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# **SOMETHING TERRIBLE, OR SOMETHING TRULY EMANCIPATING: Profound Crisis, Deepening Divisions, The Looming Possibility Of Civil War— And The Revolution That Is Urgently Needed**

*A Necessary Foundation, A Basic Roadmap For This Revolution*

**by Bob Avakian, Revolutionary Leader, Author of the New Communism**

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In the course of this talk, I will be referring to, and digging further into, key points that are put forward in two very important documents which are featured on our website [revcom.us](http://revcom.us): *A Declaration, A Call To Get Organized Now For A Real Revolution*; and an article of mine, following up on that “Declaration and Call”: *This Is A Rare Time When Revolution Becomes Possible—Why That Is So, And How To Seize On This Rare Opportunity*. So, for everyone getting into this talk, everyone who cares about the crucial questions it is speaking to, it is also important to take up (or return to) and get deeply into those documents as well—and to go regularly to [revcom.us](http://revcom.us), and watch the weekly YouTube show *Revolution—Nothing Less*, both of which sharply illustrate why a real revolution is urgently needed, and is possible, what are the goals of this revolution, and how to be part of building for this revolution. What I will be speaking to here is, as the title says, a necessary foundation and a basic roadmap for this revolution.

One other point: I am going to say what needs to be said about the way things are, why they are that way, where things are headed, and what needs to be done to radically change this in a positive way—and, as part of that, I am going to bluntly speak some truth that is bound to offend some people. I do this because the stakes in all this are so high, and (to refer to a line from Bob Dylan) the hour is getting late, and there is no time to speak falsely now. But I

do this, *not* out of a sense that people are so deeply caught up in, that they cannot break with, ways of thinking and acting which serve to perpetuate their own oppression and degradation, and that of others as well. No, I am doing this precisely out of the understanding that masses of people not only need to, but can, make a profound break with this—that they can radically change themselves as part of, and in the process of, radically changing the world, in an emancipating way.

So, let’s get to it.

Here is the heart of the matter: Many people—including someone like Martin Luther King—have argued that attempting to carry out a revolution to overthrow this system is suicidal, particularly for Black people in this country—when, in fact, Black people, and masses of other oppressed and exploited people, profoundly and desperately need this revolution. The reality is that such a revolution *can* succeed, but this is possible, particularly up against powerful ruling forces, like in this country, *only in rare times and circumstances*. And here is a very important truth: **This is one of those rare times and circumstances.**

***This rare time must not be wasted, squandered, thrown away. Rather, revolution must be actively prepared for and vigorously, consistently worked for—now, and in an ongoing way—to build up the scientifically oriented and powerfully organized forces for, and to prepare the ground for, this revolution.***

And that is why we revolutionary communists say:

[E]veryone who can't stand this world the way it is ... who is sick and tired of so many people being treated as less than human ... who knows that the claim of "liberty and justice for all" is a cruel lie ... who is righteously enraged that injustice and inequality go on, and on, and on, despite false promises and honeyed words from people in power (or those seeking power) ... everyone who agonizes about where things are headed and the fact that to be young now means being denied a decent future, or any future at all ... everyone who has ever dreamed about something much better, or even wondered whether that is possible ... everyone who hungers for a world without oppression, exploitation, poverty, and destruction of the environment ... everyone who has the heart to fight for something that is really worth fighting for: **You need to be part of this revolution.**

We're talking about a *real* revolution, not playing around with a few changes that leave this system in place and in power, while benefitting only a small number. As the "Declaration and Call" makes very clear:

A revolution means a force of millions, drawn from many different parts of society and organized for an all-out fight to overthrow this system and replace it with a radically different and much better economic and political system, a *socialist* system, based on meeting the needs of the people and carrying forward the fight for a communist world where there will finally be an end, everywhere, to the exploitation, oppression, and destruction of the environment that is *built into* this system of capitalism-imperialism. *Anything less than this revolution will completely fail to deal with the root of all the problems or lead to the actual solution.* [Emphasis added here.]

So let's get more deeply into why this is one of those rare times and circumstances when this revolution *is* possible, and what must be done for there to be a real chance for this revolution to actually succeed.

First, let's get clear on these BASIC TRUTHS:

**We live under a *system*—the system of capitalism-imperialism** (*capitalism* is an economic and political system of exploitation and oppression, and *imperialism* refers to the *worldwide nature* of this system).

**It is this system which is the basic cause of the tremendous suffering that people, all over the world,**

**are subjected to; and this system poses a growing threat to the very existence of humanity, in the way that this system is rapidly destroying the global environment, and in the danger of war between nuclear-armed capitalist-imperialist powers, such as the U.S. and China.**

*All this is reality, and no one can escape this reality. Either we radically change it, in a positive way, or everything will be changed in a very negative way.*

To be very clear once more: Changing it in a positive way means *making revolution*—a real revolution, to overthrow this system of capitalism-imperialism and replace it with a radically different and emancipating system. For it is also a basic truth that: ***In today's world, to fundamentally change society, you must seize power—overthrow the existing state power and establish a new state power.***

And here is another very important truth from the "Declaration and Call":

We have seen the potential for revolution powerfully demonstrated in the summer of last year (2020) when millions of people, of all races and genders, all over this country, and all around the world, rose up together against racist oppression and police murder. We have seen this potential in the mass outpourings of women, in countries all over the world, refusing to put up with being abused and degraded. This potential is also revealed in the deep distress being expressed, by scientists and millions of ordinary people, about the continually worsening climate crisis and the threat this poses to the future of humanity—a crisis this system cannot solve, but can only make worse.

As we have also seen, when millions of people do take to the streets—and, especially when they do this not just for a day or so, expressing their feelings and then going home, with things returning quickly to "normal," but when they do this *with real determination and in a sustained way*—this can change the "political atmosphere and alignment" in society as a whole, compelling every section of society, and every major ruling institution, to respond to this. To again cite a powerful example, this was the case with the massive uprising in the summer of 2020.

But, as important as it is, millions taking to the streets, even in a sustained militant way, cannot by itself lead to fundamental change—which can only happen if the system that they are rebelling against is actually brought down.

There have been many situations in different countries where a huge part of society has rebelled, even taking to the streets for weeks and months, but the ruling institutions, and in particular the police and military, did not "break

apart,” and the people were not prepared to take the struggle to the next level—so there was no fundamental change. There have also been disastrous outcomes when people rising up in a mass revolt have mistakenly believed that, simply because their cause is just, the armed forces of the existing system will sympathize and join with them—when in fact those armed forces continued in their role as violent enforcers of the existing system and sooner or later acted to forcefully suppress the people.

No, the existing oppressive system must be *overthrown*—the institutions of violent suppression of this system must finally be *broken apart, defeated and dismantled* by an organized revolutionary force. *That is what is necessary for things to go beyond just mass protest, however militant and determined, and become a real revolution.*

Speaking specifically of this country, even in a situation where millions of people are taking to the streets, in a sustained way, in determined rebellion against oppression and injustice, and even with some among this system’s armed forces sympathizing and identifying with this, it is very unlikely that this, in itself, would lead to those armed forces splitting apart and a significant part of them joining with the people rising up in this way. (This is all the more true of the police, whose ranks are filled with hardcore right-wing brutes.)

It is a fact that one of the objectives of the revolution—and what would be a necessary part of the strategy of the revolutionary forces—would be to win over significant parts of armed forces that start out *opposing* the revolution. But the possibility of this, and the way in which it could be achieved, would depend on how the revolutionary process actually unfolded.

Later, toward the end of this talk, I will speak to this more directly, and get into some key aspects of the doctrine and strategic approach that would need to be applied by the revolutionary forces in order to have a real chance to win, when the necessary conditions for the all-out revolutionary fight had been brought into being—including the approach to winning over forces from the opposing side, in the course of that all-out fight. And, as part of that, I will talk about how, in an actual civil war, fought between opposing sections of society, things *could* develop in such a way that the armed forces that had been the backbone of state power, enforcing the existing capitalist-imperialist system, would split apart in the context of such a civil war—and what would be the implications of that for carrying revolution to a successful outcome.

But, before that, it is important to get into this fundamental question: *What are the necessary conditions for a revolution?* In basic terms, they are:

A crisis in society and government so deep and so disruptive of the “usual way of things,” that those who have ruled over us, for so long, can no longer do so in the “normal” way that people have been conditioned to accept.

A revolutionary people in the millions and millions, with their “allegiance” to this system broken, and their determination to fight for a more just society greater than their fear of the violent repression of this system.

An organized revolutionary force—made up of continually growing numbers of people, from among the most oppressed but also from many other parts of society—a force which is grounded in, and is working systematically to apply, the most scientific approach to building for and then carrying out revolution, and which is increasingly looked to by masses of people to lead them to bring about the radical change that is urgently needed.

To get into this further, let’s start by focusing on the first of these conditions.

There is some important historical experience to learn from—situations where a ruling class was no longer able to rule in the “normal way” that people had been conditioned to accept, and a real possibility arose of putting an end to the existing system, even one which had been so powerfully entrenched that such a profound change had long seemed impossible. This has happened especially *when the ruling class, or a section of the ruling class, of that system no longer believes in, and more or less openly abandons, what had been the “cohering norms”*—the regulating set of beliefs and processes—of that system.

An example of this kind of thing—which involved a significant change, even though it was not brought about by a real revolution—is the collapse of the Soviet Union in the years 1989-91. The Soviet Union was the world’s first socialist state, brought into being through the Russian Revolution of 1917. The truth, however, is that capitalism had actually been restored in the Soviet Union, in the mid-1950s—even as it continued for some time to maintain the façade of “socialism.” But then, in the 1980s, “reforms” were instituted that began to unravel this whole thing, and finally sections of the ruling class abandoned the pretense of socialism, and the country underwent a transformation to an *openly capitalist* society, dropping even its outward identity as the “USSR” (Union of *Soviet Socialist* Republics). The same kind of thing happened in some Eastern European countries that had been under the effective domination of the Soviet Union—countries where there were massive uprisings, the ruling structures split apart, and the result was



a change from *disguised* capitalism to *open* capitalism—a major change, even if not a real revolution.

This, again, is part of a more general phenomenon where major change, and even a real revolution, can become possible (or more possible) not simply when there is a deep crisis in society, and not just when the ruling forces are seriously divided, but when they actually split apart, and the old way of ruling can no longer hold. Another example of this kind of thing is the creation of the Soviet Union itself, resulting from the Russian Revolution. This occurred during World War 1, in which millions of Russian people died and the masses of people overall suffered tremendous hardship. In this critical situation, the ruling forces of that country split, resulting first in the overthrow of the long-entrenched rule of absolute monarchs (the Tsars), but with an opening created for a revolution that overthrew the exploiting classes as a whole, including the bourgeois forces that were attempting to consolidate capitalist rule without the Tsars.

Or, to take another important example, this time from the history of this country: Why did so many Black people (nearly two hundred thousand) join the Union Army fighting against the southern Confederacy during the Civil War in the 1860s? Because the country, and those who ruled it, had split apart, and masses of Black people could sense that, in this situation, there was a real possibility of putting an end to their enslaved condition, which did happen as a result of that Civil War.

How does this kind of thing apply to this country now? As is becoming more clear every day, there are deep, and continually deepening, divisions not only in this country overall but among the ruling powers of this system. And, as I will get into more fully in a little while, *one part of those ruling powers, represented by the Republican Party, no longer believes in or feels bound by what have been the “cohering norms” of “democratic” capitalist rule in this country.* This is leading, and will increasingly lead, to further, deepening divisions and bitter clashes throughout society, as well as “at the top.” All the ruling institutions of this system will be increasingly affected by this. The polarization will continue to sharpen, with forces grouped around and led by the Republican Party becoming even more aggressive in insisting on imposing, including by violent means, their vision of what “makes America great,” with all the very real horrors, on top of horrors, that this involves.

All this in itself will have contradictory effects—some definitely negative, but some positive, or with positive potential. And, as this unfolds, this profound truth will be more and more forcefully demonstrated: The crisis and deep divisions in society can only be resolved through

radical means, of one kind or another—either radically reactionary, murderously oppressive and destructive means or radically emancipating *revolutionary* means.

With all this, what is urgently needed, what is possible—and what must be actively, tirelessly worked for, in order for there to truly be a positive outcome to all this—is a *fundamentally different* alignment in the country as a whole: a **Repolarization** that is favorable for, and brings forward the necessary forces for, **Revolution**—a *real* revolution to overthrow this system, and bring into being a radically different and much better system.

But why, and how, could it be possible to bring about such a repolarization for a real revolution?

This is because of something that is very different, in a very profound way, from what has been, for generations, the “normal situation” in this country. I spoke to how this has come about, in the following from “Rare Time”:

Even though “democracy, with liberty and justice for all” is a cruel lie, this lie has been crucial for the rulers of this country to keep things together under this system—and especially to keep people who are oppressed under this system believing in the possibility of making this system more just. This is why both ruling class parties generally agreed, for a long time, to work within the same framework for ruling this country—they agreed to accept the results of elections and bring about “the peaceful transfer of power” between the different representatives of this same system, whether Democrat or Republican.

With changing conditions in this country, and in the world as a whole, over the time since the end of World War 2 (75 years ago), it has been necessary for the ruling class, in order to maintain “order and stability” in this country, to make certain concessions to the struggle against white supremacy, male supremacy, and some other oppressive relations, while at the same time insisting that this is all part of “creating a more perfect union” and “further perfecting the great democracy that has always existed in this country.” This has also been necessary in order for the rulers of this country to continue promoting it as “the leader of the free world,” which they say must remain the dominant power in the world—but which, in reality, is the *most oppressive and destructive* power, plundering masses of people as well as the earth.

But a section of the ruling capitalist class,

represented by the Republican Party, has all along resisted even these partial concessions to the fight against oppression, and has become convinced that these changes have now gone too far, that they threaten to destroy what has held this country together and enabled it to dominate the world.

The Republicans have become a *fascist* party—a party based on open and aggressive white supremacy, male supremacy and other oppressive relations—a party convinced that only it deserves to rule, moving to manipulate elections and suppress votes in order to gain and hold onto power, refusing to accept the outcome of elections it does not win, determined to gut and pervert “the rule of law,” trample on people’s rights, and adopt what amounts to an *undisguised* capitalist dictatorship, ready to use violence not only against masses of people but also against its rivals in the ruling class.

These Republicans have mobilized a significant section of people who believe, with an intense, irrational passion, that *white supremacy, male supremacy*, and other oppressive relations (as well as unrestrained *plunder of the environment*) must be firmly upheld and enforced. They have been driven to a state of vicious insanity, embracing all kinds of lunatic conspiracy theories, along with a crazed Christian fundamentalism, as a response to the threat they see to their entitled (or “god-ordained”) position and their insistence that further concessions to the struggle against oppression will destroy what has “made America great.”

Every day, and in a thousand ways, the reality screams out that there is no living together with this fascist lunacy—and no one should want to! There is no way that any decent person should want to live in the society, and world, that these fascists are determined, that they are willing to kill, to bring into being.

As I wrote in my *New Year’s Statement*, this January (2021):

Biden and the Democrats cannot “bring the country together,” as they falsely claim, because there can be no “reconciliation” with these fascists—whose “grievances” are based on fanatical resentment against any limitation on *white supremacy, male supremacy, xenophobia (hatred of foreigners), rabid American chauvinism, and the unrestrained plundering of the environment*, and are increasingly expressed in literally lunatic terms. *There can be no “reconciliation” with this, other than on the terms of these fascists, with all the terrible implications and consequences of that!*

Early in his campaign for president, Biden bragged about how, as a senator, he was able to work with white supremacist, southern segregationists! Now, he is *still* trying to work with the blatant white supremacists and outright fascists of the Republican Party. But, try as he might, they are not willing to work with him—*except on their terms*.

Things are not as they were in the past, and the reality is this: The profound divisions, within the ruling class, and in the society overall, cannot be smoothed over—they are only going to become deeper and sharper, more acute and antagonistic. Here is the fundamental truth that needs to be clearly and deeply understood: These divisions

**cannot be resolved within the framework that has existed, and has held things together, for nearly 150 years, since shortly after the end of the Civil War which led to the abolition of slavery—they cannot be resolved on the basis of the capitalist “democracy” that has been the “normal” means of capitalist rule (dictatorship) for so long.**

And:

**This rare situation, with the deepening and sharpening conflicts among the ruling powers, and in the society overall, provides a stronger basis and greater openings to break the hold of this system over masses of people.**

*It is extremely important to deeply understand this:*

**As this situation develops, and the ruling class is more and more unable to rule in the old way, society and daily life for masses of people, from different parts of society, can become increasingly unsettled and chaotic, with frequent “disruptions” of the “normal” way things have been.**

**And as “the normal way” society has been ruled is failing to hold things together—and society is increasingly being ripped apart—this can shake people’s belief that “the way things have always been” is the only way things can be. It can make people more open to questioning—in a real sense it can force people to question—the way things have been, and whether they have to stay that way. And this is all the more likely to happen if the revolutionary forces are out among the people shining a light on the deeper reality of what is happening, and why, and bringing out that there IS an alternative to living this way.**

This is a crucial part of how a revolutionary situation could be brought into being—a situation where it becomes

possible to actually bring down this system.

On the other hand, “left to itself”—that is, if the current character and dynamics of all this remain on the same course they are now on—this situation, the divisions characterizing it, and the outcome resulting from it are almost certainly going to become even more terribly negative. So, all this must be radically changed, in what is a relatively brief, “compressed” period of time—not just weeks or months, but also not decades. If things have not already fully erupted before then, the scheduled presidential election of 2024 is very likely to be a critical focal point and turning point, through which the fascist Republicans will attempt to gain and lock down power over society, and put an end to any possibility of a future “transfer of power” away from them.

With the Republicans’ continuation of the Big Lie that the last (2020) presidential election was stolen from Trump, their moves to suppress votes, and their whole orientation that, in any case, with regard to the 2024 presidential election (assuming there is one), the only acceptable outcome is that they are declared and confirmed as the winner—all this has made clear that they will allow no “peaceful transfer of power” in government, unless it results in their coming to power. Growing numbers of fascist-oriented people in this country are prepared to use violence in pursuit of their perverse notion of “making America great again”—and the Republican leadership is ready to resort to this, if they cannot come to power otherwise. Already Republican elected officials, including members of Congress, are whipping up sentiments in favor of such violence and supporting fascist mobs who have engaged in this violence.

In the situation of the 2020 presidential election, defeating and ousting Trump through that election was possible, and was important to do, as a *tactical move* to prevent the further consolidation of fascist rule right then. Even with that electoral defeat, however, Trump and his supporters nearly succeeded in pulling off a coup that would have resulted in his remaining in power, in defiance of the outcome of the election and the “peaceful transfer of power” from one section of the ruling class to another. And things have moved, and are continuing to rapidly move, beyond the situation that existed with that 2020 election and in its immediate aftermath.

Further, this system’s electoral process itself *works against* the kind of fundamental change that is now urgently needed. Among other things, it lowers people’s horizons, restricting “realistic choices” to what is possible within the confines of this system and conditioning people to view and approach things on the *terms* of this

system. Continuing to vote for Democrats, and attempting, through the electoral process, to prevent a successful Republican-fascist seizure and consolidation of power, will very likely fail, and more fundamentally will contribute to the continuation of things on the disastrous course they are now on, with terrible consequences for the billions of people on this planet—for humanity as a whole.

As I emphasized in my *New Year’s Statement*:

**The electoral defeat of the Trump/Pence regime only “buys some time”—both in relation to the imminent danger posed by the fascism this regime represents, and more fundamentally in terms of the potentially existential crisis humanity is increasingly facing as a consequence of being bound to the dynamics of this system of capitalism-imperialism. But, in essential terms, time is not on the side of the struggle for a better future for humanity.**

Time, and with it the current momentum of things toward a disastrous outcome, is moving on. The time that still does exist must not be squandered in what would, especially now, be meaningless maneuvering within the framework of this system and its elections. *This time must be seized, with the necessary urgency, to build toward the only resolution that can avoid that disaster, and wrench something truly positive out of all this: an actual revolution.*

Through the rest of this talk, I am going to speak more fully to what needs to be done in order for there to be the basis to actually make this revolution; and toward the end of this talk, I will turn directly to the basic approach to waging the all-out fight for revolution, with a real chance to win. But here a crucial truth needs to be emphasized: **Everything depends on bringing forward a revolutionary people, from among the most bitterly oppressed, and all parts of society, first in the thousands and then in the millions, as a powerful revolutionary force, organized from the start and consistently with a country-wide perspective, *impacting all of society* and changing the terms of how masses of people see things and how every institution has to respond. Everything must be focused now on actually bringing forward and organizing this revolutionary force.**

The basic way to do this is laid out in the “Declaration and Call.” First of all:

We need to urgently change the situation where not nearly enough people know about this revolution and are with it. We need to get this revolution, and its leadership, known everywhere. We need to challenge and seriously struggle with people right around us,



and all over the country, to do something that, yes, requires real heart and will make a positive difference for real—become part of this revolution, and follow this revolutionary leadership. We need to organize more and more people into the ranks of the revolution.

So what does it mean to go to work now to organize people into this revolution? As the “Declaration and Call” explains:

Organizing people into this revolution means reaching out to all sorts of people—not just where there are protests and rebellions against oppression and injustice, but everywhere throughout society—spreading the word about revolution and getting people together (in real life and online) to grapple with why an actual revolution is necessary, what such a revolution involves, and what kind of society this is aiming for. This will enable people who are new to the revolution to themselves become organizers for this revolution and to recruit more and more people to do the same. On this basis, and through the growing ranks of the revolution acting together as an increasingly powerful force, it will be possible to attract and organize the necessary numbers, and build up the necessary strength, to be in the position to do what needs to be done.

We need to struggle hard with people to take up the orientation and strategy, the values and goals, for this revolution, and dedicate themselves to working for this revolution, while we unite growing numbers to fight the abuse, brutality and destruction perpetrated by this system, and through all this get thousands and then millions of people prepared and steeled *to do away with this system that brings so much hell to people*. We need to wield this growing revolutionary force to stand up to this system and its murderous enforcers and to change the whole “terrain” (the political, social and cultural situation and “atmosphere”) throughout society, in order to weaken the hold of this system over people, win people away from acting to strengthen and enforce this system, and create the best possible conditions for this revolution to succeed.

Along with that, this basic understanding and approach needs to be consistently applied:

An important principle and method in organizing people into the revolution is the understanding that, while revolution requires serious commitment, people’s level of commitment will, at any given time, “essentially correspond to and [be] grounded in what aspirations have been awakened, or

brought forward [in them], and what they are coming to understand is required in relation to that,” and this commitment “should proceed from what they themselves have been won (yes, won through struggle, even at times sharp struggle) to see as a necessary and essential contribution to the revolution.” People can start with basic tasks that they can readily carry out and feel confident doing which make a real contribution to building the revolution, and can learn to take on more responsibility as they gain more experience and a deeper understanding. The important thing is that they are part of the *process* of building the revolution, together with others. **These principles and methods should be kept clearly in mind and applied at all stages of people’s involvement with the revolution, to enable them to continue advancing in understanding and commitment.**

(That is from Part II of my speech *Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Can Really Make Revolution*.)

As the “Declaration and Call” makes clear, in order to win masses of people to revolution, there is a tremendous amount of struggle that needs to go on, not just against the system that is the source of the horrors that people are continually subjected to, but also against ways of thinking and acting *among the people* that actually “internalize,” and serve to perpetuate, this system and the ways of thinking it promotes, with its monstrously oppressive relations and putrid values—ways of thinking and acting that work against the repolarization that is urgently needed to have a real chance at seizing on this rare opportunity to make revolution.

In *Hope For Humanity On A Scientific Basis*, I pointed to the characterization of the current polarization by the fascist former Republican congressman Steve King—that there is a lot of talk about another civil war, and one side (the fascist side) is heavily armed (with 8 trillion bullets) while the other (“woke”) side can’t decide which bathroom to use. Even as this involves some real distortion, and definite slander against trans people, there is a demented insight, and too much of the truth, in this observation by that fascist King. And, *if this polarization remains essentially unchanged*, it will have even worse implications, as things develop and further intensify.

Very much related to and an expression of this, is the reality that today, particularly among the middle classes, things are still way too much in line with the words of the poet Yeats: “The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.” It is *fascists* who have declared “this is war!”—who viscerally feel that the way things are going is completely intolerable to them,

is an *existential threat* to a way of life and a country that they believe is worth being part of. And, in their demented minds, the government (or government that is in the hands of, or strongly influenced by, the Democrats) is working to continue things on this course, and is therefore completely illegitimate. At the same time, among what can rightly be called “decent people,” who are opposed to these fascists, there is way too much obliviousness, ignorance and ignore-ance—or even continuing *denial*—of what is going on, way too much being lulled by a sleepy sense that the way things are going is favorable to how they want things to go, or at least that “things will work out” in a way that is in accord with their inclinations. Or, to the degree that there is a recognition that this is not the case (for example, with the accelerating environmental crisis), this has led far too much to defeatism, cynicism, and passivity.

But that is not all there is to the problem. As I also noted in *Hope For Humanity*:

[A]nother element of this that we can't overlook is that, while a lot of what [Steve] King describes applies in a certain demented way, particularly to progressive or so-called “woke” middle class people, there is another kind of problem with regard to more basic oppressed people, and in particular the youth—a big problem that their guns are now aimed at each other ... this is something that needs to be radically transformed in building a movement for an actual revolution.

I will have more to say that relates to this, later. But here it is important to call attention to what has been, so far at least, the “soft” treatment of those who took part in the January 6, 2021 riot at the Capitol and Trump's attempted coup—the low level charges and lenient sentences being handed down in the court cases around this, as well as the fact that there has been no move to indict Trump and other top fascist political figures. This calls to mind the way things were handled in Germany, with the rise of the NAZI fascist movement there, headed by Hitler. In the 1920s, Hitler led what came to be called the “Beer Hall Putsch”—a clumsy attempt to come to power through a poorly organized coup that lacked the necessary planning and support. But Hitler in particular was treated very leniently, and this “Beer Hall Putsch” became in effect a dress rehearsal for the later seizure and consolidation of power by the NAZIs, the crushing of any effective opposition, and all the horrific NAZI atrocities that followed. (The parallel is captured in what some people today have put forward regarding the coup attempt by Trump and his supporters in the aftermath of the 2020 election, and in particular the storming of the Capitol on January 6: “What do you call a failed coup? *A dress rehearsal!*”)

Meanwhile, what is the situation “on the other side of the divide,” and particularly among people who claim to be “woke”? It must be bluntly said that “woke” is becoming a joke—a bad joke. The slogan we revcoms have raised, “You Think You're Woke But You're Sleepwalking Through A Nightmare,” captures something very important. But it needs to be added that this “wokeness,” with its evading of and diversion from the real struggle that needs to be waged, and its substituting of “word changing” and “cancel culture” in place of this struggle, is actually *contributing to and furthering* this nightmare.

A ridiculous, and outrageous, example of this is the ACLU's butchering of a statement by former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg about a **woman's** right to abortion: The ACLU actually replaced “woman” with “person” (and “she/her” with “they/their”)! This is part of a larger phenomenon which, in the name of trans rights, actually pushes in the direction of erasing women, conceptually. But rhetorically erasing the *concept* of women does not, and cannot, erase the reality of the existence, and the horrific oppression, of billions of women in this real world. What it actually does is undermine the massive, militant struggle that is urgently needed against the mounting attacks on, and the further fastening of the chains of oppression on, the half of humanity that is female.

If the ACLU, and others, who have done good things in the past, continue on this course, they will undermine much of the good they have done, and much they could still do, and need to do.

Do these “woke” and “progressive” people really believe that a focus on changing *terms* (nouns, pronouns, etc.) will actually lead to changing the world, in a positive way?

Do they really believe that calling oppression “agency” makes it less oppressive (for example, when women are caught up in prostitution and pornography, does calling this “agency” on their part make this something other than horrific oppression to which those women are subjected, and which does great harm to all women)?

Do they really think that having more “inclusion” of oppressed people in the dominant institutions and the structures of power of this system of capitalism-imperialism will actually change the fundamentally, and horrifically, oppressive nature of this system? (The First Black President... First female Vice-President... First Asian... First Latinx... First Gay... First Trans... First... **SAME SYSTEM!**)

Or is the deeper problem that these “progressive” and “woke” people have just given up on, or never really thought about, working for change that would actually lead to *ending* oppression?



With regard to “woke folk”—and in particular the whole “cancel culture” thing—it needs be said: Masses of people are being brutalized and savaged, the world is burning (literally as well as figuratively) and you are preoccupied with changing the faces of those who preside over these horrors, and spitting on people if they don’t use nouns and pronouns that you approve of, or in some other way violate the constantly mutating standards of “wokeness.”

This ties in with the discussion in *Breakthroughs* of a certain attitude and approach—“striking a pose to intimidate”—that was sharply criticized by Mao Zedong (the leader of the Chinese revolution, and what was a revolutionary socialist state in China until his death in 1976, whose “little red book” of quotations was widely read by people all over the world, including Black people, youth of all nationalities, and others in the U.S.). “Striking a pose to intimidate,” Mao made clear, is useless against the enemy, and does real harm among the people. As I pointed out in *Breakthroughs*:

[I]dentify politics, and in particular the posturing that all too often accompanies it, is only “useful” among people who will be intimidated by this, and in fact such intimidation does a great deal of harm. That’s what Mao meant when he said this kind of thing does great harm among the people. Intimidating people rather than winning them to a scientific understanding of reality, and what needs to be done about it, can only do harm among the people, and it’s absolutely useless against those who have real power.

Along with this, it has to be said that there is too much of people being absorbed in “trauma culture”—where any insult or affront, or challenge to one’s cherished beliefs, is treated as actual trauma, and any *real* trauma that is suffered becomes a motivation to turn inward to focus on individual “self-care.”

In *Hope For Humanity*, I emphasized this:

The trauma that results from directly suffering horrific forms of oppression and degradation is very real, and no one should deny or underestimate that—but, instead of an individual “turning inwards,” this needs to be transformed into anger and determination to be part of a collective struggle to put an end to all the atrocities, everywhere, whose fundamental source and cause is this system of capitalism-imperialism.

But, along with “trauma culture”—and I am going to call this out, even though it may “overlap” with some of what is asserted by fascists, coming from a completely opposite

place and with completely opposite objectives—it is too much the case that, despite often ill-founded, ridiculous and even cartoonish references to “badass” this and that, too many people are being encouraged and conditioned to be “soft crybabies”!

Here I have to say: Enough of “woke folk” who act as if it is actually oppressed people (or, as they like to say, the “marginalized”) who are fragile beings constantly in need of the protection of “safe spaces,” lest they fall apart at the mere appearance of a “triggering” phenomenon. And since when are universities and other institutions supposed to be places where you are “safe”—not just from physical violence of one kind or another, and from overtly threatening or clearly degrading verbal assaults, but from ideas, statements, etc., *that simply make you uncomfortable?! How are you going to “change the world” if you are in danger of falling apart at things like that? Again, from Hope For Humanity:*

[I]n any real struggle to deal with any real oppression, up against powerful enforcers of that oppression, you are going to have to face the prospect of real sacrifice, including the prospect of being physically attacked. And if you think that you can carve out little safe enclaves, and that this is somehow going to lead to any kind of significant change in society, you are full of illusions and delusions.

To add to the problem, this is often accompanied by attempts to sideline and silence others who, according to this scheme of things, occupy a “privileged” and not a “marginalized,” status.

This is all an expression of extremely lowered sights—with a marked tendency to identify the “enemy” as people who may have more “privilege,” rather than *the system of capitalism-imperialism*, its fundamental relations, and its institutions of authority and power, which embody and enforce the terrible exploitation and oppression that masses of people here, and literally billions of people around the world, are subjected to.

Here again we are back to Mao’s point about striking a pose to intimidate—that it is useless against the actual enemy and does real harm among the people.

All this represents the influence of forces proceeding from a bourgeois (or petty bourgeois) outlook and aspirations—seeking a re-arrangement which will provide them (and perhaps some others like them) with a better position *within* this horrific system of oppression, and trying to force opposition to injustice into the framework and in the service of this objective.

So, once again, with all this in mind, and with regard to the society overall, what is profoundly and urgently needed is *repolarization*—for *revolution*: winning growing numbers of people away from support for *either* side in the division among the ruling powers that are seeking to maintain and enforce this system, in one form or another, away from those promoting deadly illusions and self-serving goals which are dead-end, non-solutions for the masses of people.

This goes back to the first of the three conditions for revolution—the deep divisions among the ruling powers—and more particularly that, with the conflicts among the ruling forces increasingly becoming really deep and sharp, **masses of people respond to this *not* by falling in behind one side or the other of the oppressive rulers—not by acting in ways that serve to perpetuate and reinforce the oppressive rule of this system—but by taking advantage of this situation to build up the forces for *revolution*.**

It is true that there are a lot of very bad things connected with the present polarization and the whole trajectory things are on, and this could lead to something really terrible; but it is also true, and of profound importance, that it is possible that we could wrench something really positive out of it—revolution, to put an end to this system and bring something much better into being. But, once more, this requires recognizing the situation, and the current trajectory of things, for what they are—and responding in a way and on a level that is commensurate with this, is in accordance with the profound stakes involved—acting to *change* things, urgently, toward the goal of getting rid of this whole system, and replacing it with something radically different and much better.

The reality now is that the fascist section of the ruling class, represented by and concentrated in the Republican Party, is actively and aggressively engaged in a “two-pronged” move to achieve and consolidate fascist rule. These “two prongs” are: corrupting and controlling the electoral process and key government institutions; and the threat and use of violence, including through the mobilization of violent mobs. These fascists are, for now, relying mainly on the first, but with the second (violence) as an “accompaniment” to this—which could become their main means, if that proves necessary for them. In any case, if they succeed, the full power of the government—including the executive power of the presidency, the courts and legal apparatus, the prisons, as well as the police and the military—will be wielded to crush any effective opposition to fascist rule and to forcefully impose its program of

“restoring” America to its mythological “greatness” on the basis of aggressive white supremacy, crude and brutal male supremacy and suppression of LGBT people, xenophobia (hatred and persecution of foreigners and immigrants, particularly from what Trump infamously referred to as “shithole countries”), forceful assertion and chauvinistic trumpeting of American dominance and “the superiority of western civilization,” along with willful rejection of science and the scientific method, especially where it would interfere with unrestrained plunder of the environment, as well as people.

Given the nature, objectives and actions of the fascists, there is the real possibility of actual civil war. But given the nature, objectives and actions of the “mainstream” section of the ruling class (as represented by the Democratic Party and media such as MSNBC, the *New York Times* and CNN), and given the current situation with those, from different parts of society, who tend to support, and politically tail behind, this “mainstream” section of the ruling class, it is possible that the fascists could achieve and consolidate power *without* a civil war, but *with* all the terrible consequences that would follow this fascist consolidation of power. *Or*, as emphasized in the “Declaration and Call,” in what would amount to a *one-sided* civil war, these fascists could carry out a slaughter of those they hate, including Black people and other people of color, “illegal immigrants,” “uppity women” and those who don’t conform to “traditional” sexual and gender relations and “norms.”

In any case, it is a deadly serious reality that these fascists are determined to crush—as violently as necessary—anyone and anything, anywhere in society, that stands in the way of implementing their horrific objectives.

This puts an exclamation point on what the “Declaration and Call” says immediately after this:

This situation needs to be radically changed, to where there are masses of people prepared to defeat these fascists and to do so as part of getting rid of this whole system, which has bred these fascists, along with all the other horrors it continually perpetrates.

The Democrats will never, and *can* never, fight these fascists in the way they need to be fought, because that requires getting into the real nature of this system, and bringing out the fact that these fascists, as grotesque as they are, are in fact a grotesque expression *of the very system that the Democrats themselves are an expression of, and are working to perpetuate.* Most fundamentally: The purpose and aim cannot be simply to defeat these fascists, as an end in itself, with the orientation of somehow returning things

to the “normal” way this horrific system of capitalism-imperialism has operated for more than a century.

This is not the time of the Civil War in the 1860s, when the goal of those fighting against injustice was to abolish slavery, and—in terms of who ruled society—the only possible positive outcome was the consolidation and strengthening of the rule of the rising capitalist class centered in the North. That time is now long gone. And this system of capitalism, which has developed into a system of worldwide exploitation and oppression, *capitalism-imperialism*, is long *outmoded*—long past its expiration date, long past any circumstances where it could play any positive role. The goal now must precisely be *getting rid of this whole system of capitalism-imperialism*.

The character of a new civil war would have significantly different features from that previous civil war of 1861-65, where *one geographic part* of the country, the southern Confederacy, attempted to secede and form a separate country in that territory. Today, the forces of fascism among the population are again concentrated in the South, as well as in rural areas throughout the country; but, in the South and throughout the country, they are closely connected, geographically, with sections of the population that are *opposed* to this fascism. Any new civil war would be fought between opposing forces that would be in close proximity to each other—in a real sense intertwined geographically—around the country. This would have both advantages and disadvantages for the people on the positive side of such a civil war, and this would need to be taken into account in their approach to fighting that civil war.

(The “Red States/Blue States” picture, which is constantly presented in the mainstream media, is very misleading in terms of the geographic and political divisions in the country. It does not present an accurate picture of population *concentration*—of which sections of the people are actually concentrated where, and in what numbers, *within* the existing states. Of particular importance, it downplays *the concentration of people in this country as a whole in urban areas*, including the suburbs around the inner city cores, and the concentration of masses of oppressed people especially in those inner city cores. It downplays the strong opposition to the fascists that exists among large numbers of people in the urban areas. This mainstream presentation of things is meant to reinforce the sense that the only possibility is the continuation of this system of capitalism-imperialism, and the only choice is between the two parties representing the ruling class of this system: the “red” Republican Party or the “blue” Democratic Party. And, by the way, with the color red historically associated with *communism*,

the “appropriation” of this color in association with the *fascist* Republican Party is an abomination!)

The current polarization, even on the positive side, among those opposed to the fascists, is not what is needed, and will not meet the profound and urgent challenge of these times. For the reasons discussed in this talk, there can be no real and lasting defeat of these fascists on the terms of the Democrats, on the terms of what have been, for generations, the “norms” of “democratic” capitalist rule in this country. Fundamentally, there can be no resolution to this, under this system, which will be in the interests of the masses of people, not just in this country but in the world as a whole. Once more, what is urgently needed is a very different polarization than what exists today—a **repolarization**—for **revolution**.

And, once again as well—without being absolute about this—there is a limited time frame within which this repolarization must be achieved. If things continue as they are, with the fascist offensive by the Republican Party and its base becoming even more aggressive and powerful, then it is very likely that their “two-pronged offensive” will succeed, that they will utilize the changes they are forcing through state governments and key parts of the federal government, in particular the courts, to regain and consolidate control of the country as a whole, move forward with a vengeance to implement their fascist program, and forcefully suppress, as violently as necessary, any effective opposition.

The urgency of this situation—and the urgent need for repolarization, **for revolution**—must be clearly understood, and forcefully conveyed to masses of people. This must be done in a compelling way, without hype (and there is no need for hype to describe the critical situation and urgent stakes). While it is crucially important to unite with people in rising up against the terrible injustices and outrages constantly perpetrated by this system, *and* to continually bring alive the possibility of a radically different and emancipating alternative, once again it needs to be stressed: It is necessary to wage a tireless struggle to break people out of the ways of thinking, and acting, that in fact keep them chained to this system and contribute to *perpetuating* this system, in one form or another.

Fatalism, and defeatism—the belief that nothing can be done to change the terrible situation and bleak future humanity is now facing, that no positive radical change is possible—this way of thinking *itself* must be defeated, overcome both through sharp struggle and by bringing alive and popularizing the possibility for a radically different and better world, through revolution, which is grounded in a scientific, materialist approach to and



understanding of the real world and the actual possibility for its positive radical transformation. Overall—and above all in terms of the basic masses, the bitterly oppressed people who must become the backbone of this revolution—overcoming this defeatism, and bringing about the necessary repolarization, must be carried out, and can only be achieved, through a powerful combination of fierce ideological struggle among the people, to win growing numbers to a scientific understanding of the situation we face and the actual solution to this, together with determined resistance against this oppressive system—all of which must be led to contribute to building up the forces and creating the political alignment necessary for revolution.

While masses of people urgently need this revolution, it is all too true that, right now, the great majority of them are thinking in a lot of wrong ways. To put things straight-up, they don't know shit and have their heads up their asses! This needs to be radically changed—and *can* be, but *only through a tremendous amount of sharp struggle*. As I have said before (in “Rare Time”):

It is the responsibility of everyone who recognizes the profound need for revolution—and the rare possibility in a time like this to actually make revolution—to wage a tireless, and at times fierce, struggle to win more and more people to make a radical rupture with the confining and degrading terms of this system, and to take up, and act on, the revolutionary orientation and motivation that is put forward in the “Declaration and Call.”

Instead of “staying in your lane,” and “going for self,” while this system is moving to even more decisively crush any hope for a world worth living in, people need to be looking at the bigger picture, focusing on the greater interests of humanity and the possibility for a far better world—and acting to make this a reality.

Instead of finding excuses to go along with the way things have been, standing apart from (or even bad-mouthing) the revolution, people need to get with this revolution, and not throw away the rare opportunity to be part of bringing something much better into being.

Instead of lashing out with individual acts of frustration, or attempts to take on this system with small, isolated forces that have no chance of succeeding, people need to pour their anger, and their hatred for injustice, into building a movement of millions that could have a real chance to defeat this system and make a real revolution.

Instead of fighting and killing each other, what people need to be doing now is *uniting to defend each other*—opposing all unjust violence, not launching attacks on anyone but at the same time not allowing the police or “civilian” fascist thugs to wantonly brutalize and murder people. And people need to do this as part of building up the forces for revolution.

Instead of snarking and sniping at each other, and being divided by “identities,” people should be working to unite everyone, from every part of society, who can be united in the fight against oppression and injustice, with the goal of *putting an end to this system that is the source of this oppression and injustice*.

Instead of being a tail on the Democratic donkey—with its attempt to keep this monstrous system going, and to deal with the growing fascist danger, by relying on the “normal procedures” of this system and doomed efforts to “heal the divisions” that are deepening every day—people need to *work for the revolution that is urgently needed*, and deal with the fascist danger as part of doing *that*.

Running through much of the situation today is the problem of *individualism*—“going for self” regardless of the effect on other people, and on humanity as a whole—which is encouraged and expressed in extreme forms in this particular society at this time, and is often combined and intertwined with a lack of hope for anything better in this world. Again, from *Hope For Humanity On A Scientific Basis*:

*Lack of real hope for a better life in this world is a heavy chain weighing down, suffocating and deeply scarring the masses of humanity, including the youth who are concentrated in the ghettos and barrios of this country as well as its overflowing torture chamber prisons. And the extreme individualism promoted throughout this society, the obsessive focus on “the self,” has reinforced the heavy lid on the sights of people, obscuring their ability to recognize the possibility of a radically different and better world, beyond the narrow and confining limits of this system, with all its very real horrors.*

Along with other negative trends, there is the way that people's sense that the world is fucked up beyond repair, and things are just going to keep going to hell, leads them to just try to get what they can for themselves now, before it's too late. So people need hope—not hype but real hope that is based on a scientific method and approach to understanding the world as it actually is and the possibility of changing it, in the way it *can* be changed, to bring a

radically different and much better world into being, through a real revolution. They need the scientifically based sweeping vision, and concrete blueprint, for a radically different and emancipating society that is set forth in the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*, which I have authored.

They need the fundamental approach to understanding reality, and the basis and possibility for radically changing it, that is concentrated in the following:

[T]he systems that characterize the societies that people live in ... are *historically evolved*. This means that changes in human society are based, and can only be based, on transforming what already exists in that society, on the foundation of the *forces of production* that have been developed at any given time [the land and raw materials, factories and other production facilities, machinery and other technology, and the people, with their knowledge and abilities].

And even *revolutionary* changes—a radical leap from one system to another—can only proceed on the basis of transforming what exists. This cannot be done by coming up with ideas or notions about how society “ought” to be, if those ideas or notions have no basis in the existing reality.

What is crucially important to understand is that *the basis now exists* to enable the billions of people on this planet to have the means for a decent life, worthy of human beings—a life that is continually being enriched, not just materially but socially, intellectually and culturally. But, at the same time, the way human society has developed under the domination of this system of capitalism-imperialism has led to a highly “lopsided” world, where billions of people in the world live in horrific conditions of oppression and misery, with millions of children in the Third World dying each year from starvation and preventable diseases....

It is the *productive forces* that have been developed under the capitalist-imperialist system that actually provide the material basis to move beyond all this. But, at the same time, it is this system, with its *mode of production* based on *exploitative relations of production*, that is the direct barrier to making this a reality—is a chain on the masses of people throughout the world, and on humanity overall.

That is from the article *Why The World Is So Messed Up, And What Can Be Done to Radically Change This—A Basic Scientific Understanding*. As I pointed out in that article:

The resolution to this howling contradiction between what are now the conditions of the masses of humanity, and what is actually possible—the only resolution that is in the interests of those masses, and ultimately all of humanity—is through the revolution to overthrow this system and replace it with a socialist system on the road to a communist world. Bringing this fundamental understanding to people is crucial, in order for them to really have hope, on a scientific foundation.

But the fact is that there is not only a lack of hope among many, but also a lack of *searching*—for an understanding of why the world is so messed up, and can anything be done to really change this. This needs to be strongly and deeply challenged, through the promotion of broad debate about these literally life and death matters, and a tremendous amount of struggle over the big question: what is the fundamental problem humanity is facing, and what is the solution?—or, put in basic terms, reform vs. revolution, working within this system, *or overthrowing* it and replacing it with a radically different system. This needs to be vigorously taken up and fiercely debated and struggled out among people in all parts of society—including students, academics and other intellectuals, people in the arts and the professions, as well as people with only a limited formal education—all of whom can be, and need to be, seriously engaged with these vital and urgent questions.

To return to the current lack of searching: this is linked in many cases with self-absorbed individualism, either blindly and blithely oblivious or virulently poisonous. Once more from *Hope For Humanity*:

Individualism is a significant factor and “unifying element” in much of the negative trends that play a major role in keeping people from recognizing the reality and depth of the horrors continually brought about by this system—and recognizing the urgent need to act, together with others, to abolish and uproot all this, at its very source.

And:

*[T]he terrible suffering of the masses of humanity and the urgent challenges facing humanity as a whole as a result of the escalating destruction of the environment by this system of capitalism-imperialism as well as the possibility of nuclear conflagration that continues to loom as an existential threat over humanity—all this cannot be seriously addressed, let alone actually solved, by each person pursuing their particular individual interests, and in fact people acting in this way constitutes a major obstacle to bringing about the necessary solution.*

This individualism, in turn, is based, to a very significant extent, in *parasitism*—living in this country that is sitting atop the imperialist food chain, deriving benefits from the exploitation and misery of millions and billions of people worldwide. This applies not just to the section of people in this country that is really well off, but also to the large number who are scrambling to make it through the day, the week, or the month: for them in particular there is a kind of toxic combination of having to struggle and scrounge to get through, and at the same time benefitting to some degree from imperialist parasitism. The effect of all this is to make it seem possible, and/or to seem necessary, to ignore what is going on in the larger world. But, in reality, there is, and increasingly there will be, *no* ignoring what is happening in that larger world, and no avoiding the consequences of failing to confront and radically transform this.

Yes, it is true: YOLO. But, since you only live once, you should make it count for something—something much bigger than yourself—being part of an historic revolution to free all oppressed people, and bring in a new day for all humanity, with whole new horizons of freedom and life with meaning for human beings, way beyond what is possible now, when we are still forced to live under this monstrosity of a system which denies a decent life to billions of people on this planet and has no decent future, or no future at all, for those of the younger generations.

Parasitic individualism needs to be directly, sharply, and deeply challenged, as it is a major obstacle in the way of people seeking out the answers to the profound and accelerating crisis and potential catastrophe that people, not just in this country but in the world as a whole, are facing (whether or not they recognize, or acknowledge, it). And this individualism prevents people from acting together, as a revolutionary force, to *wrench something positive* out of all this ongoing madness.

In both immediate *and* overall *strategic terms*, very much bound up with challenging this parasitic individualism is waging substantial, determined, relentless struggle against American chauvinism—the disgusting notion that America and Americans are better and more important than everybody else. As I have pointed out before, this is a poison infecting people broadly in this country, even among the bitterly oppressed; and a positive, revolutionary resolution to the current course of things cannot be brought about unless masses of people *break* with this American chauvinism. One of the main, and most ugly, manifestations of this American chauvinism is the sickening support, even among large numbers of “progressive” and “woke” people, for the U.S. military—with all this nauseating “thank you for your service”—a

“service” which consists of horrific war crimes and crimes against humanity in enforcing the interests and objectives of the most exploitative, oppressive, and destructive social force in the world: U.S. capitalist imperialism. Combating this, and winning people to reject and repudiate this—*among all sectors of society*—is crucial now, and has definite *strategic implications*, in building for and then carrying out the revolution that is urgently needed.

So people need to be *jolted awake*, to reality—to the reality of this system of capitalism-imperialism, the reality of where things are heading right now, with terrible consequences if things continue on this course—and the reality of the possibility, and the urgent need, to wrench something positive out of this, through a real revolution.

Another important dimension of the straight-up, hardcore struggle that needs to be waged with people, including bitterly oppressed people, is spoken to in the following in Part 3 of my *New Year's Statement*:

Given the tight connection between militant patriarchy and fascism, it is not surprising that some (though clearly a minority of) Black and Latino men have been drawn to support for Trump, despite his overt white supremacy. (This includes some who are or have been prominent in rap music. While there have been positive forces and elements in rap and Hip Hop overall, what has been increasingly promoted is a culture that is full of, not to say dominated by, misogynistic degradation of women, as well as admiration for the kind of hustler gangsterism that is one of Trump's defining “qualities.”) It is also not surprising that even significant numbers of women (mainly white women but also some Latina and other women of color) have been drawn to this fascism, as the phenomenon of the oppressed clinging to “tradition's chains” that oppress them is unfortunately all too common.

There must be determined struggle against the “macho” bullshit of all too many Black and Latino men—a “warrior mentality” of the *wrong* kind, which also characterizes far too many Native American men, in their own particular way, with their utterly misplaced, and frankly perverse, pride in being part of the same U.S. military that carried out the *genocide* against these original peoples in America. There must also be sharp struggle against the ways that, among the other half of humanity, which is female, the phenomenon of the oppressed acting in ways that oppress them not only involves clinging to highly oppressive patriarchal religious tradition but also takes the form of aggressively reveling in and flaunting what is objectively



highly demeaning “sexualization” and commodification of sex. This is actively promoted among Black and Latina women—and is a definite negative trend in popular culture, including Hip Hop. It is also noteworthy that, as surprising as it might seem when looked at superficially, this self-degrading hyper-sexualization often goes hand-in-hand with its “mirror opposite”: religious obscurantism—a fundamentalist form of religion that blocks, *obscures* the light of reason. There is also a similar phenomenon among gang members, where gang-banging and other acts of degradation and self-degradation are combined with a heavy religious obscurantism, in one form or another.

To far too great a degree, the “education” that masses of basic people get—and in particular the “education” that tends to “stick”—comes through religious institutions, and the promotion of obscurantist religion. This is a real problem, a significant part of why far too many basic oppressed people are susceptible to anti-scientific thinking, including crazy conspiracy theories.

This “religious impulse” continues to exert a significant influence—is a significant phenomenon—among many in the Black middle class as well, including many who acquire a more “cosmopolitan” education, even at the more “elite” universities.

All this is promoted and reinforced by the continually propagated notion that the very identity of Black people is somehow inextricably bound up with religion and religious institutions, in particular the Christian *Black Church* (the idea that this religion and Black identity are so tightly and essentially woven together, that they cannot be separated) and that, without religion and the Black Church, Black people could not survive, or thrive, in racist America. But, for the *masses* of Black people, “thriving” within this monstrous system is *impossible*—and merely surviving, while still being terribly oppressed, tormented, tortured and repeatedly brutalized and murdered, under this system, cannot be, and is not, the most that can be hoped for, or achieved.

It is true that, although Christianity in particular was imposed on Black people by the slave system, the Black Church has at times, and to a degree, played a positive role in the struggle of Black people; but it is also true that it has placed very definite constraints on this struggle, channeling and limiting it within the confines of this very system that is the source of the oppression and suffering to which Black people have been subjected throughout the history of this country.

As another dimension of this problem, especially with the undermining and outright gutting of public schools, particularly in the inner cities, in the realm of athletics—one of the very few arenas in which a few basic Black

people can attain wealth and prestige—there is the fact that significant numbers of Black athletes now go through private *Christian fundamentalist* schools for their basic “education” (in fact, *mis-education*). And then, even as they take stands in support of struggles against injustice, many of these athletes also utilize their “platform” to promote the religious obscurantism with which they have been indoctrinated—which contributes to the situation where masses of people, who are influenced by these prominent figures, are vulnerable to all kinds of distortions of reality.

We have witnessed statements and actions by influential Black celebrities, in sports as well as the arts, which reflect and encourage anti-scientific ways of thinking, including disinformation about and discouraging people from getting the vaccines against COVID, when Black people (and other people of color) are dying at higher rates than others from COVID, and the vaccines have been proven safe and very effective against serious illness and death from COVID. This spreading of anti-scientific disinformation is very harmful, both in its immediate effects, *and in strategic terms*.

Yes, it is true that, in the history of this country, Black people have been the victims of horrific medical experiments, and still today they are subjected to discrimination, and at times uncaring and even harmful treatment, in the realm of health care. And, yes, it is true that Black people have been, and continue to be, subjected to vicious and often murderous oppression at the hands of government authorities. But all that is certainly true of Native Americans as well. Yet they have a *much higher* rate of vaccination against COVID. What they do not seem to have among them, at least not as a significant factor, is the phenomenon of prominent and influential people spreading anti-scientific disinformation about the vaccines and active discouragement from getting vaccinated.

With regard to vaccines, and dealing with COVID generally, as with all social problems and their solutions, what is needed is an *evidence-based scientific approach*.

Besides the great harm it does to people who are hit hardest by COVID, and to the overall efforts to “get on top of” this COVID pandemic, another very damaging effect of this *anti-scientific*, anti-vaccine *disinformation* is that it plays directly into the hands of the white supremacist fascists, who have been quick to pick up on, praise and promote this. As I have said about this:

*What a terrible situation where some Black people and other oppressed people can actually find themselves in the same place as those fascists who regard them as inferior sub-humans and want to*

*deny them basic rights, lock them up permanently, or outright exterminate them!*

To a great degree, this spreading of harmful, even deadly disinformation is also an expression of rampant individualism—the notion that “it is my right, and an expression of my personal freedom, to do whatever I want, and no authority should be allowed to restrict that.” As I have also pointed out:

This is nonsense—very harmful nonsense! Individual freedom is not absolute—as almost everyone will agree when this is posed to them in terms that do not run up against their individualism. For example, few will argue that someone should have the freedom to drive 100 miles an hour through a school zone when children are crossing the street. And any reasonable person will agree that it is not okay for white supremacists to lynch Black people—or for the police to wantonly murder Black people—simply because they feel like it—because they see it as an expression of their “individual freedom” (and “personal choice”)....

*It would be impossible to live in any society where “individual freedom” (or “personal choice”) were absolute. The question is: Are expressions of individual freedom, or restrictions on individual freedom, good or bad—do they make for a better, or worse, society?*

On the part of at least some of these Black celebrities, this irresponsible spreading of anti-scientific nonsense is also part of self-promotion—is an expression of the dominant culture overall, where opinions are “re-branded” as “my truth” and are put forward as being the same as (just as good as, or perhaps even better, than) facts, and people seek to build a following by spouting opinions, including many which are wildly in conflict with reality.

But, again, the influence of religion, and especially crudely anti-scientific obscurantist religion, is also a significant factor in these harmful positions taken by some influential Black celebrities. In the absence of, and especially in opposition to, a scientific approach, people are left groping in the dark, unable to determine what is actually represented by different forces and where different paths will lead. Any rebellion in these circumstances is rebelling *blindly*, believing that you are striking out against things that oppress you (and others like you), when in fact you are playing into the hands of, and actually strengthening, the most vicious oppressors and ultimately the whole system of oppression.

The religious obscurantism that is far too widespread

among the basic masses is another chain of oppression on them, which needs to be vigorously and resolutely struggled against.

And, while it needs to be recognized that there are many religious people who play a positive role in the fight against many injustices and forms of oppression, and it is important to unite with them in this fight, it is also important to struggle against the religious outlook in general. Why? Because putting an end to injustice and oppression, and uprooting the basis for all this, requires a revolution led by a powerful and growing force of people who are grounded in a *scientific* method and approach, in particular the scientific method and approach of the new communism.

What is said in the book *BASics, from the talks and writings of Bob Avakian* is a fundamental truth—and there is a need to unsparingly drive home this truth: “Oppressed people who are unable or unwilling to confront reality as it actually is, are condemned to remain enslaved and oppressed.” (This is *BASics* 4:1.) And the religious outlook and approach—with its misplaced belief in the ultimately decisive role of non-existent supernatural beings and forces—is an obstacle to applying a consistently scientific method to confront reality as it actually is, and transform it in an emancipating way.

To put things in deliberately provocative terms: It’s time to leave that “god stuff” *alone*—that will never lead anybody to get free. We need a lot less of this “god talk” and a lot more talk, and action, for revolution—real revolution.

Some people may not like my saying all this, but I’m going to say it anyway, because I’m not here to please people, or to make them feel better about their enslaved and degraded position—I’m here to bring them a scientific method and approach to making revolution, in order to free themselves and all humanity, and I’m here to tell them the truth about everything that stands in the way of that.

And one big reason why I say what I say, regardless of whether some people like it or not, is because Black people, who have so long been subjected to the most horrific oppression under this system, can and must play a decisive and tremendously powerful role in bringing about the revolution that will not only put an end to their oppression, but will strike a powerful blow for ending all oppression, of everyone, everywhere. As I have stated before:

There is the potential for something of unprecedented beauty to arise out of unspeakable ugliness: Black people playing a crucial role in putting an end, at long last, to this system which has, for so long, not just exploited but dehumanized,

terrorized and tormented them in a thousand ways—putting an end to this in the only way it can be done—by fighting to emancipate humanity, to put an end to the long night in which human society has been divided into masters and slaves, and the masses of humanity have been lashed, beaten, raped, slaughtered, shackled and shrouded in ignorance and misery.

But this can happen only as growing numbers of Black people, together with others, take up a scientific, not a religious, viewpoint, method and approach.

So, am I saying that there is no place in this revolution for people who continue to hold religious beliefs? No. It is an objective fact, which needs to be understood, that many people who take part in this revolution will still hold religious beliefs, of one kind or another—and of course religious people who want to be part of this revolution should be welcomed into the broad ranks of the revolution. The casting off of religious belief by masses of people must be a conscious, voluntary act, which will advance in tempo with the overall development of the revolutionary process and the transformation of society, and the world, toward the goal of ending all oppression and exploitation, all division of society into masters and slaves. But, again, there must be a *leading force*, and a *growing force* of the revolution that is solid core/hardcore based on a scientific, not a religious viewpoint, method and approach, and there must be generous-minded but consistent, determined, compelling struggle, waged broadly—sharply posing the need for people to take up the scientific viewpoint, method and approach of the new communism, in opposition to everything that is an obstacle to that, including belief in gods or other supernatural forces which in reality do not exist, and religious tradition which upholds oppressive relations.

Here is another profound truth: Even with all the ways that the heavy chains of hundreds, and thousands, of years of oppressive tradition weigh down on the masses of people—and place a heavy burden particularly on the half of humanity that is female—there is a deep yearning to be free of all this, which not only leads to imaginary hopes of supernatural salvation but also erupts in unrestrained fury right in this real world. And that fury needs to be fully called forth, given a scientific, revolutionary expression—focused toward the emancipation of all the oppressed and exploited of the world, and ultimately all humanity—directed to fighting against the fundamental source of all the suffering: this system of capitalism-imperialism, with its suffocating and brutal, patriarchal male supremacy, along with all its other outrages. This takes on even

more powerful meaning and urgent importance in the current situation in this country (and others), where the forceful assertion of raw misogyny (hatred of women) and patriarchal subjugation of women is becoming more blatant and unbridled, focused to a significant degree now in the escalating moves to even further deny women control over their own lives and their very bodies, with the right to abortion, and even birth control, being brought under mounting attack. Right now, this slogan and call needs to be taken up broadly and made a powerful material force: **Break the Chains, Unleash the Fury of Women as a Mighty Force for Revolution!**

In relation to all this, these observations of mine, from a number of years ago now, not only have great importance in general and at all times, but are especially important now:

The religious fundamentalists, of various kinds, make a point of recruiting in the prisons, and they come with a heavy ideological message.... It is not at all the case that people can only “lose their religion” by replacing it with another religion in some form. But there does have to be another explanation about the world and existence and why this is the way it is, and how it could be different.... If you want to rupture people out of shit, not only stuff that lands them in prison, but the daily shit they are caught up in, in the society, you have to have a really strong hardcore ideological thing to bring to them.... [I]t has to be coherent and systematic. It has to explain the world—and in our case we can actually explain it in a scientific way. That’s an advantage of communism over religion, even though religion has certain short-term advantages.... But we have the advantage of actually being able to make reality make sense for people. That’s a very powerful thing.

We should not underestimate the importance, not only with prisoners but in general, of doing a lot of ideological work to really enable people to see the world in a wholly different way—really the way it is. To take the pieces of this puzzle that are all out of whack and don’t fit together—it’s like looking through a weird kaleidoscope the way most people see reality. And then it’s misinterpreted for them by all these different bourgeois and reactionary ideologies and programs, and so on, including various religious views. But communist ideology and its application to the world is a way of taking reality and having it make sense for people.

At the same time, winning basic people, and in particular



the youth, to revolution also requires making further critical breakthroughs in what I have called the “George Jackson question”—the problem sharply posed by George Jackson, a prisoner who became a militant revolutionary associated with the Black Panther Party during the upsurge of the 1960s, and who grappled deeply with the question of revolutionary possibility, before he was assassinated by the authorities. To a slave who does not expect to live beyond tomorrow, Jackson said, the idea of gradual change, and revolution in some far-off future, has no meaning and no appeal.

This takes on particular and special meaning in a rare time like this—a time when revolution could actually be possible, *exactly not in some vague far-off future, but through the swirl of the sharpening events and conflicts that are happening right in this present time.*

Here, again, is the decisive question of how much the organized forces of revolution are built up and have an impact on all this, in the direction of the revolution that is so urgently needed.

To appeal to masses of people, and in particular basic youth, the revolution must become a *growing, organized, disciplined, bold and fearless force* which, through its scientifically based method, its sweeping vision, its emancipating program and goals, and its actions, is an increasingly powerful pole that will attract these youth—and fighters for revolution from all parts of society.

There is plenty that needs to be done, and urgently, which requires real boldness and heart, in working for this revolution: powerfully spreading the word about this revolution, *challenging* people to get into this revolution, recruiting and organizing them into this revolution—*going up against and breaking through all the bullshit that people are caught up in that goes against their own real interests*—doing the work that needs to be done to transform people’s thinking, and their actions—standing up against the forces oppressing the people, waging the fight that needs to be waged against the atrocities of this system—doing all this to get ready, and to have the basis, to wage the all-out fight to finally overthrow this system, as soon as the necessary conditions for that have been brought into being.

And, as the revolution grows in this way: There is plenty that needs to be done, and urgently, which requires real boldness and heart, to stand up against the fascists, and any other oppressive force, in their moves to threaten and intimidate, brutalize and even murder people. Let me make clear that I am not calling for launching unprovoked and unjustified attacks on anybody; but there is a right, and a need—and *there is the responsibility*—to *defend* the people who are oppressed and brutalized under this system, and

those who represent and stand for what is right, and are being attacked because of that.

In the six Points of Attention for the Revolution—which are basic principles that the Revolution Clubs, a key form of organization for this revolution, base themselves on and fight for—the final point is this:

We are going for an *actual* overthrow of this system and a whole better way beyond the destructive, vicious conflicts of today between the people. Because we are serious, at this stage we do not initiate violence and we oppose all violence against the people and among the people.

Yes, this is something very serious: going for an actual overthrow of this system and a whole better way. And, yes, a big part of this is overcoming how people who are already messed over, in so many ways, by this system, get caught up in yet *another* way this system messes them up: fighting and killing each other. This needs to *stop*.

But it doesn’t need to just stop. *People who have been caught up in this need to become part of something really positive—they need to become part of the forces for the revolution that is so urgently needed now.*

The frustration and anger that so many feel, especially so many basic youth, because they can sense that life under this system has nothing good for them—that, from the time they are born, they are locked down and surrounded by forces that regard and treat them as alien objects of fear and hatred—and that those with power look at them as scum who deserve nothing more than a boot up the ass and a bullet in the brain—this frustration and anger needs to be redirected to fighting the system that treats them this way, and has robbed them, and so many like them throughout the world, of a decent life and a decent future, or any future at all.

Once more, there is plenty that calls, urgently, for great courage and boldness in doing what needs to be done: to be part of rising up against this system and getting ready to go all the way with revolution as soon as the time is right—and, as an important part of that, supporting, and *defending*, people who are constantly being subjected to unjust attacks on their rights and their very being.

There are the continuing attacks on people and movements that are rebelling against racist oppression.

There are threats against, and physical attacks on, health care officials and providers, local government officials (and their families!), as well as employees in stores, and so on, when they are advocating and implementing much-needed and life-saving measures, such as mask and vaccination mandates to deal with the continuing COVID pandemic.

There are attacks on school board members not only for adopting these basic health measures but also for things like approving the teaching of some truth about the white supremacy that has always existed in this country, or allowing rights for trans people.

There are the threats, harassment and attacks on women seeking abortions, and on clinics and medical personnel working to provide those abortions, along with the escalating assault on the *right* to abortion by the Republican-fascist party, and those it has placed in the courts.

There are brutal and often murderous attacks on LGBT people.

There are continuing moves, including with the threat or use of violence, to once again prevent Black people and other oppressed people from even exercising what are supposed to be basic rights, such as voting. (With a scientific method and approach, it is both possible, and important, to actively oppose attempts to deny people the *right* to vote, and *at the same time* win people to see that their efforts need to go, not into voting for representatives of this system that is oppressing them, but working to build up the basis to *overthrow* this whole system.)

All these attacks on people and their rights need to be powerfully opposed, and people on the good side of this need to be actively protected and defended, where they are assaulted with threats and even outright physical attacks.

There is the need to prevent the police from brutalizing and just coldly murdering people. Let us remember what was said by some people who witnessed, and even recorded, the slow-motion vicious execution of George Floyd: They agonized over whether they should have done more, should have acted to *stop* this blatant assassination of a defenseless Black man. Now, again, what I am pointing to is consistent with point 6 of the six Points of Attention for the Revolution—and, in what I am saying here, I am not calling for launching an attack on anyone. But there is no right for anyone, including police, to just murder someone—and there *is* a right and responsibility to defend and protect people from unjust attacks on their rights, and on their very lives.

Imagine if, in these different kinds of situations, there were a force of hardcore revolutionaries, including basic youth, whose presence in a disciplined and organized formation made clear that no unjust attacks on people would be tolerated. But this must not just be imagined—it must be developed as *one important part* of the overall process of preparing for, and building the organized forces for, revolution.

This must be taken up in a serious, scientific way—not attempting, at any given point, to do what there is not yet the basis to do, but actively working to bring into being the conditions where what was not possible before *becomes* possible, as the organized ranks of revolution continue to grow and become steeled as a disciplined force. Taken up in this way, this can increasingly have dynamic effect—with “reverberations” and impact far beyond the immediate situation, attracting more people to this revolution... which, in turn, will make it possible to have even greater impact... and attract even larger forces.

All this is an important part of the *overall approach* that I have laid out in the course of this talk, which will enable what are today the small organized forces of this revolution to continue to grow—increasingly by leaps and bounds—in numbers, organized strength, and impact on society as a whole. This is what more and more people must be challenged, and enabled, to become part of.

This brings up another important dimension of working for revolution—and opposing the fascists *as part of doing that*: It is necessary to sharply expose and oppose—and fight to politically and practically overcome—the reality that for white supremacists and fascists generally the Second Amendment, the “right to bear arms,” has been regularly upheld and given the backing of the law and the courts, and the support of the police and other institutions of the state; while for Black people, other oppressed people, and generally those opposing the oppression and injustice of this system, the “right to bear arms,” even in self-defense, has been actively *opposed and suppressed*.

This is made graphically clear in the book by Carol Anderson focusing on the Second Amendment—*The Second: Race and Guns in a Fatally Unequal America*. This book contains (yet more!) searing exposure of the depraved violence visited upon Black people throughout the history of this country, and speaks to how the “right to bear arms” has never applied to Black people, and instead there has been the perverse “right to kill” Black people, on the part of the powers-that-be and racist whites generally. This cannot be allowed to continue!

And it is not just around what is represented by “the Second Amendment” that a determined fight must be waged, but around the many ways in which the approach to rights that are supposedly guaranteed to people is applied in a *highly unequal* way, so that oppressed people, and those acting against the oppressive relations of this system, constantly find their rights attacked, “abridged,” or outright denied and suppressed. In waging this fight, it is important to recognize and, to the degree possible,

take advantage of *this contradiction*: In reality, under this system of capitalism-imperialism, rights and liberties are determined, and limited, in accordance with what serves the interests of this system and its ruling class; but, we are constantly *told* that, under this system, there is “liberty and justice for all,” and the rulers of this system, or at least some of them, feel it is important to maintain this myth. Again, to the degree possible, this contradiction must be seized on, in waging the fight to defeat attempts by the enforcers of this system to *violate* what are supposed to be basic rights, in their moves to suppress people rising up against this system and its profound *injustice*.

But, most fundamentally, this fight must be waged with full awareness, a scientifically grounded understanding, of the essential nature of this system, with the orientation and goal of working toward the *overthrow* of this system and the dismantling of its relations and institutions of vicious exploitation and blood-soaked oppression and repression.

Once again, in order to make all this a reality, as this revolution is being brought to growing numbers of basic youth, and others, and they are being challenged to get into it, they need to be struggled with, hard, to get rid of the ways of thinking and acting that keep this system going. People need to “get their head right,” get their head out of their ass, and take up the *scientific method and approach of the new communism* to understanding reality, and transforming reality in a fundamental way, through revolution. This means not being just out for yourself, or those you can identify with in a narrow way (whoever that may be), but becoming revolutionaries in the fullest sense—*revolutionary communists, emancipators of all humanity*—becoming part of the organized and disciplined forces for this revolution, and nothing less.

As we say, to “*everyone who has the heart to fight for something that is really worth fighting for: **You need to be part of this revolution.***”

So, on the foundation of everything that has been said so far, and in moving to the conclusion of this talk, it is worthwhile returning to, reviewing, and elaborating briefly on some key aspects of these big questions: Why this is one of those rare times and circumstances when revolution becomes possible, even in a powerful country like this, and how to seize on this rare opportunity to actually make this revolution.

\* There is the sharpening conflict at the top, and throughout the country, with society and the “ruling norms” of this system being torn apart, driven especially by the relentless offensive of the fascist forces. Yes, as the “Declaration and Call” makes clear, there are a lot of bad things connected with this, and it could lead to something

really terrible; but, if it is seized on and correctly worked on by growing organized forces of revolution, guided by the scientific method and approach of the new communism, it is also possible that we could wrench something really positive out of this—**revolution, to put an end to this system and bring something much better into being.**

\* Bringing into being a revolutionary people in the millions—with an organized force of thousands at the core, leading these millions—is the key objective and necessary focus of revolutionary work *now*, in preparing to go for all-out revolution, with a real chance to win, as soon as the conditions for that have been brought into being.

And here is another very important requirement in all this. In order for there to be the necessary force of thousands, able to lead millions—and more particularly in order to defeat the vicious repression that is bound to be brought down on a seriously developing revolutionary force, including the ability to replace leaders who are killed or imprisoned by the repressive force of the existing state power:

It is a matter of strategic importance to develop a large core of experienced and tested leaders—not just “tens” but at least hundreds of such leaders, on all levels—firmly grounded in the line, above all the scientific method and approach of [the new communism], and capable, on that basis, of taking initiative to lead, including in situations of sharpening contradictions and the intensification of repression and even attempts at violent suppression by the powers-that-be, throughout the process of advancing the “three prepares” [prepare the ground, prepare the people, prepare the vanguard leadership for revolution]; and then, when the conditions come into being, this core of tested leaders needs to be capable of giving direction to thousands, and in turn millions, to fight all-out, in a unified way, for the seizure of power. Whether or not such a cadre of leaders—in the hundreds, at least—is developed, will have a significant bearing on whether or not all the work we are doing now is really preparing for revolution, and whether there is a real chance of winning when the time comes.

(That is a crucial point I have emphasized in the book *The New Communism*, Part IV, “The Leadership We Need.”)

This development of hundreds of such leaders must be carried out in the crucible of intense struggle in the tumultuous time before us, as a crucial part of bringing forward the thousands to lead millions. And, as the work of building for revolution is developing, these hundreds, together with the thousands they are leading, must be forged into a disciplined vanguard force, capable of leading



the overall revolutionary process of preparing for and then, when the time is right, carrying out the all-out fight for the seizure of power.

\* *Transforming the people* is decisive in order for there to be a positive outcome to all this—and *transforming the thinking* of masses of people is crucial, is pivotal, in doing this.

\* At the same time, there is real importance to fighting the power—building powerful, massive resistance to the continuing atrocities of this system—and actively defending, and opposing moves to intimidate, and attack, those who are targeted by “official” enforcers of this oppressive system and “civilian” fascist forces.

\* *The key, the most decisive thing:* All this must be **for revolution**: carried out to build toward, and get in position to have a real chance to win, an all-out fight for revolution, as soon as the conditions for that have been brought into being.

Once more: **Everything depends on bringing forward a revolutionary people, from among the most bitterly oppressed, and all parts of society, first in the thousands and then in the millions, as a powerful revolutionary force, organized from the start and consistently with a country-wide perspective, impacting all of society and changing the terms of how masses of people see things and how every institution has to respond. Everything must be focused now on actually bringing forward and organizing this revolutionary force.**

*And then, once this revolutionary force is brought into being, everything would be focused on how to actually fight to win.*

At that point, this force of millions would need to be mobilized and wielded in such a way as to make clear that it is going for a complete, revolutionary change—that it will not back down from this goal and accept anything less. In this way, it would constitute a powerful pole attracting and drawing forward even broader numbers of people from all parts of society—and it would pose a definite challenge and call to people everywhere in society, including in all the existing institutions of this system, to come over to the side of this revolution.

*And, through the swirl of this intense process, concrete work would need to be carried out to organize, train and prepare the initial fighting forces for the revolution, while actively, vigorously combating and defeating attempts to violently suppress this.*

Here, again, is something that is crucial to understand, something that is a hallmark of a serious, scientific approach to fighting to win, when the time comes: No matter how much the situation in society overall is

changed, and no matter how much even the most powerful institutions of violent repression of this system are affected by this, with significant splits very likely occurring among them, the revolution will still be confronted with powerful armed forces of counter-revolution, from among sections of the official institutions, along with fascist “civilian forces” aligned with them. And it would be extremely unlikely that, particularly at the beginning phase, the revolutionary fighting forces would be able to confront and defeat those armed forces of counter-revolution by directly and frontally taking on anything close to their full force. That is why, in the doctrine and strategic orientation that has been developed to enable the revolutionary forces to fight to win, when the time is right, it is stressed that:

[T]he revolutionary forces would need to fight only on favorable terms and avoid decisive encounters, which would determine the outcome of the whole thing, until the balance of forces had shifted overwhelmingly in favor of the revolution.

This doctrine and strategic orientation is spoken to in some depth and spelled out more fully in my speech *Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Could Really Make Revolution*, with additional thinking provided in my article *A Real Revolution—A Real Chance To Win, Further Developing the Strategy for Revolution*, both of which can be found at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us). This sets the basic groundwork for how, when the necessary conditions have been brought into being, a revolutionary force, mobilizing masses of people, could actually approach the overthrow of this system in such a way as to effectively neutralize and eventually overcome what would almost certainly be, at the outset, the overwhelming power of the armed forces seeking to defeat and pulverize this attempt at the revolutionary seizure of power. It speaks to how, when the revolutionary situation has been ripened, revolutionary fighting forces, with the backbone drawn especially from youth who have been won hardcore to this revolution, could be organized and trained, and provided with the means to engage and defeat forces of counter-revolution in encounters, beginning on a small scale, which would be favorable for the revolutionary forces—and *how, on that basis and through the course of doing that, they could grow in strength and win over growing numbers among those who had been part of the counter-revolutionary forces, and then finally defeat the remaining forces of counter-revolution.*

At the same time, the development of this basic doctrine and strategic approach is an ongoing process. And throughout this period of preparing the ground, preparing masses of people and preparing the leading forces for this revolution, this basic doctrine and strategic approach

for the all-out fight must be continually developed and made more “operational” in conception—that is, it must be *further elaborated and further concretized*, particularly in terms of *what will constitute the actual pathways to victory*—and, *flowing from and serving that*, what should be *the specific nature and features of the encounters with the other side*, particularly in the beginning phases, and (as far as possible) overall.

As spoken to earlier, a big factor in regard to all this is the real possibility of civil war between opposing sections of society, and how this could impact the key institutions of state power of this system. If such a civil war were to erupt—or even if the deepening divisions in society were moving more directly toward such a civil war—this could have a profound effect on such institutions, with the real prospect of splits among them, and even the *splitting apart* of such institutions, with some parts siding with the fascists and others with those on the side opposed to the fascists.

This possibility is something that the basic doctrine and strategic approach for the revolutionary fighting forces would need to take into account and encompass. But, in order for the revolutionary forces to win over, and incorporate into their ranks, significant numbers from among the ruling and repressive institutions of this system, *and to do so in a way that would actually maintain the emancipating character of the revolutionary forces, and strengthen them on that basis*, it would be necessary for the revolutionary ranks to be tempered and steeled, not just in terms of fighting capacity but in terms of their fundamental ideological and political orientation, as fighters for the emancipation of humanity.

Here again is the very important point that

This is not the time of the Civil War in the 1860s, when the goal of those fighting against injustice was to abolish slavery.... The goal now must precisely be *getting rid of this whole system of capitalism-imperialism....* which has bred these fascists, along with all the other horrors it continually perpetrates, here and throughout the world.

So, in the event of, and in the context of, a new civil war, the approach of the revolutionary forces, led by the new communism, would be to carry out the necessary political work, in combination with the actual fighting, to develop such a civil war into a *revolution* to achieve the goal of *getting rid of this whole system, and replacing it with a radically different and emancipating system based on the Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*.

Above all, right now, this further emphasizes the crucial importance of working actively, boldly and tirelessly for

the necessary political **repolarization** in society as a whole, and *among all sectors of society*, in a direction favorable for all-the-way revolution.

In this same light, it is also necessary to take into account how a revolution in this country would have important international dimensions and interconnections. First of all, this revolution would of course not be bound by the present territory and borders of this country, which have been forged through wars of conquest and genocide. This revolution will inevitably be influenced by, and will in turn significantly influence, what is happening in countries to the south (and north) of it, with which the USA has historically been closely interconnected, and which in many cases it has dominated and plundered.

And more generally, there will be the ways in which this revolution will be viewed, and responded to, by different forces, far beyond the present borders of this country. A serious fight for revolution *in this country*—this country—would have the effect of a powerful political earthquake, sending seismic shockwaves throughout the world. It is true that one reaction to this would be that oppressive governments and forces throughout the world would see this as a serious threat to their position and objectives, and there is a real possibility that there could be moves by some of these forces to aid, or join in, attempts to crush such a revolution. At the same time, such a revolution would shake awake and provide a powerful positive shock to literally billions of people everywhere, shattering the sense that no alternative to this terrible world is possible. Overall, it would almost certainly contribute, in a very significant way, to a repolarization on a *global* scale.

All this would need to be taken into account by the leading forces of this revolution, as an important part of its strategic orientation and objectives.

In all this, and in everything I have spoken to in the course of this talk, this fundamental principle stands out: *Revolution is a very serious matter, and it must be approached seriously and in a consistently scientific way.*

In Conclusion: Everyone who really wants to see the world changed, in a profoundly positive, emancipating way, and everyone who thinks about whether this is actually possible, or wishes it could be, needs to seriously engage what has been spoken to here, take up the scientific revolutionary orientation, method and approach of the new communism; become part of, and work tirelessly to build up, the organized forces for this revolution whose goal is nothing less than the emancipation of all oppressed people, everywhere, and ultimately all of humanity, from the horrors of this system and from any way in which people are exploited, oppressed, degraded and treated as less than

human.

To return to this crucial and urgent truth:

This is one of those rare times and circumstances when revolution becomes possible, not just because this system is always a horror, but because the crisis and deep divisions in society now can only be resolved through radical means, of one kind or another—either radically reactionary, murderously oppressive and destructive means *or* radically emancipating *revolutionary* means.

There is a great challenge that must be met, and a tremendous amount of work and struggle that must be carried out, with scientifically grounded determination

and boldness, in order to make possible the emancipating revolutionary resolution.

There is no guarantee of achieving all this, but there *is* a real possibility. And what we do—what all those who want to see a world and a future worth living in, where human beings everywhere can truly flourish in the fullness of their humanity—what we all do can make a tremendous difference in what the outcome of all this will be.

There is the possibility, there is the challenge.

Dare to become part of the forces for this historic revolution. Dare to work resolutely to make this a reality. Dare to struggle, dare to win.

***From Bob Avakian—Revolutionary Leader,  
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