

# you can't change the world if you don't know the **Basics**

## Basics 2:2

Marx said about the future world, the world of communism, that it will seem as ridiculous and outrageous for one part of society to privately own the land, and everything that goes along with that, as it now seems for one human being to own another.

Communism will mean that we have reached the point where the very idea that the way society should advance is for a few to benefit and then to proclaim that to be in the general interest of the society, where that idea will seem so ridiculous and outrageous that in a certain sense, to put it simply, it couldn't get a hearing.

"The Role of Dissent in a Vibrant Society," *Observations on Art and Culture, Science and Philosophy*, 2005 (quote originally published 2004)

## Basics 2:19

It is easy to have a society where a privileged intellectual elite has considerable freedom to grapple with ideas—as long as they stay within certain confines and don't fundamentally challenge the existing order....

The hard thing is turning all of this upside down without stifling the critical spirit, the wrangling over ideas and theories and so on.

Because we have also seen from history that it might be quite easy to institute a kind of monolithic system where only a few ideas are allowed to be debated out and where there is not real critical thinking and dissent.

And we have seen that, to the degree that this is a tendency in socialist society, it works against socialism, against the revolutionary transformation of society, against the advance to communism.

"The End of a Stage – The Beginning of a New Stage," *Revolution* magazine, Fall 1990

## Basics 2:8

Let's imagine if we had a whole different art and culture. Come on, enough of this "bitches and ho's" and SWAT teams kicking down doors. Enough of this "get low" bullshit. And how come it's always the women that have to get low? We already have a situation where the masses of women and the masses of people are pushed down and held down low enough already. It's time for us to get up and get on up.

Imagine if we had a society where there was culture—yes it was lively and full of creativity and energy and yes rhythm and excitement, but at the same time, instead of degrading people, lifted us up. Imagine if it gave us a vision and a reality of what it means to make a whole different society and a whole different kind of world. Imagine if it laid out the problems for people in making this kind of world and challenged them to take up these problems. Imagine if art and culture too—movies, songs, television, everything—challenged people to think critically, to look at things differently, to see things in a different light, but all pointing toward how can we make a better world.

Imagine if the people who created art and culture were not just a handful of people but all of the masses of people, with all their creative energy unleashed, and the time were made for them to do that, and for them to join with people who are more full-time workers and creators in the realm of art and culture to bring forward something new that would challenge people, that would make them think in different ways, that would make them be able to see things critically and from a different angle, and would help them to be uplifted and help them to see their unity with each other and with people throughout the world in putting an end to all the horrors that we're taught are just the natural order of things. Imagine all that.

*Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible, What It's All About*, a film of a talk by Bob Avakian, excerpt transcribed in *Revolution* #176, September 13, 2009

## What people are saying about **Basics**:

### **Cornel West, professor, public intellectual, activist:**

I want to say a word about my dear brother Bob Avakian. He has a deep love for the poor people and even as a Jesus-loving free Black man, I love that brother. He bears witness, he's willing to pay a cost and, thank God, we've got his text now of writings that provide us an analysis of how we think about this mess in which we find ourselves... People are suffering, working people are being debased and it's time for us to straighten our backs up and brother Bob Avakian is one of the voices, one of the very important voices.

**Bill Laswell, musician and producer:** *Basics* is the fundamentals of how things really are, if you choose to see it. Sometimes the truth can be in plain sight but you need someone to bring it out. Bob Avakian has done that.

### **Dongping Han, political scientist, author of *The Unknown Cultural Revolution*:**

Bob Avakian's book is soul searching. It is powerful and courageous. If we want to have a better world in the future, we have to face our past, and we have to understand what we are doing in the world today cannot be sustained.

**reg E. gains, poet and playwright:** Basic as the voice, the words, the simple yet inexplicable thoughts of Bob Avakian, who may have the blueprint, the recipe, the undeniable common sense socialist solution necessary for our ever growing global community to make real change.

**Prisoner in Midwest:** It's definitely a handbook for my generation and the youth coming up. I'm certainly promoting it as much as my influence will allow me behind these walls.

