

# REVOLUTION: A REAL CHANCE TO WIN

by Bob Avakian

Part 1:  
**We Are Serious**

Part 2:  
**A Scientifically Based Strategy**

Part 3:  
**Civil War and Revolution**

Part 4:  
**Hard Core Youth and the Revolution**

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**Winning and Winning**

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## Who Is Bob Avakian?

Bob Avakian (BA) is completely different than the endless stream of bourgeois politicians who are put forward as “leaders,” whose goal is to maintain one variation or another of this system of capitalism-imperialism. BA is a revolutionary who bases himself on the scientific understanding that the capitalist-imperialist system must be overthrown and replaced with a radically new and better system aimed at overcoming all forms of oppression and exploitation. He has written the blueprint to achieve this in the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*. BA insists that the revolution’s goal must not be revenge, but the emancipation of humanity all over the world.



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Late summer 2023

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with a prospect of actually winning, taking place in this country. Think of the effect on hundreds of millions of youth as well as on others throughout the world.]

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.

### **Everything Depends on Bringing Forward a Revolutionary People**

Having examined in some depth, and in a broad framework, the necessary foundation and basic roadmap for the revolution that is (more) possible—and urgently needed—now, we are back once more to this decisive point:

**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.<sup>24</sup>**

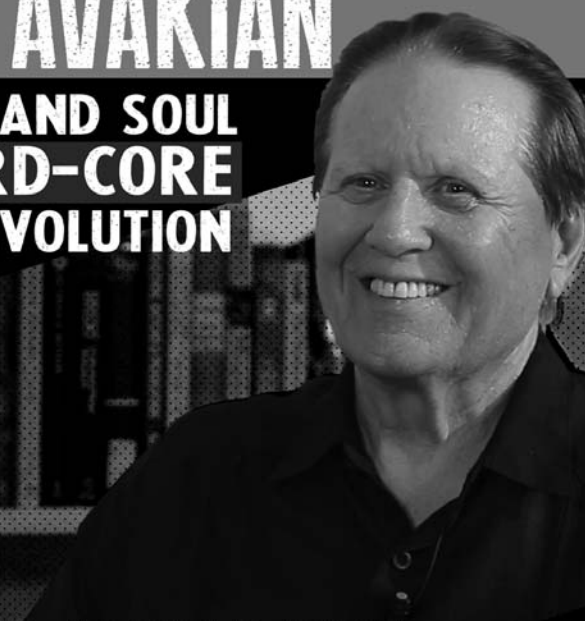
A LEADER FOR A TIME WHEN THE FUTURE HANGS IN THE BALANCE:

# UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



WITH

## BOB AVAKIAN

### HEART AND SOUL & HARD-CORE FOR REVOLUTION



A RARE APPEARANCE  
ON THE RNL SHOW  
THE REVOLUTION NOTHING LESS SHOW!

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<sup>24</sup> This is from *Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating*.

the new communism. As I called attention to in “Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating”:

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 here I want to mention a very important new book that has been published by the Revolutionary Communist Organization, Mexico: *La Esperanza Revolucionaria* [*Revolutionary Hope*],<sup>23</sup> which has also been translated into English by, and is available at, [revcom.us](http://revcom.us).)

“Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating” goes on to make this important point:

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 there is no alternative to this terrible world. Overall, it would almost certainly contribute, in a very significant way, to a repolarization on a *global* scale. [Think about the effect, even on people who are now drawn to very bad trends, like Islamic fundamentalism. All of a sudden, things are completely different in the world—here is a real revolutionary, emancipatory struggle,

# REVOLUTION: A REAL CHANCE TO WIN

by Bob Avakian

## Introduction

Some people have argued that an attempt to make an actual revolution, to overthrow the ruling system of capitalism-imperialism in this country, up against the powerful armed forces of this system, would be suicidal. This is something I spoke to, a number of years ago now, in the talk *Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Can Really Make Revolution*:

Many people, including many who say they would like to see a radical change in society, insist that revolution is not possible because “they” are too powerful, and “people are too messed up.” Well, it is true that, shaped as they are by this system, the masses of people, in any part of society, don’t know shit and have their heads up their asses, when it comes to an understanding of how things really are, *why* they are the way they are, and what could and should be done about this. But this stands in sharp contradiction to another important truth—that millions of people really do care about one or more, and many care about all, of the “5 STOPS.” This is a contradiction that we have to *go to work on*, to move masses of people in the direction of the revolution that is needed to finally put a stop to those “5 STOPS” and the horrific conditions to which the masses of humanity are constantly subjected. [The 5 STOPS refers to five major social contradictions and forms of oppression and devastation that are built into this system of capitalism-

<sup>23</sup> *La Esperanza Revolucionaria* [*Revolutionary Hope*] available at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us).

imperialism and which can only be eliminated through a revolution to overthrow this system.]<sup>1</sup>

It is also true that the ruling powers of this system, with the machinery of death and destruction they wield to enforce this system, are indeed very powerful. But a big part of people's difficulty in imagining that we could actually defeat them is the inability to conceive of a situation that is radically different than the "normal" functioning of this system, a situation where, for large parts of society, the "hold" of the ruling class over people—its ability to control, manipulate, and intimidate them—is broken, or greatly weakened. *Fundamentally, people cannot imagine this because they are not approaching things with a scientific outlook and method.*<sup>2</sup> (Emphasis added.)

This series of five articles speaks more fully to why such a revolution is not only urgently necessary now but why, with the right scientific approach, such a revolution could in fact have a real chance to succeed—and why **anyone who really wants to see a radically different world, without all the horrors that are continually brought about, and the even greater horrors for humanity that are now threatened by this system of capitalism-imperialism needs to be actively involved in working tirelessly, with scientifically based determination, for this revolution.**

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<sup>1</sup> The 5 STOPS are:

STOP Genocidal Persecution, Mass Incarceration, Police Brutality and Murder of Black and Brown People!

STOP The Patriarchal Degradation, Dehumanization, and Subjugation of All Women Everywhere, and All Oppression Based on Gender and Sexual Orientation!

STOP Wars of Empire, Armies of Occupation, and Crimes Against Humanity!

STOP The Demonization, Criminalization and Deportations of Immigrants and the Militarization of the Border!

STOP Capitalism-Imperialism from Destroying Our Planet!

<sup>2</sup> A film and the text of *Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Can Actually Make Revolution* are available at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us) in BA's Collected Works.

forces; and how, in turn, this relates to major social contradictions in the larger society (for example, racial, sexual and gender oppression).

To be more concrete, to break this down further: Out of their own interests, the rulers of this country have been compelled to draw large numbers of people from the ranks of the oppressed into their military, including women, Black people and Latinos. To the degree that these ranks would see, in the masses of revolutionary people, "people like themselves," this would strengthen the potential ability of the revolutionary forces to disintegrate the forces seeking to suppress them and to cause significant defections from their ranks to the ranks of the revolution.

Of course, as pointed out in "Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating," this factor (the composition of the revolutionary people, in relation to that of the opposing forces) will not "automatically" translate into support for—and even defection over to—the side of the revolution; but this *is* a potentially favorable factor that would need to be consciously and concretely built on through the course of the all-out fight. And the potential for this would likely be even greater in the context of an actual civil war, with once again "the real prospect of splits," among the institutions of violent enforcement of this system, "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."

In this connection, here is another crucial point: We, the revcoms and continually growing masses of people we are leading, must come to the fore in waging the fight against the fascists *and* do so on a revolutionary basis, not as defenders of bourgeois-democratic imperialism. This will have everything to do with the potential for a repolarization more favorable for the revolution, including in the actual all-out fight.

Through all this, it will be of great importance to be firmly based on, keep constantly in mind, and consistently apply the fundamental *internationalist* orientation and approach that is an essential part of

such a civil war—this could have a profound effect on such institutions, with the real prospect of splits among them, and even the possibility of 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 [which is obviously very important] but in terms of their fundamental ideological and political orientation, as fighters for the emancipation of humanity.

Otherwise, even if you win over forces from the other side, given how they've been conditioned and trained, that could end up setting the terms of things on a very bad basis and lead to defeat in one form or another (either outright defeat at the hands of the enemy, or defeat in the sense that, even if military victory were somehow achieved, the way that was done would not lead to a radically new and better system, where the ongoing transformation of society, and ultimately the whole world, to uproot all exploitation and oppression, could be carried out).

Here is something else to take into account: What matters, as the all-out showdown approaches, is not only the size (in the millions) of the revolutionary people, but also its “composition,” involving *masses of the most oppressed, especially youth*, as well as large numbers of people from other sections of society; how that “composition” of the revolutionary people would relate to the composition of the *opposing*

## Part 1: We Are Serious

*The following is the first in a series of selections from my talks and writings speaking to how to go about carrying out a revolution in this country, mobilizing millions of people, with the goal of actually defeating the violent enforcers of this system of capitalism-imperialism, abolishing this system altogether, and bringing into being a radically different, emancipating system based on the Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America.<sup>3</sup>*

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*This part one contains an excerpt from “Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating” (which is available at revcom.us); and then an excerpt from a presentation to a gathering of revcoms (revolutionary communists) in 2022.*

**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.*

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<sup>3</sup> The Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America is available at revcom.us.

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.

As I said in the Dialogue with Cornel West: It is important that we are right, and righteous—it is important that we stand with the wretched of the Earth and stand up against their oppression—but we have to win.<sup>4</sup>

We have to actually shatter the rule of this monstrous system, and bring something radically different and much better into being. Or else, we will at best “fight the good fight” but the horrors will continue, and get even worse.

The sixth point of the Points of Attention for the Revolution says 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.”<sup>5</sup>

I have highlighted the words “Because we are serious” in order to emphasize that this Point of Attention is *not* a declaration of some idealist pacifist notion that the struggle against this system can and must always remain nonviolent. First of all, while we are against all violence against the people and among the people, and at this stage we do not initiate (and we do not encourage others to initiate) violence, at the same time we strongly recognize and uphold the right of people to defend themselves against unjust attacks. And, more

4 *REVOLUTION AND RELIGION: The Fight for Emancipation and the Role of Religion; A Dialogue Between CORNEL WEST & BOB AVAKIAN*. This film of the Dialogue is also available at [revcom.us/BA's Collected Works](http://revcom.us/BA's%20Collected%20Works).

5 The Points of Attention for the Revolution are available as well at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us).

Here it is worth repeating this crucial point:

It is also true that the ruling powers of this system, with the machinery of death and destruction they wield to enforce this system, are indeed very powerful. But a big part of people’s difficulty in imagining that we could actually defeat them is the inability to conceive of a situation that is radically different than the “normal” functioning of this system, a situation where, for large parts of society, the “hold” of the ruling class over people—its ability to control, manipulate, and intimidate them—is broken, or greatly weakened. Fundamentally, people cannot imagine this because they are not approaching things with a scientific outlook and method.

(And does it need to be said again that we must be bringing this scientific outlook and method to people?)

At the same time, “Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating” emphasizes that the development of the basic doctrine and strategic approach for this all-out fight is an ongoing process. And that

[T]hroughout 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



**from the beginning, or very quickly after the start**, for the revolutionary forces to have **organized strongholds of support in many different parts of the country**—and to have the ability to **act simultaneously, or in quick succession, in many different parts of the country** (to effect a “popcorn” phenomenon of actions breaking out repeatedly and in quick succession all over the country)—**in order to effectively counter the “encirclement and suppression” of the revolution by the counter-revolution, and in particular the ability of the counter-revolution to not only concentrate forces against but to actually occupy the areas that constitute the strongholds of support for the revolution** (even while those strongholds are not yet being openly controlled and administered by the revolution), **particularly in the early stages of this all-out fight.**

This “popcorn” approach, keeping the enemy off balance, could also contribute to the disintegration of and defection from the other side.

To quote again from *Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Can Really Make Revolution*:

[A]nother point emphasized by Rupert Smith is important: it is not absolute force but “utility of force” that matters—not what any state, or other armed force, may have in its arsenal, but what it can actually utilize to its advantage in an armed conflict. One of the key operational principles of the revolutionary forces would be to wage the fight in such a way as to *prevent* the forces of the old order from being able to use their worst destructive power in a way that would be to their military as well as political advantage. At the same time, in the face of the barbaric actions that the old ruling forces would still carry out, it would be crucial for the revolutionary forces to “turn the barbaric actions of the enemy against him—to win greater forces for the revolution, including those who come over from the ranks of the enemy.”

strategically, we scientifically understand that: **the fundamental source of violence in the world is this system of capitalism-imperialism, that by far the greatest perpetrators of unjust violence are the ruling classes of the capitalist-imperialist powers, most of all this country—and that the fundamental reason why the abolition of this system cannot be achieved peacefully is, once again, because of the nature of this system itself, and the fact that those who rule in it would never allow their system to be swept away without attempting to violently suppress and crush any such attempt.**

This is what it means that we are *serious* about all this.

It is with this understanding, and this orientation, that we have to very seriously approach the question of how to actually win—win in the more immediate fight, historically speaking, to seize power—and win in a way that lays the basis for winning in the largest sense, with the goal of uprooting all oppression and exploitation, all over the world, bringing into being a communist world in which human beings can truly thrive with the fullest expression of their humanity.

## *A Major Work for This Time*

**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**

Rupert Smith, a British military officer and strategist, has noted that an insurrectionary force that is “defining the parameters of the conflict” has “by default presented an alternative force and power.” [Let’s stop and reflect on what that means.] This means that, if a revolutionary force is to a large degree determining the character of the conflict, it will be seen not as a bunch of “outlaws” but as a legitimate force contending against the old order; and this relates to why it is so important that the initial actions of the revolutionary fighting forces, accompanied by a bold declaration to the world, “make clear that there is an organized force determined to defeat the forces of the old order and bring into being a new, revolutionary system.” This would play a crucial part in demolishing the “superstitious awe” that people have toward the existing system, the nearly religious belief that this is the best, or at least the only, way that things could be, and that the power of this system is unchallengeable; it would further undermine the “legitimacy” and “authority” of the old order and its ruling class and the allegiance to it of broad sections of the population, and lay more of a basis for winning over even broader sections, including from within the fighting forces of the other side.

The approach of seeking and achieving victories, in more limited encounters, has as one of its key objectives the creation of an overall situation in which there will be increasing disintegration of the opposing side, and the defection of significant parts of that opposing side to the revolutionary side. This will be an important part of the process of bringing about a qualitative change in the “balance of forces,” to where the revolutionaries have gained the upper hand—a position from which they could then carry out the final defeat of the counter-revolution.

The following (from the article “A Real Revolution—A Real Chance To Win, Further Developing the Strategy for Revolution”) stresses this:

There would need to be an added emphasis on the need for the all-out revolutionary fight to be **country-wide in scope,**

of forces had shifted overwhelmingly in favor of the revolution.<sup>22</sup>

This doctrine and strategic orientation is spoken to in some depth and spelled out more fully in... *Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Can Really Make Revolution*, with additional thinking provided in my article “A Real Revolution—A Real Chance To Win, Further Developing the Strategy for Revolution” (which also can be found at 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.

In *Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Can Really Make Revolution*, I cited this important statement:

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<sup>22</sup> *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 is available at revcom.us. The statement quoted here can be found in *Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Can Really Make Revolution*; this statement originally appeared in *From the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA: How We Can Win—How We Can Really Make Revolution*, which is available at revcom.us.

## Part 2: A Scientifically Based Strategy

*The following excerpt from Why We Need An Actual Revolution And How We Can Really Make Revolution is the second in this series of selections from my talks and writings speaking to how to go about carrying out a revolution in this country, mobilizing millions of people, with the goal of actually defeating the violent enforcers of this system of capitalism-imperialism, abolishing this system altogether, and bringing into being a radically different, emancipating system based on the Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America.*<sup>6</sup>

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Let's begin with the statement from *HOW WE CAN WIN* that everything we are doing is “aiming for something very definite—a **revolutionary situation**: Where the system and its ruling powers are in a serious crisis” and “millions and millions of people refuse to be ruled in the old way—and are willing and determined to put everything on the line to bring down this system and bring into being a new society and government that will be based on the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*. **That is the time to go all-out to win. That is what we need to be actively working for and preparing for now.**”<sup>7</sup> Key components and signs of a *revolutionary* crisis are that the violence used “to enforce this system is seen by large parts of society for what it is—murderous and illegitimate” and that “the conflicts among the ruling forces become really deep and sharp—and masses of people respond to this *not* by falling in behind

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<sup>6</sup> *The Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America* is available at revcom.us.

<sup>7</sup> *From the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA: How We Can Win—How We Can Really Make Revolution*, which is available at revcom.us.

one side or the other of the oppressive rulers, but by *taking advantage* of this situation to *build up the forces for revolution*.” This underlines the great importance of ongoing work and compelling struggle to break people away from the “hold” of the political operatives and media mouthpieces of this system.

I will speak more fully to how we need to be *actively preparing now* for a revolutionary situation. But, first, in order to have the fullest sense of this, we need to work back from that situation and what would be required then—how the all-out fight would need to be waged—to have a real chance to *defeat* the powerful, violent forces of this system. Here again, it is crucially important to approach things in a serious and scientific way. This is what is done in “On the Possibility of Revolution,” which (as noted in *HOW WE CAN WIN*) “sets forth the foundation—the strategic conception and doctrine—for how to fight with a real chance of winning,” once the necessary conditions have been brought into being. “On the Possibility of Revolution” (which is available at revcom.us) is an important document that deserves serious study.<sup>8</sup> Here, I am going to examine some of the key points that are gone into in depth in “On the Possibility of Revolution” and are summarized in a more concentrated way in *HOW WE CAN WIN*.

A big problem for the revolution is what could be called the “encirclement and suppression” of the people at the base of society who are subjected to one injury and insult after another under this system, and who yearn for an end to all this madness, but who are, in a certain sense, “surrounded” in the society at large by sections of people who do not directly suffer the same daily outrages. To put it simply, there are large numbers of poor and bitterly oppressed people in this country, but there is also a big middle class. Although much of this middle class is not doing as well economically as in the past, there is still a big gap between the middle class and the people at the base of society, and this big divide is one of the main reasons why people—even people who say they would like to see a revolution, but who just look at things on the surface and do not analyze the

<sup>8</sup> *On the Possibility of Revolution, Letter from a Reader... and Response, Revolution #102, September 23, 2007, is available at revcom.us.*

flow from and be consistent with the fundamental ‘ends’ of abolishing all exploitation and oppression through revolution led on a scientific basis.”<sup>21</sup>

So, let’s get into how we could, and would need to, go about winning, when the conditions for that have been brought into being. The necessary strategic approach to this flows from the scientific understanding that the revolutionary forces could not win any contest in which they frontally took on the full force of a unified and cohesive existing state power. (I’m going to pause so people can think about this...)

The following, from “Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating,” speaks to 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

<sup>21</sup> This is from *Breakthroughs, The Historic Breakthrough by Marx, and the Further Breakthrough with the New Communism, A Basic Summary*, by Bob Avakian, that is also available at revcom.us.

violence and we oppose all violence against the people and among the people.”<sup>20</sup>

I have highlighted the words “Because we are serious” in order to emphasize that this Point of Attention is *not* a declaration of some idealist pacifist notion that the struggle against this system can and must always remain non-violent. First of all, while we are against all violence against the people and among the people, and at this stage we do not initiate (and we do not encourage others to initiate) violence, at the same time we strongly recognize and uphold the right of people to defend themselves against unjust attacks. And, more strategically, we scientifically understand that: **the fundamental source of violence in the world is this system of capitalism-imperialism, that by far the greatest perpetrators of unjust violence are the ruling classes of the capitalist-imperialist powers, most of all this country—and that the fundamental reason why the abolition of this system cannot be achieved peacefully is, once again, because of the nature of this system itself, and the fact that those who rule in it would never allow their system to be swept away without attempting to violently suppress and crush any such attempt.**

This is what it means that we are *serious* about all this.

It is with this understanding, and this orientation, that we have to very seriously approach the question of how to actually win—win in the more immediate fight, historically speaking, to seize power—and win in a way that lays the basis for winning in the largest sense, with the goal of uprooting all oppression and exploitation, all over the world, bringing into being a communist world in which human beings can truly thrive with the fullest expression of their humanity.

This approach to “winning—and winning”—is an application of the principle that “the new communism *thoroughly repudiates* and is determined to root out of the communist movement the poisonous notion, and practice, that ‘the ends justify the means.’ It is a bedrock principle of the new communism that the ‘means’ of this movement must

<sup>20</sup> The Points of Attention for the Revolution are available at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us).

situation scientifically—say that revolution is not possible. And it is something that the ruling class, and its institutions of repression and control, have seized on, in their efforts to isolate and contain, as brutally as they deem necessary, those whom they most viciously oppress and who represent potentially the greatest threat to their system. This is something these ruling powers would seek to do in an even more systematic and greatly intensified way in a situation where they were confronted by an organized revolutionary struggle aimed at overthrowing their whole system. It is one of the main obstacles the revolutionary forces would need to overcome in order to have a real chance of winning. Not only the strategic approach and basic operational principles, but also certain particular tactical measures of the revolutionary forces—including concentrating forces to repeatedly break through and break down the other side’s physical encirclement of areas of revolutionary strength—would need to be developed and applied to address this major contradiction once the all-out struggle were underway. But confronting this basic problem cannot be left until the time when the all-out struggle is raging. This is something I spoke to in very plain and stark terms in *THE NEW COMMUNISM*, where I emphasized that we need to “transform this situation so that, when the time comes, it’s not going to be the case that they can easily contain this revolution to those sections of the people that they’d... just as soon kill off anyway.”<sup>9</sup> And, as is also emphasized in Part 2 of *Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles, But Humanity Can Soar Beyond the Horizon*: “political and ideological work with this contradiction in mind would need to be carried out during the whole period before the emergence of the necessary conditions and... [the all-out] struggle is launched.”<sup>10</sup> The more this work is carried out, from here forward, the more the revolutionary forces would be able to counter and defeat the military “encirclement and suppression” of the strongholds of the revolution when the time came for the all-out fight.

<sup>9</sup> Bob Avakian, *THE NEW COMMUNISM, The science, the strategy, the leadership for an actual revolution, and a radically new society on the road to real emancipation* (Insight Press, Chicago, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> *Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles, But Humanity Can Soar Beyond the Horizon, Part 1 and Part 2*, by Bob Avakian is available at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us).

As I put it in *THE NEW COMMUNISM*, a defining contradiction of this all-out fight is the fact that, at the start, the other side “would likely still be very powerful in military terms, although weak, and in crisis, politically”; while the revolutionary side “would be weak, at the beginning, in military terms, but strong, and on the rise, and having a great deal of initiative, politically, which then would have to be transformed into initiative militarily.” The operational principles and stratagems that are outlined in the final part of *HOW WE CAN WIN*, speaking specifically to “How We Could Defeat Them,” are particular applications of the approach to dealing with this contradiction.

An overall principle that flows from this contradiction is the fact that, once underway, the all-out fight would need to be *protracted* but also *finite*. “Protracted” means drawn out—it would not be a situation where the outcome, if it were favorable for the revolution, could be decided in a very short period of time. “Finite” means having definite limits—not extended indefinitely. Given that, at the beginning, the balance of power would almost certainly be heavily in favor of the forces of *counter-revolution* (the forces of the old ruling class and those fighting with it to defeat the revolution) in terms of their military organization and experience, as well as their armaments, the revolutionary forces would need to draw out (protract) the conflict for a certain period, in order to transform the situation into one in which they could overcome those strategic disadvantages. At the same time, because this all-out fight should only be launched by the revolutionary forces in a situation marked by a deep and acute revolutionary crisis and a revolutionary people in the millions and millions, if it were protracted over *too long* a period, without the revolution advancing in a fairly limited period of time toward the situation where it began to have the upper hand, then the advantages of a revolutionary situation would tend to be lost, the overall initiative would return to the counter-revolution, and the allegiance of significant sections of society, including in the middle classes, that was lost by the old ruling class, would be regained to a degree that could spell defeat for the revolution. This touches on a very important point of strategic orientation: When it comes down to it, what happens on the battlefield will be decisive in determining the

## Part 5: Winning and Winning

*The following excerpt from a presentation to a gathering of revcoms (revolutionary communists) in 2022 is the final installment in this series of selections from my talks and writings speaking to how to go about carrying out a revolution in this country, mobilizing millions of people, with the goal of actually defeating the violent enforcers of this system of capitalism-imperialism, abolishing this system altogether, and bringing into being a radically different, emancipating system based on the Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America.<sup>18</sup> The first part of this excerpt was included in part one of this series.*

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As I said in the Dialogue with Cornel West: It is important that we are right, and righteous—it is important that we stand with the wretched of the earth and stand up against their oppression—but we have to win. We have to actually shatter the rule of this monstrous system, and bring something radically different and much better into being. Or else, we will at best “fight the good fight” but the horrors will continue, and get even worse.<sup>19</sup>

The sixth point of the Points of Attention for the Revolution says 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

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<sup>18</sup> The *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America* is available at revcom.us.

<sup>19</sup> *REVOLUTION AND RELIGION: The Fight for Emancipation and the Role of Religion; A Dialogue Between CORNEL WEST & BOB AVAKIAN*. This film of the Dialogue is available at revcom.us in BA’s Collected Works.

outcome but, for the revolutionary forces, one of the key objectives of the fighting would be to demoralize and disintegrate the ranks of the other side, both their actual fighting forces and their broader “civilian support,” leading to further loss of allegiance and of initiative on the counter-revolutionary side; and, to the degree this succeeded, it would be a key element in shifting the balance of forces in favor of the revolution. The all-out struggle will not just mean going up against the institutional forces of the old ruling class but will also involve “a civil war between two sections of the people,” requiring the revolution to both defeat and disintegrate but also, as far as possible, win over parts of the armed forces among the population that started out on the other side....

To begin, “backbone forces”—especially youth strongly committed to and actively involved in the revolution—would need to be transformed “into *organized fighting forces* in key strategic areas” and provided with the necessary training and equipment. Doing this would depend on the recognition that the revolutionary situation is *clearly emerging*. On the one hand, trying to do this before the immediate approach of a revolutionary situation would almost certainly lead to this effort being easily targeted and quickly crushed. On the other side of things, once a revolutionary situation were at hand, the shattering of the “normal conditions” and “normal functioning” of the system that such a situation would involve, would make it possible not to *easily and smoothly* organize, train, and equip fighting forces for the revolution, but to *wrench*, out of the intensifying situation, the basis for doing this. The point is that doing this, without being wiped out, would be a process of very intense *struggle*, but the dramatically new situation would provide the possibility for waging, and winning, this beginning struggle.

Similarly, providing for the basic logistical needs of this revolutionary fighting force, to enable it to initiate the all-out fight, without being immediately crushed, and then to quickly regroup and once again take the initiative and maintain momentum overall, without being “fixed” and annihilated, would also involve intense struggle, and would require defeating enemy blockades and attacks and penetration directed against strongholds of the revolution and focused on locating

and destroying those who make up the revolutionary fighting forces and their logistical sources. All this would require “misdirection” and surprise in operations. And all this would depend on millions more, beyond the backbone fighting forces, being organized concretely as “reserves” and as networks of support and supply for these fighting forces, and the willingness and ability of these “reserves” to “absorb” and protect the fighting forces and their equipment and logistical supplies, and enable them to repeatedly regroup and seize the initiative. This would also require continual “calibration” of the size of fighting units and their operations, at any given time, to enable these fighting units, upon completion of an engagement, to “melt back into” the larger revolutionary “reserves,” while at the same time the conditions are being created to allow them to remain active, in training and in initiating further engagements with the enemy.

The approach of capturing equipment from the enemy is important for any revolutionary force which starts out facing an enemy with an overwhelming advantage in destructive power and, for some time, a much greater capacity to produce more of this. But *HOW WE CAN WIN* also emphasizes that utilizing equipment captured from the enemy must be done in ways that “fit the fighting strategy of the revolution.” Not all equipment that might be captured from the other side would be usable by the revolutionary forces—to try to use *some* captured equipment could put requirements on the logistical capabilities of the revolution that could not be met or sustained, and/or propel the revolutionary forces into fighting in ways that would run counter to the strategy the revolution would need to follow, and/or violate the basic principles and goals for which the revolution is being fought. It has everything to do with what the revolution is all about in the first place, as well as whether or not it has a real chance of succeeding, that *HOW WE CAN WIN* emphasizes that the revolutionary fighting forces must, “Always conduct operations and act in ways that are in line with the emancipating outlook and goals of the revolution.” Still, in addition to developing means to enlist masses of people in creating equipment the revolutionary forces could utilize, ways could be developed to utilize a great deal of equipment captured from the enemy that are

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.***”



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*.

consistent with the strategic orientation, the ways of fighting, and the goals of the revolution. All this would be vital for the advance and ultimate success of the revolution.

As stressed in *HOW WE CAN WIN*, the 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 flows from what has been discussed regarding the overwhelmingly superior destructive force of the counter-revolution at the start of the all-out fight. What is also very important to underline is that this is not merely a question of *orientation and intent* on the part of the revolutionary forces. Given its overwhelming superiority of force, for some time the enemy would continually seek precisely to *force* the revolutionaries into situations where they would either be compelled to fight decisive battles that they were bound to lose, or they would have to surrender outright—leading to the total defeat of the revolution, or putting it well on the road to defeat. The point is that being able to avoid potentially disastrous decisive encounters with the enemy would itself be a matter of *intense struggle*, including that the revolutionary forces could often find themselves having to wage a determined struggle just to avoid being trapped in a situation where they would have to fight such a decisive encounter, or surrender. This is why *HOW WE CAN WIN* speaks of *actively* avoiding unfavorable decisive encounters and fighting only on favorable terms. It is why it also emphasizes that, even when the “balance of forces” has shifted in favor of the revolution, it would still be necessary, when conducting operations aimed at achieving final victory, to continue to “calibrate” those operations, “so that decisive encounters are still avoided until the forces of the old order have been brought to the brink of total defeat”—which would then be the time to “fully, finally, rout and dismantle the remaining enemy forces.”

And it is because of the same concerns that *HOW WE CAN WIN*, while speaking to the importance of building up political and logistical bases of support for the revolution, at the same time stresses that the revolutionary forces should “*not attempt to openly control and govern*

*territory*, until the necessary ‘favorable balance of forces’ has been created.” To attempt to do so prematurely would make this territory, the people within it, and the revolutionary forces defending and governing it, highly vulnerable to attack from an enemy that, again, would have overwhelming destructive power; and it would put the revolutionaries in the position of having the responsibility—and what, under the circumstances, would be an unsupportable burden—to meet the basic requirements of a functioning society, and the people within it. The point, the goal, is to carry forward the fight to thoroughly defeat, and dismantle, the forces of the old order, and *on that basis* to bring into being a new, revolutionary state that can embark on the thorough transformation of society with the ultimate aim of overcoming and eliminating all relations of exploitation and oppression, everywhere in the world.

This ultimate aim and internationalist orientation of the revolution is also why *HOW WE CAN WIN* speaks to the need for the revolutionary forces in this country to correctly handle the relation between the all-out fight, when the time comes, and the situation—including the character and level of revolutionary struggle—in countries to the south (and the north). As we know, this country was created through and amidst warfare; and, as I spoke to earlier, it has continually expanded its territory and extended the reach of its empire through armed conquest, enslavement and other forms of extreme exploitation. In carrying out the fight to overthrow the violent rule of this system, both as a matter of orientation and principle, and in terms of strengthening the basis for succeeding, it will be crucial to refuse to be bound by the borders that have been established and the walls that have been erected through the murder and marauding of the ruling capitalist-imperialists of this country, but instead to actively unite with peoples to the south, and the north, in the struggle against this capitalist-imperialist monster, and advance the revolution overall, in this part of the world and in the world as a whole.

In contrast to the revolutionary forces, the forces of the old order, especially when faced with the prospect that their oppressive system could actually be overthrown and dismantled, would resort to all kinds

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,”

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 attacks on school board members not only for adopting ... 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

of barbarity to preserve this system. As it is put in “On the Possibility of Revolution”:

It is not that the imperialists would hold back from bringing down terrible destructive force against the revolutionaries and the masses of people who supported them—given their reactionary nature, it would be necessary to reckon with the fact that the imperialists would do this—but the decisive question would be whether, through doing this, the imperialists would be able to isolate and destroy the organized forces of the revolution; or whether, on the contrary, these barbaric actions of the imperialists would deepen the hatred of growing numbers of people for the imperialists, stiffen the resolve of those already supporting the revolutionary side, and win more of the people to sympathize with, and to actively support, the revolutionary cause....

“Decapitating” the leadership of the revolution, and destroying or crippling the means of coordination and overall direction for the revolutionary forces, would also be one of the major objectives of the counter-revolution. *HOW WE CAN WIN* correctly emphasizes the importance of “Relying on mass support, the intelligence this provides for the revolution and the denial of intelligence to the enemy, [to] counter the enemy’s efforts to find, fix and annihilate revolutionary leadership and key fighting units” and the importance of combining “strategic direction and coordination for the fight as a whole, with decentralized actions and initiative by local units and leaders.” Here again stands out the importance of all the work, from here forward, to build the revolution, among masses of people in many different parts of society. But it has to be squarely faced that, when it comes down to it, even with broad and deep mass support, protecting leadership, in particular the top leading core of the revolution, maintaining overall coordination and strategic direction, and being able to rapidly replace leaders and forces that are lost, is, and will remain, a serious challenge; and this, too, must be actively prepared for and struggled for, including by bringing forward growing ranks of revolutionary leadership *now*, who are trained and tempered through the

combination of being actively involved in building the revolution and becoming more and more deeply grounded in the scientific outlook and methods of communism as it has been further developed with the new communism.

This brings us back to the decisive point that everything that has been spoken to in terms of how we could defeat them, when the time comes, “**depends on winning millions to revolution in the period that leads up to the ripening of a revolutionary situation**”....

Here, it could be helpful to look at the similarities, and the differences, between the revolutionary process in a country like this and, on the other hand, what has happened in some Third World countries where conditions have allowed the revolutionaries to wage an armed struggle from the *beginning* of the revolutionary process—to start by fighting battles against small parts of the enemy forces, and to wage war over a long period of time, to wear down the enemy and build up their own forces, with the aim of reaching the point where the “balance of forces” has shifted in their favor, and they can then fight larger-scale battles to finally defeat the forces of the old order. This does have some things in common with how the all-out fight would be waged in a country like this, *once the conditions for that had been brought into being*. But there are important differences. In this kind of country, an armed struggle would not—should not—be launched until a revolutionary situation had been brought into being in society overall, and then this struggle, while having a certain aspect of being protracted, would also be considerably shorter (more finite) than the overall process of protracted revolutionary wars that have been carried out in Third World countries. In a country like this, there needs to be a process of political, ideological, and organizational work to carry out those “**3 Prepares**,” to *hasten* the development of things toward the revolutionary situation, when it would *then* become possible to launch an all-out struggle with a real chance of winning, through a somewhat protracted *but also finite* process. [The “3 Prepares” are: prepare the ground (the situation in society overall), prepare the people, and prepare the vanguard leadership for the revolution.]

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.<sup>17</sup>

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

<sup>17</sup> The six Points of Attention for the Revolution are available as well at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us).

*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.

To summarize briefly: Third World revolutionary wars—armed struggle from the beginning, over a whole protracted period, to create the basis for the final decisive battles; revolution in a country like this—a process of political, ideological, and organizational work to hasten and prepare for the development of a revolutionary situation, whereupon the all-out fight could be launched, and carried out over a somewhat protracted but also finite period.

In *both* types of situations, there is an aspect of “awaiting” as well as “hastening.” Even where revolutionaries in Third World countries have been able to wage warfare from the beginning, they have had to wait for, while actively fighting to bring into being, the situation where they can successfully fight large-scale decisive battles (and in some cases things have become protracted to the point of being bogged down, without any prospect of success). In *both situations, everything the revolutionaries are doing needs to be aimed at getting to the point where they can go all-out to finally defeat and dismantle the violent enforcers of the old oppressive system*; but the paths and the processes are different because of the different conditions. The point is that *everything we are doing, at all times, is part of making revolution*—actively working, according to a strategic approach and plan, *to move things, as fast as possible, toward the time when it will be possible for millions to fight, all-out, with a real chance to win.*

So, with this understanding and orientation, how do we go about *hastening while awaiting*? The means for doing this is concentrated in the formulation: “**Fight the Power, and Transform the People, for Revolution.**” Let's start with the aim of all this—**Revolution.** In *BASics* 3:1, I put it like this: “Let's get down to basics: *We need a revolution. Anything else, in the final analysis, is bullshit.*”<sup>11</sup> That is another simple and basic truth. **We need to go to people—not just one or two people, not just a small number of people, but masses of people, reaching all over the country, in every part of society—straight up with revolution**—instead of just letting “where they are at” set the terms, and trying to somehow “bring in” some idea about

<sup>11</sup> *BASics, from the talks and writings of Bob Avakian* (RCP Publications, Chicago, 2011).

revolution within that limited framework. As *Basics* 3:1 goes on to say: We do need to unite with people in all sorts of struggles short of revolution; but it is frankly ridiculous to think that something short of revolution could solve all the monumental problems and monstrous outrages that people face under this system. On the basis of going to people straight up with revolution, then, *coming from that place*, we need to unite with people in fighting injustice and oppression, *and* struggle to win more and more people to see the need and the possibility for revolution, and to get with this....

This goes back to the important contradiction that millions and millions of people really do care about one or more, and many care about all, of those “5 STOPS,” but in terms of understanding where all these outrages come from and what is necessary to really put a stop to them, most of the same people don’t know shit and have their heads up their asses. So, while uniting with and working to bring forward still greater numbers of people in protesting and resisting the atrocities of this system, there is a need for sharp struggle to win them to confront and grasp the fact that, in fundamental terms, *this system* is the source of all these horrors, and *it cannot be reformed but must be overthrown*.

This is revolutionary work that must be carried out, by *continually growing numbers of people organized into the ranks of the revolution and acting together in accordance with a common strategic orientation and plan*. This must be done consistently, including in more “normal” times (whatever those are), and it is of *heightened* importance “with every ‘jolt’ in society—every crisis, every new outrage, where many people question and resist what they normally accept...”

*HOW WE CAN WIN* emphasizes that: “The organized forces and the leadership of this revolution must become the ‘authority’ that growing numbers of people look to and follow—not the lying politicians and media of this oppressive system—not those who front for the oppressors and preach about ‘reconciliation’ with this system—not

## Part 4: Hard Core Youth and the Revolution

*The following, from “Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating”<sup>15</sup> is the fourth in this series of selections from my talks and writings speaking to how to go about carrying out a revolution in this country, mobilizing millions of people, with the goal of actually defeating the violent enforcers of this system of capitalism-imperialism, abolishing this system altogether, and bringing into being a radically different, emancipating system based on the Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America.*<sup>16</sup>

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*

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<sup>15</sup> *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 is available at revcom.us.

<sup>16</sup> *The Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America* is available at revcom.us.

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....

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.*

those who turn people against each other when they need to be uniting for this revolution....”

Revolution *IS* possible—and we have to go to work to make it real. So let me end with what is powerfully stated in the conclusion of *HOW WE CAN WIN*:

**All this depends on winning millions to revolution in the period that leads up to the ripening of a revolutionary situation. The chance to defeat them, when the time comes—the chance to be rid of this system and to bring something far better into being—has everything to do with what we do *now*. Everyone who hungers for a radically different world, free of exploitation and oppression and all the needless suffering caused by this system, needs to work now with a fired determination to make this happen, so we *will* have a real chance to win.**

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



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

## Part 3: Civil War and Revolution

*The following, from “Something Terrible, Or Something Truly Emancipating”<sup>12</sup> is the third in this series of selections from my talks and writings speaking to how to go about carrying out a revolution in this country, mobilizing millions of people, with the goal of actually defeating the violent enforcers of this system of capitalism-imperialism, abolishing this system altogether, and bringing into being a radically different, emancipating system based on the Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America.<sup>13</sup>*

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*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.

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<sup>12</sup> *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 is available at revcom.us.

<sup>13</sup> *The Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America* is available at revcom.us.

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....

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. ...<sup>14</sup>

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*.

<sup>14</sup> *From The Revcoms: A Declaration, A Call To Get Organized Now For A Real Revolution* is available at revcom.us.