

# The dominican republic: a spitting image of 1984

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It is surprising how a dystopian novel written in the 1940's can accurately reflect our society and governments today. George Orwell's 1984 features a totalitarian oligarchy that uses extreme tactics to maintain The Party in power. In order to do this, The Party constantly distorts the truth in order to deceive the proles and even those that work for The Party. As far-fetched as it may sound, 1984's Party depicts many of our governments nowadays, including the Dominican Republic's government. The Dominican government distorts the truth as well as history, in order to maintain their oligarchy in power just as The Party does in 1984.

The current Dominican government alters the truth in order to manipulate the citizens. The government also creates scapegoats to redirect blame and hate to other entities and limits the information the citizens have access to in order to maintain the lower class uneducated and ignorant and conserve their power. 1984 is eerily similar to the Dominican Republic today. In 1984, The Party manipulates information and data to benefit their political party. One instance in which we see this is when the chocolate ration is decreased, something that will not appeal to the starving citizens of Ingsoc. Winston is the one in charge of typing this announcement and even though the ration is going to be reduced, he is instructed by The Party to write it as if it is being increased.

It reads," Winston was aware, the chocolate ration was to be reduced from thirty grammes to twenty at the end of the present week" (50). Even though Winston was aware, the rest of the citizens were not. Winston even recounts how "... there had even been demonstrations to thank Big Brother for raising the chocolate ration to twenty grammes a week."(74) Here we see how the

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Party manipulates statistics and the way information is delivered to benefit their government, where citizens even thank them. Just like in 1984, the Dominican Republic alters statistics to benefit their political party.

At the end of last year, the PLD's website released an article titled " Middle class grows and the quality of life of Dominicans improves". Along with the article, a chart was published featuring the percentages of the different social classes. The chart did in fact show a decrease over the past four years in the ' poor' social class. The article boasted about this and claimed " the percentage of the poor population decreased to 25. 9%, a level inferior to that before the crisis in 2003".

(Mises, I.) However, they do not mention anything about the new social class featured in the chart labeled " Vulnerable". This ' social class' created by the PLD is not defined, but is placed between the ' poor' and ' middle' classes. This " vulnerable" class shows a steady increase totaling a 44. 3%. The article even reads, " An investigation will be conducted to determine the definition of the ' vulnerable' social class.

By changing the way the information is presented, the PLD political party easily made citizens believe there has been a significant change in the social classes and a decrease in the ' poor' class. Curiously, this article was published months before the next presidential elections. It is evident the manipulation of statistics is used to benefit their political party and increase their chances of being reelected as governing party. In 1984, The Party omits fragments of history and creates scapegoats to redirect hate and blame to

other entities. This is especially evident in 1984 when talking about the war Ingsoc had with Eastasia and Eurasia.

The citizens don't even know they were allied to Eastasia before being at war with them. This is due to the fragments of history that are deleted and omitted. " To trace out the history of the whole period, to say who was fighting whom at any given moment, would have been utterly impossible, since no written record, and no spoken word, ever made mention of any other alignment than the existing one. At this moment, for example, in 1984 (if it was 1984), Oceania was at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. In no public or private utterance was it ever admitted that the three powers had at any time been grouped along different lines" (43). This lack of information of Ingsoc's history is what allows The Party to create scapegoats, which are blamed for the war.

The Eastasian soldiers, or ' Mongols' as they are called, are used by The Party for citizens to release their anger, and blame them for the war. We see this in an instance, as Eastasian soldiers are taken captive. " At the start there had been a few boos and hisses, but it came only from the Party members among the crowd, and had soon stopped" (146) The Party encourages them to blame them, because they know citizens won't recall they used to be allies before. The lack of information allows them to claim they are to blame for the war and to redirect any dissatisfaction and hate from their party. The Dominican Republic's government has also omitted sections of history and has taken advantage of this to create scapegoats. A private newspaper published in 2013 an article that read, " The government

has given Dominicans the idea that Haitians have invaded the country slowly and silently in the past years.

" The former president Leonel Fernandez is criticized by the article, " Leonel has turned the PLD extremely conservative and nationalist." (please see citation at bottom) These chauvinistic speeches are exactly what have promoted hate and blame towards Haitians and has targeted them as " a threat to our sovereignty". Since this article was published by a private newspaper, very few Dominicans had access to this information since most cannot afford it or don't have access to Internet. Public newspapers and textbooks fail to show the reality. The government has called Haitian migrations a " slow and silent invasion", yet it fails to mention that Trujillo was the one that actually brought Haitians to the country to work.

Another private article mentions how " In just the first 5 years of his government, Trujillo had allowed the entrance of 60, 000 Haitians into the country." This crucial information is omitted on school textbooks and public newspapers. By doing this, current governments have been able to get away with creating scapegoats and blaming Haitians for economical and social problems in the Dominican Republic, just as it is done in 1984. In 1984, we see how The Party maintains the proles ignorant to prevent them from rebelling by limiting their access to information and only providing them with propaganda. Government propaganda, of course, is heavily manipulated and biased as mentioned before. The Party is conscious of this and uses the lack of information as a weapon to keep them from rebelling.

Towards the end of the book we see this explicitly explained in *The Book*. “ From the proletarians nothing is to be feared. Left to themselves, they will continue from generation to generation and from century to century, working, breeding, and dying, not only without any impulse to rebel, but without the power of grasping that the world could be other than it is. They could only become dangerous if the advance of industrial technique made it necessary to educate them more highly; but, since military and commercial rivalry are no longer important, the level of popular education is actually declining. What opinions the masses hold, or do not hold, is looked on as a matter of indifference. They can be granted intellectual liberty because they have no intellect.

” (256) Here we see how the lower class is intentionally being kept ignorant and deprived from information. By doing this, the Party is able to maintain itself in power without threats from the proles, which is the biggest social class in quantity. The Dominican Republic also relies on the lower class’ lack of education and information. The government claims there has been development in the area of education, but evidence proves the contrary. In April 2016, 2500 adults graduated from the government’s new literacy programs called “ Quisqueya Aprende Contigo”. The creation for this project cost around 2 billion Dominican Pesos (Amarante Baret Resalta Inversion De RD\$2 Mil MM En “ Quisqueya Aprende Contigo”).

In this ‘ graduation’, 2500 people were given diplomas for their supposed completion of the literacy program. A video was later aired by a private news channel, where these ‘ graduates’ said they “ Didn’t even know why [they] were there” (Falsa Graduacion Empana y pone programa Quisqueya Aprende <https://assignbuster.com/the-dominican-republic-a-spitting-image-of-1984/>

Contigo). Many expressed they had never attended the program and many did not know how to read and write, yet the government's party published ads praising the government's effort and success. The lower class of the Dominican Republic is majorly uneducated and illiterate. An Unesco specialist, Rosa Maria Torres, estimates that the literacy rate is around to 40-50% . (Maria, Rosa) The government, however, boasts claiming there is 91% literacy rate (Central Intelligence Agency).

This kind of propaganda is what has led thousands of Dominicans and International entities to believe that the country and it's education is progressing. These claims are what have maintained most citizens satisfied with the idea that the government is actually investing money in education. This, is what is maintaining the lowest, yet the most numerous, socioeconomic class from rebelling against the government. The only access to information they have, is given to them by the government, who relies on their limited access to education and information and at the same time making erroneous statement about the education they are receiving. The government has eliminated them as threats, by taking the most powerful weapon away from them. The idea that 1984's Ingsoc and the Dominican Republic are actually very similar should be frightful by itself.

The fact that so many analogies can be made and supported between the governments nowadays and The Party from 1984 is disgusting. Dominican Republic's reality is a spitting image of George Orwell's 1984. Perhaps this desire for absolute control is innate of the human being, making 1984 atemporal and relevant at every point in history. Bibliography: Mises,

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