

Voices from the Premieres of *BA Speaks: REVOLUTION—NOTHING LESS!* Bob Avakian Live

At the March 16-17 premieres of the film *BA Speaks: REVOLUTION—NOTHING LESS!* in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay Area, *Revolution* interviewed dozens of audience members during the intermissions and at the end of the showings. The following are excerpts from some of those interviews.

Two students... a man and a woman

Q: What stood out to you most about the film and BA?

W: I like the comparison drawn between how undocumented immigrant families are separated, and this is like how the children of Black slaves were sold, and how the tears and suffering of the people mean nothing. If you don't take action—then this is just talk and we let the suffering continue, when in fact we can make a difference.

Q: What did you know about BA before and what's your impression of him now?

W: I knew before the film that BA is the leader of the RCP. After the film, I see more how serious he is about revolution, and spoke at length on this. I like how he uses so many examples.

Q: BA says, "Revolution—Nothing Less!" What do you think about that?

M: I think it's appropriate. That is what is needed.

W: Initially I thought the title was too pushy. Now I think it is appropriate. What he says about the youth, that there is only a bad future for the youth under this system is true. Revolution has a future for the youth. The suffering of the people and crimes of the system are so extreme, revolution—nothing less is what is needed.

Q: What did you think about the challenge to people at the end?

M: I want to let more people know about the revolution.

W: I feel a responsibility to make revolution. Before when I met the Revolution Club, I felt a sense of responsibility but now it is stronger. You need to make a difference.

Q: Those this system has cast off, those it has treated as less than human, can be the backbone and driving force of a fight not only to end their own oppression, but to finally end all oppression and emancipate all of the humanity?

M: I agree that is true.

W: That's true and we need to realize it.

Two young Black women students

Q: Tell me a little about yourself and how you heard about this.

A1: We were walking from class on campus and someone just stopped us. We saw a poster of this Black man being pinned down by a bunch of police. I saw it and it intrigued me so was just like I kinda wanna go. So I didn't hesitate, bought my ticket and I'm here. Yeah, I'm here.

Q: What stood out to you most about the film so far?

A1: What stood out to me the most was when he was talking about the fact that how Obama is basically a figure of entertainment. He's a figure of ... he has an agenda assigned to him by the—not the masses that are supposed to be democracy—but he's assigned by the supremacies of this nation. And that's what stood out to me the most, the fact that a lot of Black people nowadays are so happy and so relieved that our president's Black but he's just not doing anything. He is a Black puppet and that's what stood out to me and I kinda came here to broaden my knowledge of really what's going on because my mom really sheltered me from it. She was a Black Christian. She's like, 'it's in God's hands so just forget about it.' But I didn't really know about anything so that's why I'm really here.

Q: What has stood out to you most about Avakian so far?

A1: Honestly, it really surprised me that he knows so much. Mainly because he is white. He's different from what I am, and how come I don't know about these things and I'm Black and it's happening to me.

Q: Same question. What has stood out to you the most about Avakian?

A2: Well, for me, the fact that he's so passionate. I know he described certain people in neighborhoods where they're like... where they see these white people taking part in these revolutionary acts and then when the pressure hits they leave and for me that's my biggest problem with those types of people and I don't know much about him but you guys said he's been around forever and he hasn't stopped when the pressure hits and for me that's what I really like to see in people. When I first heard about this, I did ask myself what ethnicity is he? They said white and then right off the bat I'm just like alright, let me not jump to conclusions or judgments or stuff because when I see ... when you see these movies there's always like a white savior and I really hate it...I really hate it. So for me that's where I come in as being kinda stand-offish. Not even stand-offish but what is this all about? Skeptical. I don't want somebody to be my white savior. I think another thing that I'm still kinda like, okay... is the whole fact that he's really against Christians and religion in general. Just because I'm a Christian and ... the whole thing of wait until Jesus comes back? That is not what Jesus...that's not what this is about. That's not what Christianity is about and you know to a large extent that's what people have made God's word out to be and so I don't blame him or many other people for being, yeah, skeptical or atheist or whatever they are.... So the whole being Christian thing it's kind of like... okay, we're for the same thing.

A1: I have a story to tell. It was 2009 when the Haiti earthquake struck. So I was sitting there watching the news because it was all over the news, right? And I was sitting there watching with my mom. I happened to see this little girl. They said that she was trapped under a whole bunch of rubble and she was crying and just in tears and she had blood coming from her head. I was just terribly struck, I was just shocked and I couldn't move and I was crying and I looked back at my mom and she was just sitting there basically, she was just watching it. And I'm looking like, who are you? Why aren't you like, you know. And it struck me to the point where she was like, 'it's all in God's hands.' It's for a reason. Everything happens for a reason and she was trying to comfort me with that. So I just walked out the room, really. And I was crying to myself and I just realized just now that that's where my desensitization stems from when it comes to human impoverishment and deaths and stuff like that. My mom is just like, 'oh, you know, it's in God's hands' and she even told me that it was supposed to happen, really, like because people in Haiti worship idols so she was just like...and that really pissed me off. She was just like, 'oh, you know, they did this so that's why they're suffering now.' I looked at the little girl and I'm just like 'are you really sitting up here and telling me like this is her fault?' 'And so that's what really hurt me the most, and from then on I was just like, maybe, hey, it's not in my hands, it's in God's hands, basically.'

I think it's just so funny that Christianity has become like this when God definitely says that we're supposed to be loving the poor and loving the oppressed and doing his work and not just sitting back waiting until he comes back. I really hate that. That's not what it's about...

Q: What did you know about Bob Avakian before and what's your impression of him now?

A2: Oh, absolutely nothing, actually. Like nobody knows about him and he's been around forever, right? Before today I didn't. Well before when I was watching, I was like, wow, he should be president. But I was like, hell no. Because so

many people of this country, something would happen to him. So no he can't, he can't. But I think a number of people should know about him to the point where he should be a leader, a really big leader in this country. Can I tell you about the whole communism thing?

Before I came... So what was taught in the history books when I was growing up: communism is a bad thing. I was oh, it's all about, you know, we're sharing toothbrushes and I don't want to share my stuff with that person. I didn't know about communism because I was taught that communism was bad, a red scare, these are bad people. And then I'm trained to believe that capitalism is the only way to go. I buy things, you give me things in return, that type of thing. But he opened up a new modernized socialism and that's what stood out to me the most, I think. So if you're saying bad stuff about capitalism, and then when people are just so scared of communism, then what the hell are you going to do? So like he said that strategy and I like that.

Q: One more thing, BA says, Revolution—Nothing Less. What do you think about that, or are we not ready to talk about that?

A2: I'll tell you what I think about it so far. To be honest, I am sort of doubting the whole spreading of it because you really have to change people's psyches and that's going to take so much work and that work is intimidating. It really is, mainly because of the people that I grew up with they're so focused on pop culture; they're so focused on the Housewives of wherever, that they don't really want to deal with this because it's boring, it's nothing ... to the point where people are so desensitized. To the point where it's just oh, 5,000 people are killed...blah, blah, blah and you are just 'oh, okay.' So the revolution, nothing less—I think it's going to take a lot of work because you have to change a lot of people's psyches.

Black woman singer

Q: What stood out to you in the movie?

His frankness. And he's so accurate about a lot of things. I mean, wow. What were the most poignant points, there were so many things, that's why I had to buy the DVD. The Rodney King references, there were so many references. The point that I'm bringing back with me is that we can't make the system better. This system needs to be changed, period. We need a new system.

Q: So does the title of the film BA Speaks: REVOLUTION—NOTHING LESS! resonate with you?

Oh, yes it does. Because nothing less will do. It has to change, it cannot stay this way. And I wasn't even aware, like I said. We're so busy living our lives we're not even aware of the atrocities. Like I wasn't even aware of the prostitution still being so, I didn't know the numbers were like that. I'm just astounded. But whatever we have to do. I'm going to play this DVD, I bought it, at the shelter. Instead of listening to Maury Povich and who's the daddy, not the baby daddy, things that we can do. Because a lot of us down there, there are people down there, we don't qualify for this, we don't qualify for that, we can't get help...

Q: There's a quote, "Those this system has cast off, those it has treated as less than human, can be the backbone and driving force of a fight not only to end their own oppression, but to finally end all oppression, and emancipate all of humanity." What do you think about this?

That's me. There were certain points in this movie where I was moved to tears because I identified with it. And that quote right there, that's exactly how I feel... [starts to get really choked up] I feel cast aside. But hopefully getting involved with this group, learning more, actually learning how to apply this, changing my political affiliation, I'm going to, and working from there, whatever I can do to help. I also have a sister who I think will be very interested in this. So I'm going to play the DVD as much as I can. □

