

## ***The powerful positive experience of the 1960s movement—the crucial importance of uniting broadly against injustice and atrocity, with open-minded engagement of different ideas and programs, and principled debate over differences.***

In a previous message (Number Twenty-Seven), I recalled the experience of the Free Speech Movement (FSM) at UC Berkeley and the overall radical movement of the 1960s, and the significance of that in relation to what is going on now—when once again there is crucial resistance against horrific atrocity and profound injustice—especially the genocidal slaughter being perpetrated against the Palestinian people by Israel, with the full backing of the U.S., and the vicious attempts to repress the protest against this atrocity.

What characterized the truly massive movement of the 1960s, with all its different tendencies, was a determination to actually *put an end* to the outrages that people were rising up against, along with a broad sense of “*being in this together* in the fight for a better world;” and the generosity of spirit, as well as largeness of mind, that went along with that. One of the significant expressions of this was meaningful discussion and debate about different ideas and programs, within the broad mass movement, where the *actual content and substance* of opposing positions was gotten into, instead of petty bickering relying on “cheap shots” and *distortion* of the views of others—or the refusal to seriously engage views that are different from and might challenge one’s own viewpoint.

Even with the contradictory tendencies that did exist, *why* was there a very positive defining culture of the radical 1960s upsurge overall? The basic answer is that, with the many different ideas about what this meant, masses of people, especially youth, were *aspiring to some kind of revolutionary, liberating transformation of the world.*

(Why the movement of that time did not succeed in bringing about the revolutionary change that literally millions at that time were aspiring to, is an important question that is definitely worth digging into seriously. But that is beyond the scope of this particular message. I have spoken to this in talks and writings that are available in my Collected Works at revcom.us—including the article *Bob Avakian Responds To Mark Rudd: On The Lessons Of The 1960s And The Need For An Actual Revolution—Infantile Expressions of Outrage, or Accommodation to This Monstrous System, Are Not the Only Alternatives*. Mark Rudd was one of the leaders of the 1968 protests at Columbia University, and he later became one of leading figures in the “Weather Underground.”)

For those today who are motivated by aspirations for a more just and far better world—those who care about the truth and understand how important a true understanding is of where all the injustice and oppression comes from, and how it can be ended—those who can recognize that serious, honest and principled engagement of contending ideas and programs is a crucial element in arriving at the truth, especially of really profound and critical matters: there is a great deal to learn from the positive culture of that inspiring mass movement of the 1960s.

In light of what I have emphasized here, I am going to speak to the accusation that when we revcoms (revolutionary communists) take part in protests and other actions, we are just trying to promote “our own thing,” which is supposedly “outside of,” or even in opposition to, what the particular struggle, or movement, is about. This is completely false, fundamentally wrong. In taking part, together with others, in protests and resistance against injustice and oppression, we have two basic objectives: To unite all who can be united, in the broadest possible way, on the most principled basis, in the struggle against this injustice and oppression. And to put forth, encourage broad discussion and debate around, and win as many people as possible to, our understanding of the *fundamental cause* of all this injustice and oppression *and what is necessary to put an end to it, and uproot the basis for it*: our scientific understanding that all these injustices, all this oppression, is *fundamentally rooted in this system of capitalism-imperialism*, and—while resistance against this is very important—it will require a *revolution* to overthrow this system, and bring into being a fundamentally different and truly emancipating system, in order to actually *eliminate and uproot* all this injustice and oppression.

And there is *this* decisive point: It is very positive, very important whenever the idea of “revolution” is “in the air.” At the same time, there is the crucial question of what “revolution” actually means, and what the *content* of a revolution should be: what are *its aims and objectives, its guiding principles and ideology*—and, flowing from that, *what must be (and not be) the methods and means of struggle* to bring about that revolution.

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

***Bringing truth the powers-that-be don't want you to have—truth you need to know***

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