavement. The general white American public, South and North, as well as fellow enslaved were incorporated in the operation of spying.

Surveillance against Black Americans continued after slavery. The "emancipation" of the

U. S. allowed the state to *reconstruct* and manipulate more varying expressions of *difference* and to coerce a broader sector of the American public to accept and participate in the operation of surveillance.

The Civil Rights movement, the Black Panthers, the Black Power movement, to the Viet Nam War movement, the Women's movement, the American Indian movement, and the Gay Rights movement gave the U.S. a body of knowledge about free minds and unwilling bodies. Individuals pursuing the American Dream have learned how to respond to agitators, protesters, resisters, militants, radicals, and homegrown terrorists. Consider the law enforcement shootings of unarmed young Black American men or the judiciary imprisonment of resister Rev. Edward Pinkney in Michigan or Mumia in Pennsylvania as actions taken to defend the American Dream of Pax Americana.

Recently, I heard a "progressive" talk show host (a prominent white lawyer) describe 1968 as the year when "angry" Blacks burned and destroyed their communities. He went on to describe other protesters, women and students. But Blacks were relegated to "angry" Blacks, and if you are a young person today, you would think all Black protesters or activists (aside from Martin Luther King) were rioters, looters, destroyers of their community! Mind you, this host expressed his anger with passion against the Bush regime or against the pharmaceutical drug companies, for example, every week! Most Black people *were angry with passion* against the U.S. government and its refusal to confront the conditions of poverty, unemployment, education, or housing. I could hear in this host's voice his acceptance of the American Dream that denounces and rejects Black anger as standing in the way of "progress."

But this almost seems like a time in the distant past...

You might recall him. A guy named O'Brien. O'Brien is a member of the Inner Party, and Winston Smith has a dream that O'Brien, sitting next to him in a "pitch-dark room," quietly said: "we shall meet in the place where there is no darkness." Later, Winston meets O'Brien.

Momentarily he caught O'Brien's eye. O'Brien had stood up. He had taken off his spectacles and was in the act of resetting them on his nose with his characteristic gesture. But there was a fraction of a second when their eyes met, and for as long as it took to happen, Winston knew - yes, he *knew!* - that O'Brien was thinking the same thing as himself. An unmistakable message had been passed... 'I am with you,' O'Brien seemed to be saying to him. 'I know precisely what you are feeling. I know all about your contempt, your hatred, your disgust. But don't worry; I am on your side!'

And so it begins with whispered words: "don't worry; I am on your side!"

In 1984, George Orwell's protagonist Winston believes that O'Brien believes in freedom from BIG BROTHER. BIG BROTHER and O'Brien are not alien to the American Dream. Consider the story of Mary Lou Sapone (maiden name) and Mary McFate (spy).

McFate led the Million Moms March (2000), and according to a *Mother Jones'* article "There's Something about Mary: Unmasking a Gun Lobby Mole," July 30, 2008, volunteered to organize against gun violence. There's Mary McFate helping "state groups coordinate their activities in Washington for gun control legislation, and regularly attending strategy and organizing meetings." She's for real, right? She's no 1984 O'Brien, you think?

McFate sought information, specific information: Find out what anti-gun activists are

thinking. McFate listened to activists and victims of gun violence, and purposely pursued leadership roles on behalf of these victims. A zealot on behalf of gun-control issues in a number of leading anti-gun violence organizations, Sapone was no zealot as a spy. She was an orthodox believer in BIG BROTHER.

Winston notes that the believers maneuver in a state of "unconsciousness." Zeal is not enough. Zeal is for the Christian fundamentalists that King George and his crime squad mocked. But the characteristics of "unconsciousness" are "aloofness" and a "sort of saving stupidity," necessary for functionaries of the State. Why wouldn't she see herself as a "research consultant"? Sapone thought nothing of joining every anti-gun organization she could find. As a member of the National Rifle Association, this woman thought nothing of covertly infiltrating citizens groups "for private security firms hired by corporations that are targeted by activist campaigns."

The *Mother Jones* report continues. "Despite her supposed commitment to the cause, her friends and colleagues in the gun control community considered McFate something of a curiosity." A "curiosity"? "Among other things, she had a tendency to drop in and out of contact, explaining away her absences by saying she had been vacationing aboard luxury cruise liners." Taking a luxury cruise liner would be a dead give away that something was indeed wrong with Mary! But McFate/Sapone was very much committed to the cause - the cause of achieving control and dominance of people and resources for transnational corporations. Isn't this the strategic goal of the American Dream?

In a "1984" world, "change" will mean the further curtailing of our privacy and freedom and resistance to our organizing resistance! But how many of us Black on the Left have known this for years? Winston says what we know: the slogan FREEDOM IS SLAVERY will change "when the concept of freedom has been abolished." Hasn't this government been in the business of abolishing the concept of freedom for the last forty years? Ultimately, there will "be no thought...[because] orthodoxy means not thinking - not needing to think." "Orthodoxy is unconsciousness." Freedom Cage is normal!

Nothing is outside of BIG BROTHER - *in our here and now!*

BIG BROTHER is the individual and the individual is BIG BROTHER. The enemy ("militants," "dissenters," or "resisters") is within and out there in the Middle East or in Cuba or in Venezuela. In a "1984" world such as the world some of us know today, "co-workers," "neighbors," and even "family" and "friends" accept unconsciously, the verdict of "guilty" whereas Sapone's deception doesn't warrant a corporate media spectacle or a "special report."

Sapone knew *where* to do her best work.

In 1984, O'Brien passes Winston and whispers: "we shall meet in the place where there is no darkness." And O'Brien is right!

And here's the key message from Winston for us.

When O'Brien comes across Winston's radar screen, the latter reacts. He shields himself from the telescreen, but he *reacts* to O'Brien. He speaks of receiving a "signal of recognition" from O'Brien! He *thinks* that O'Brien, a member of the Inner Party, might be a resister, someone opposed to the tyranny of BIG BROTHER! He *reacts* to O'Brien and, in the process, succumbs to O'Brien's *focused* scheme to rein in one of their best writer/liars - functionary. Winston forgets himself and his principle about staying sane in order to carry on the human heritage. His thoughts about freedom

begin to wane. He forgets his own work of thinking in opposition. As a result of his forgetfulness, *he* draws O'Brien's attention in that "pitch-dark room" of his mind. In turn, O'Brien *observes* Winston's obsession to be *uncovered* as an unbeliever!

But this world of [1984](#) isn't a game. It's not about T-shirts and buttons, flag pins and returning home to suburbia when it's all said and done. Winston never develops his focus on opposition. He treats the government of BIG BROTHER as if it were a game. He loses his way long before his "capture" and interrogation at the end of [1984](#).

O'Brien, on the other hand, knows what he sees in Winston. It's easy to convert this "valued" intellectual worker for BIG BROTHER. And so it begins for Winston: "two gin-scented tears trickled down the sides of his [Winston's] nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished." The narrative tells us that Winston "had won the victory over himself."

"He loved Big Brother" - after all! Winston is sure to become a great telescreen on two legs!

The revolution will not be televised on your local or cable television stations. Neither *NPR* nor *Air America* will broadcast the revolution. No mention of it will appear in the *New York Times* or the *Chicago Tribune*. The Pepsi center will not allow it to happen there among the Democrats, and don't look for it in Minnesota at that other spectacle by the Republicans. The Fusion Centers will not send their corporate reporters to document this *change*.

We, on the Left, can't afford to be our own worst enemy. Resistance is work done by those who couldn't possibly imagine any other greater work, or any other way of living (under the conditions of BIG BROTHER) and who think in opposition as there is no other way to think for action.


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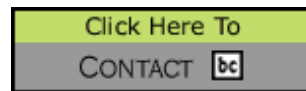
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member, Lenore Jean Daniels, PhD, has been a writer, for over thirty years of commentary, resistance criticism and cultural theory, and short stories with a Marxist sensibility to the impact of cultural narrative violence and its antithesis, resistance narratives. With entrenched dedication to justice and equality, she has served as a coordinator of student and community resistance projects that encourage the Black Feminist idea of an equalitarian community and facilitator of student-teacher communities behind the walls of academia for the last twenty years. Dr. Daniels holds a PhD in Modern American Literatures, with a specialty in Cultural Theory (race, gender, class narratives) from Loyola University, Chicago. Click [here](#) to contact Dr. Daniels.

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