🇺🇸 "Those who control the present, control the past" (George Orwell)

By Steve Bakke 🇺🇸 June 15, 2020

"Those who control the present, control the past and those who control the past, control the future." – from George Orwell's "1984."

An article I read, followed by a friend's email, spurred something in my memory that I'll try to relate here. I realized that several unpleasant and threatening events that we've recently suffered through brought to mind two fictional experiences many of us remember.

First, there was an imagined society in which people led dehumanized and fearful lives. It takes place in a wild and misery filled world following a catastrophic event that brought about societal collapse, murder, revenge, and intense fear. Desperate, unhinged people occupied both sides of the conflict. I'm describing what was going on in the series of "Mad Max" movies.

Next, do you remember the following statement of frustration from another book and movie? "Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the party is always right." That was Winston, secretly talking to Julia about the "Big Brother" government, in George Orwell's iconic novel "1984."

I ask you to think about our own very real experiences with rewriting of history books, pulling down historical statues, violent and destructive riots, and "autonomous zones." You're probably thinking "those aren't the same" as the situations depicted in those fictional enactments. Remember, I said they "brought to mind" those experiences, not "reflected" them.

It's at least worth contemplating whether "law and order" will be something that's totally redefined. If so, it concerns me. It bothers me less that we have disruptions and riots around the country, than the fact that a growing number of city councils and mayors seem to be unbothered by it all. Some are inviting and condoning "gang occupation," while smiling and

calling these gangs "patriots." Is it possible we're on the verge of establishing "no go" zones in U.S. cities, similar to those in Europe, where police will not set foot? Yes, it worries me.

And will we eventually "cancel" all of our flawed Founders and other historical leaders? If you consider all of the important people who were slaveowners, or guilty of other politically incorrect sins, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, would there be anybody left in the history books? Some would predict that only Abe Lincoln, from among significant historical leaders, would be left standing at the end. But Lincoln's historical demise would come eventually when these "crusaders" finally discover he had seriously negotiated the elimination of slavery by putting slaves on boats and shipping them to a newly created slave country/colony. What do we accomplish by wiping away these names from our history?

I'd like to encourage serious thought and discussion about the implications of these current events. Are we living in a world in which far-fetched fiction is becoming, or has become, reality? Are we learning that after all, truth is stranger than fiction?