

Mindless Anti-Communism and Mindless Accusations of “Cult”: Brainwashing to Shut Down Critical Thinking and Fundamental Opposition to this Monstrous System

In the situation people are facing right now, there is a definite and compelling need for the further development and strengthening of the protests in opposition to the genocidal slaughter of the Palestinian people by Israel, with the full backing of the U.S., and more broadly opposition to injustice and atrocity perpetrated against people everywhere.

In this regard, there are crucial lessons from the movement of the 1960s. As I pointed to in message number Thirty-Three, one of the very positive qualities of that 1960s movement was:

meaningful discussion and debate about different ideas and programs, within the broad mass movement, where the *actual content and substance* of opposing positions was gotten into, instead of petty bickering relying on “cheap shots” and distortion of the views of others—or the refusal to seriously engage views that are different from and might challenge one’s own viewpoint.

Closely bound up with this positive orientation of the 1960s movement was opposition to mindless anti-communism and the anti-communist witch-hunts carried out by the government in the 1950s and into the 1960s. The anti-communist crusades of that time were aimed at enforcing loyalty to the American empire and a culture of conformity to its oppressive and repressive relations, confining any exploration of politics and philosophy, or any kind of culture in general, within those narrow, suffocating limits. *Opposing and challenging this was a crucial part of creating the “oxygen” (the “air to breathe”) for the movement that developed through the 1960s.* It was an essential part of developing a movement marked by critical thinking, searching out the answers to big questions with an open mind and restless search for the truth, with vigorous debate over opposing ideas and programs.

But today, along with the continuing slander and ideological assault against communism, *there is this other form of brainwashing*, which is perpetrated not just by traditional representatives of the ruling class but also by various opportunist forces which claim to be “woke” or “progressive,” or “socialist,” but which do not seek solutions that actually break through and beyond the confines of this system and do not offer any really emancipating alternative. While large numbers of students (and others) are courageously protesting the genocidal slaughter of Palestinians perpetrated by Israel, with the full backing of the U.S., and the complicity of American universities in this genocide—and there is a need for this resistance to become even broader and stronger—these various opportunist forces, unable to deal with the substance of what we revcoms (revolutionary communists) are about—our actual goals, principles and methods—try to narrow and restrict things by resorting to this new form of brainwash: facile and fatuous (feeble and smug) accusations that we are somehow a dangerous “cult,” so we should be banned from “the movement” and people should stay away from us and simply refuse to listen to, or look into, what we have to say.

Ironically, it is the repetition of this zombie-like mantra of “cult” that actually smacks of “cultism.” If “cultism” is characterized by a closed system of thought which forbids engagement with ideas that challenge that closed system of thought, then that applies not to us revcoms but to those who insist that people must refuse to seriously

engage (or even engage at all) with what we have to say and the challenges it presents to “conventional wisdom” (“what everybody knows”), whether that “conventional wisdom” is the crude propaganda of the ruling class or the often equally crude dogma of “wokedom” and other anti-scientific trends, which evidently are afraid of a challenge to their brittle subjective, self-contained “truth.” Something very revealing is that these “cult” accusations involve the same kind of brainwashing as traditional anti-communism: “stay away from those *scary people* with dangerous ideas and devious methods.” (This also calls to mind the old film “Reefer Madness,” with its laughable melo-dramatic depictions of people turned into depraved and dangerous criminals after merely taking one “toke” of marijuana! Apparently, according to the “woke” and other opportunists, even a *discussion* with the revcoms could cause you to lose your mind!) In some cases, these “cult accusers” actually employ the language of crude anti-communism—condemning us for being “totalitarian.” Here is something very relevant:

It is very common to hear communism denounced as “totalitarian,” but the fact is that there is no such thing as totalitarianism....

As I have extensively analyzed, “totalitarianism” is a thoroughly unscientific—or, really, anti-scientific—“theory” which has been concocted and promoted by intellectual apologists of this system of perpetual atrocity (this system of capitalism-imperialism) and which serves to distract from and rationalize this system’s ongoing massive crimes against humanity and to foster irrational opposition to revolution and especially communist revolution. (From *Another Provocative But Simple And Basic Truth On Communism And The Fallacy of “Totalitarianism,”* available in my Collected Works at revcom.us)

In all this, the purpose is to promote mindless conformity and shut down critical thinking and exploration of different ideas and programs that are outside of very narrow, straight-jacketed confines. Things in the world are far too serious for people to allow themselves to be influenced, or intimidated, by this petty posturing and bullying and the brainwash it is seeking to impose on people. Once again, there is a compelling need for a massive movement opposing the horrific crimes against the masses of people, in Palestine, and throughout the world—a movement that is characterized by largeness of mind and generosity of spirit, and not only a willingness but a determination to restlessly pursue, with an open mind, an understanding of where all this atrocity and horror comes from and what can put an end to it. And once more, from message number Thirty-Three:

This emphasizes the crucial need for principled engagement and debate about all this—and most fundamentally: *What is the cause of all the injustice and oppression, and what is the solution to this?* We revcoms are always anxious to engage in such principled engagement and debate, with the recognition once again that this is a necessary and crucial part of getting to the root cause of, and the actual solution to, all the terrible atrocity and needless suffering to which masses of people, not just in this country but throughout the world, are subjected, and the very real threat to humanity that is posed by the current, and accelerating, direction of things, under the domination of this system of capitalism-imperialism.

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WHO IS BOB AVAKIAN?

Bob Avakian (BA) is a revolutionary leader who has developed a whole new framework for human emancipation: the new communism. This includes the analysis and strategy for a real revolution in this country, at the soonest possible time (yes, a “physical revolution”). As such, he is loved by many—and he is slandered by people who have a stake in the current system or can see no further than getting such a stake.

BA has written on the Middle East and the crucial struggle against U.S. imperialism and its “attack dog” Israel for 40+ years. At @BobAvakianOfficial, he is speaking to the hardest questions and bringing truth the powers-that-be don't want you to have. He breaks down why we need a revolution, and how that revolution could be possible. If you don't know this, then you don't know what you need to know.

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