

BA Everywhere



Imagine
the difference
it could make

A GREAT BEGINNING... EXCITING STEPS TO COME

April 2011 marked the release of *Basics*, a book by Bob Avakian, the revolutionary leader who has developed a new synthesis of communism. This book of quotations and essays speaks to essential questions of revolution and human emancipation. On this occasion, a range of artists, musicians, dancers and actors from a diversity of perspectives came together in a unique cultural event to celebrate revolution and the vision of a new world.

The film, *Occasioned by the Publication of Basics: A Celebration of Revolution and the Vision of a New World*, will tell the story of what those artists did and why they did it. It is a film for everyone who has dreamed of a different and better world or wondered how art and culture can be part of creating it.

Through the diverse efforts of hundreds of people across the country, we met and exceeded our fundraising goal of \$23,000 for the production and release of this film. \$25,002 was raised!

This is a very significant and exciting development! We look forward to hearing from the broad range of experience, why people contributed to this film and the larger discussions that were opened up in the process. A few things can be said about this now.

As we identified in the editorial "BA Everywhere... Imagine the Difference It Could Make," raising money for this film, and other projects—including raising money to send copies of *Basics* to prisoners, to sponsor "Revolution buses" to take the message out far and wide—is an opening stage of "a major, multi-faceted fundraising campaign to project BA, his voice and his work way out into society—far beyond what it is today. A fundraising campaign that will raise the necessary major money to make this possible. A fundraising campaign that unleashes and develops imagination, defiance, and community in everything it does."

A whole range of creative and inspiring fundraising activities were part of raising the money needed to produce and release the film. A page at indiegogo.com/basicsevent served as the fundraising center. It has a trailer—a short preview clip—giving a taste of what the film will be like. Dozens of people, groups of people and teams, donated there. Among the comments by contributors: "A change is in the wind. People have the power"... "This is from an Iraq war resister who wants to see a world without the US military spread over it"... "One step closer to spreading the word how humanistic things can be." And, "As many come to see the system as the problem in this country, leadership to bring us to the other side is crucial. That's why I support this..."

One highlight of the fundraising experience was an event in Chicago where 60 people, a diverse mix of ages and nationalities, came together at Chicago's Elastic Arts Gallery for a benefit. A number of people commented that this gave them a little taste of what April 11 must have been like. Film clips of Avakian from '69, '79 and 2003 were shown, and for many people there it was their first time seeing BA. Spoken word artists, including teachers and students from a high school poetry slam crew, performed, and a band volunteered their services to be the "house band." Several people bought *Basics* after watching the film trailer. The headline performance was by Fred Lonberg-Holm and Tomeka Reid, renowned jazz cellists. At one point Fred said softly, "Thank you all for coming out for this very good cause. I only wish I could have been at the event this film is about, but you can't be everywhere." \$1,400 was sent that night and over a dozen new people signed up to get more involved.

Around the country, house parties were held to raise money, from late-night scenes of people straight from Occupy protests to brunches. One group, mainly occupiers, found this fundraising drive compelling enough to raise \$30. This was a group that included people with only a few dollars between them for food. Teams of fundraisers hit the phones—including people doing this for the first time. Some people went into housing projects and raised funds. People set up displays at holiday light displays and sold hot chocolate, spread the word, and collected donations.

Influential voices in the arts and politics weighed in, including director and producer Robert Young, filmmaker David Zeiger, Carl Dix, Cornel West, Sunsara Taylor, and writer Erin Aubry Kaplan. A performance at Chopin Theatre in Chicago, "Music with a Conscience, the Protest Music of George Flynn," was a benefit to raise funds. In L.A. there was an event at Revolution Books with members from the revolution rock band Outernational and *Revolution* correspondent and radio host Michael Slate.

Celebrating... Fundraising... And Looking Ahead

"Fundraising—if it's done right—does two things. It raises the money that is badly needed to make a huge difference; and it brings people together—in this case to engage with BA, and what he represents and the whole process of changing the world. And the fact is that there are many, many people who may not agree with everything BA stands for, or who feel that they themselves need to learn more about this, but who also understand very deeply how important it would be, what a difference it would make, to have this voice and vision being projected, and engaged and debated, by people in every part of society." (From "BA Everywhere... Imagine the Difference It Could Make!" at revcom.us.)

Through a range of projects—each with its own identity and character—with people participating in different ways, from different perspectives, we have made a significant beginning in raising major funds to make Bob Avakian a household word in society: BA EVERYWHERE... IMAGINE THE DIFFERENCE IT COULD MAKE! A Mass Campaign to Raise Big Money to Get BA's Vision and Works Into Every Corner of Society.

In this process, big questions are being opened up... bigger questions that people don't normally have an opportunity to discuss—questions about Avakian's new synthesis of communism, about the movement for revolution he is leading and the possibility of revolution in a country like the U.S., the history of socialist revolutions, human nature and whether a radically different world is viable, discussions about the concept of horizontal movements vs. the need for vanguard leadership... and people who came together got to learn about each other's lives and experiences.

All this is a good beginning! We've begun to have an impact with this, and begun to see some of the significant things this mass campaign can unleash.

On Black Friday, the "biggest shopping day of the year," people were challenged to help bring to life "the alternative to capitalism" by pitching in to buy copies of *Basics* for themselves, and for prisoners. Over that weekend, money was raised to fill 340 prisoner requests for the book (as well as 130 more books sold, many in gift packs). The challenge remains to raise the money to send hundreds more copies of *Basics* to prisoners.

Along with taking time over the holidays to get together with all the people that have been reconnected with, and to get together with friends and family, we're going to take everything we've learned and build for year-end parties to raise money for the BA Bus Tour that will kick off in 2012. Gather people together for year-end celebrations of the debate and engagement we've been getting going with a radically different and far better vision of how the world could be—bringing together people from different perspectives and all walks of life to do something really meaningful in the world—and raise funds while doing so.

And all this will lay the basis for new and more significant and exciting steps in the year to come. Write in to *Revolution* newspaper with your plans so these can be publicized and learned from. Also, stay tuned to *Revolution* for more reporting from the efforts over the last week and for updates on the film itself.