

**ISRAEL AND  
PALESTINE,  
THE MIDDLE EAST AND  
U.S. IMPERIALISM,  
THE REVOLUTION  
HUMANITY  
NEEDS**

**a selection of writings from  
Bob Avakian**

This compilation is a project of The Bob Avakian Institute.

**W**e, the people of the world,  
can no longer afford to allow  
these imperialists to continue to  
dominate the world and determine  
the destiny of humanity.  
They need to be overthrown  
as quickly as possible. And  
it is a scientific fact that  
we do not have to live this way.

*Bob Avakian, 2022*

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# Israel and Palestine, The Middle East and U.S. Imperialism, The Revolution Humanity Needs

*A selection of writings from Bob Avakian*

## Some Basic Truths About the U.S.-Supported Israeli War Against Palestine, October 20, 2023

Israel, backed by “western” imperialists—and above all, the U.S.—is *the dominant and oppressive force* in its relation with the Palestinian people. Israel was founded, 75 years ago, on the basis of massive terror against masses of Palestinian people, and has carried out repeated atrocities against the Palestinian people ever since. This is a matter of historical fact.

Hamas is not revolutionary and its goals are not emancipating—it is not a force for liberation, but is itself an oppressive force. The atrocities committed by Hamas against Israeli civilians flow out of the reactionary nature, objectives and methods of Hamas as religious (Islamic) fundamentalist fanatics. These atrocities should be condemned. *But this is not some kind of “new Holocaust” involving genocide against Jewish people—and it is nowhere close to the horrific suffering that Israel has imposed for generations on the Palestinian people.* Already now, the number of Palestinian civilians, including children, that Israel has killed since this Hamas attack is far greater than Israeli civilians killed in that attack—and that is on top of the thousands more that Israel has slaughtered just since 2008.

This is not the 1930s and World War 2, when the Nazis, as the ruling power in Germany, carried out horrific atrocities against and mass murder of millions of Jews. The situation today is not one where Palestinians are herding helpless Jews into concentration camps and subjecting them to genocide. The actual situation is the **opposite** of that.

**Israel is a nuclear-armed military power, heavily supplied and supported by the dominant imperialist power in the world, the U.S. Israel has, for generations, imposed apartheid oppression on the**

**Palestinians, denying them basic rights. And, especially with regard to the more than two million Palestinians in Gaza, half of them children, Israel has denied them even the means to live beyond the most minimal and desperate existence.**

To once again emphasize some basic and crucial facts: *Israel is a country that, with the backing of major imperialist powers, was founded as a racist, Jewish supremacist state, 75 years ago, on the basis of horrific ethnic cleansing—with mass killing, rape, and destruction of whole villages of the Palestinians, driving masses of Palestinians off of their lands and incorporating that land into the expanding territory into what became the state of Israel (which had never existed before World War 2). And now Israel, with the full backing of the U.S. imperialists, is openly carrying out genocide against the Palestinians.*

This is the truth. It describes the essential reality of this situation and its history. This truth is not “anti-Semitic”—it is just the truth.

Excerpt from “Some Basic Truths About the U.S.-Supported Israeli War Against Palestine,” October 20, 2023. Available at [TheBobAvakianInstitute.org](http://TheBobAvakianInstitute.org).

After the Holocaust, the worst thing that has happened to Jewish people is the state of Israel.

*Basics, from the talks and writings of Bob Avakian, 5:12*

**What is the Right Way and the Wrong Way to Understand “Never Again”?**, November 15, 2014

There’s a very important example negatively, that we should all learn from, in the state of Israel. The experience of Jewish people throughout centuries, in Europe and other places, of being bitterly discriminated against and viciously persecuted for centuries; and then under the rule of the Nazis during the time of World War 2, being literally exterminated with six million annihilated by the Nazis, certainly ranks at the very top of the whole history of crimes against humanity. But in response to this, among Jewish people—including those who survived that Holocaust—

there have been two different and opposite responses. One is “Never Again! Never again must this happen to any people anywhere.” But the other is, “Because of what has been done to our people, anything we do from now on is justified.” And so you find them founding the state of Israel on the basis of bloodthirsty ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people who lived there which is now reaching genocidal proportions. No! Our answer has to be the first. **Never again shall this happen to any people anywhere, we need to move to a world beyond all that!**

From *Revolution and Religion: the Fight for Emancipation and the Role of Religion; A Dialogue Between Cornel West & Bob Avakian*, November 15, 2014. Available at [TheBobAvakianInstitute.org](http://TheBobAvakianInstitute.org).

**Yes, There Can Be No “Equivalence” Between Israel and the Palestinians—But the Reality Is the Reverse of What Supporters of Israel Insist**, October 23, 2023

Yes, it is the case, as supporters of Israel continually insist, that there can be no “equivalence” between Israel and the Palestinians—but the reality is the *reverse* of what these supporters of Israel insist: There is no equivalence between the *oppressor nation Israel*, and the *oppressed nation, Palestine*; and the actions of the Israelis are far worse, in a whole different category, than even the atrocities committed by Hamas, because Israel is in a much more powerful position to carry out, and does carry out, such atrocities on a far greater scale and much more frequent basis!

**The essential reality in all this is that the Israeli state (again, with the full backing of the U.S.) has created, and forcefully/viciously/murderously maintains, the apartheid and overall oppressive conditions in which the Palestinian people are effectively enslaved and forced to suffer terribly, on an ongoing basis.** *This is the fundamental source of the conflict*—and no just resolution of this conflict can be achieved without a recognition of, and acting to overcome and uproot, this essential oppressive reality.

Available at [TheBobAvakianInstitute.org](http://TheBobAvakianInstitute.org).

## **Israel has done something truly incredible—*Israel has managed to turn Jews into Nazis!*** November 10, 2023

The following is a companion to my statement that: *After the Holocaust, the worst thing that has happened to Jewish people is the state of Israel.*

### **Israel has done something truly incredible—*Israel has managed to turn Jews into Nazis!***

This is the terrible but unavoidable conclusion that has to be drawn from the whole history of Israel, in its murderous oppression of the Palestinian people, and the current genocidal actions of Israel, along with the statements of high officials of the Israeli government, as well as backers of Israel, in attempting to justify all this.

It also has to be said that *none of this could have happened without the full, unwavering support of U.S. imperialism for Israel's continuing crimes against humanity and war crimes*: its ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people, its apartheid rule over them for generations, and now the heightened genocidal slaughter in Gaza and the mounting violence of illegitimate settlers, backed by the Israeli army, against Palestinian people in the West Bank.

Available at [TheBobAvakianInstitute.org](http://TheBobAvakianInstitute.org).

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## **Answering people who say, “Why should I care about Palestine when we’ve got problems here?”**

Revolution 4 from *@BobAvakianOfficial*, January 21, 2024

In previous messages (especially Number Two and Number Three) I have shined a light on some—but only some—of the monstrous crimes perpetrated by the ruling class of this country. And look at what the U.S. government—Biden/the Democrats, the whole ruling class—is doing right now to Palestine: backing and aiding Israel in carrying out the slaughter of tens of thousands of Palestinian people, including huge numbers of *children*.

I know some people say: “Why should I care about things like Palestine, we’ve got enough problems right here that need to be dealt with.”

First of all, you should care because you are a human being. And, the fact is that *things will never be made right—and masses of people will never get out of the hell they are in—as long as this system of capitalism-imperialism continues to rule over people here and to dominate the world.*

**The problem for people everywhere is THIS SYSTEM.** This system of capitalism-imperialism that is the force behind the slaughter of people in Palestine is the *same system* that is causing so much misery for masses of people in this country. Ripping away basic rights, treating whole groups of people as “second class” and less than human. Maintaining many in desperate conditions and driving many to desperate acts. Poisoning people’s minds with this system’s putrid culture and depraved “values”: “do for self and to hell with everybody else”... “get what you want, any way you can”... “pursue your dreams,” while sleepwalking through the real nightmare. Distracting and demoralizing people with dead-end and deadening pursuits. Terrorizing people with brutality and murder by the police, and mass incarcerating people already denied a decent life. All this while this same system robs people here and everywhere of a future worth living in, or any future at all, with the accelerating destruction of the environment and the wars which threaten to go over to all-out conflict between nuclear-armed powers which could wipe out humanity.

All this is why you, why every decent person, should care—and should *act* to do something about this—to do the most meaningful thing that could be done: to be part of the revolution to put an end to this system, and all the misery it imposes on people everywhere.

So, I’m gonna keep coming back with more about Palestine, and what it has to do with this whole system, and the need for a revolution to overthrow this system at the soonest possible time.

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## **The Moral Blind Spot of Supporters of Israel Who Criticize Hamas—and Hamas Alone—for Murdering Children,** October 23, 2023

While the actions of Hamas involving the slaughter of old people and of children (and allegedly the rape and other sexual abuse of women) cannot in any way be justified, it is sickening that not only the ruling

class and its media, but also many celebrities and others in this country, seem to only notice, or care about, the slaughter of innocent people, and in particular children, when it is *Israelis (or more generally those whom these Americans are conditioned to think of as “our friends and allies,” like the people in Ukraine) and not people like the Palestinians*. Although there are significant opposing and more positive trends among the people in this country, it really does come across that Palestinians don't really count, are invisible—or even that they are not actually considered human—by far too many people, beyond just the monstrously criminal ruling class, in this country. And this is all the more outrageous when the number of Palestinian children killed, even in this current situation, is already greater than the number of Israeli children—and taking into account the past 15 years or so, it is far, far, far greater, on top of all the other ways in which the Palestinian people have, for generations, been brutally oppressed and suppressed by Israel, with the full backing of the U.S. and its political representatives and functionaries, of both ruling class parties (Democrat as well as Republican).

Available at [TheBobAvakianInstitute.org](http://TheBobAvakianInstitute.org).

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## **Israel and Palestine: A Terrible Ironic Twist of History**

Revolution 5 from [@BobAvakianOfficial](https://www.instagram.com/BobAvakianOfficial/), January 23, 2024

What is happening with Palestine shines a powerful light on what this murderous system of capitalism-imperialism, and those who rule it, are all about, and why their whole system has to go.

The U.S. ruling class has for decades supported Israel's *apartheid oppression* of the Palestinian people, and *this U.S. ruling class is now supporting the genocidal slaughter of Palestinians by Israel*.

What a terrible ironic twist of history: For centuries Jews were subjected to horrendous atrocity, and this reached its most terrible dimensions in the Holocaust, when millions of Jews were murdered by the Nazis during World War 2; but then Israel was founded and has been maintained as a Zionist (Jewish-supremacist) state on the basis of bloody oppression of the Palestinian people! This is why I have made

the provocative but profoundly true statement: After the Holocaust, the worst thing that has happened to Jewish people is the state of Israel.

*Genocide* is the deliberate killing off of a people, in whole or in part—and that is exactly what Israel is doing to the Palestinians in front of the whole world now.

*Apartheid* is a system that openly treats a whole people as inferior and not deserving of the same rights as the dominant and supposedly “superior” people—a system that forcibly segregates and confines the subjugated people in conditions of poverty and deprivation, continually subjecting them to violent repression.

Apartheid is the white-supremacist system to which the native African people in South Africa were subjected for generations, until the early 1990s. Apartheid is the Jewish-supremacist system which Israel has imposed on the Palestinian people, from the founding of Israel in 1948 until the present time.

Apartheid is also very much the same as the system in the U.S. itself, for 100 years after the Civil War, especially (but not only) in the southern U.S.: the enforced racial oppression, written right into the law—with systematic segregation and discrimination against Black people, backed up by official terror and Ku Klux Klan lynching.

So, it is not surprising that the U.S. ruling class *supported the apartheid regime in South Africa for almost the entire time it was the ruling system in South Africa*, and now the U.S. is continuing to support the apartheid state of Israel.

It is also no accident that, during the time when apartheid was the ruling system in South Africa, *Israel was a very close ally of South Africa*. Israel provided military and other aid to the South African apartheid regime in its brutal suppression of the African people in that country. Israeli leaders openly praised the South African apartheid regime, celebrating it as a model for Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people. (If you don't believe this, or you want to know more about it, go to the website [revcom.us](http://revcom.us) and look at the quiz about Israel, and in particular Part 2 of that quiz: “Israel and Comparisons to Apartheid South Africa.”)

Apartheid has been ended in South Africa, but Israel is continuing its apartheid oppression of the Palestinian people—and now it is carrying

out the genocidal slaughter of Palestinians, with the full backing of the U.S. ruling class. (And now the government of South Africa—which is no longer based on apartheid—has brought a case before the World Court of the United Nations rightly accusing Israel of genocide against the Palestinian people.)

I know some of you may be thinking: “All these horrors will always go on, and there’s nothing anybody can do that will really change this.” But that’s just wrong, and I’m gonna get into why and how we *can* change this in a fundamental way—through an actual revolution. An important part of being able to make this revolution is understanding what is really happening, and why, especially with really big things going on in the world, what this shows about the nature of the system that we are up against, and how to go about defeating it. What is happening now with the U.S.-backed Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people is one of those big things that holds crucially important lessons.

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### **Taking on the “Justifications” for Israel’s genocide of Palestinians**, Revolution 6 from *@BobAvakianOfficial*, January 24, 2024

Over and over, you hear media mouthpieces of this system (and others) justifying the genocidal actions of Israel by pointing to the attack on Israel by the Palestinian armed force Hamas on October 7 last year (2023), when Hamas killed large numbers of Israeli civilians, including children, and committed other atrocities, while taking hundreds of Israelis hostage.

But the crucial events *did not begin on October 7, 2023*. In establishing the state of Israel, in 1948, Israeli forces systematically destroyed hundreds of Palestinian villages, murdering thousands, raping women in large numbers, driving hundreds of thousands from their homes. And since then, Israel has repeatedly carried out murderous oppression of the Palestinian people, with repeated massacres involving the most depraved acts. So, even though Hamas is not a force for liberation, and its actions on October 7 did involve war crimes, this is nowhere on the same scale as what Israel has done to the Palestinian people for generations, *before* October 7—and it is nowhere close to the genocidal slaughter of Palestinians that Israel is carrying out *now*.

As I have pointed out before—speaking to the horrors to which Jews were subjected at the hands of Hitler and the Nazis, and how the situation now is very different:

This is not the 1930s and World War 2, with the Nazis inflicting horrific atrocities and mass genocide on the Jewish people. The situation is not one where Palestinians are herding helpless Jews into concentration camps and subjecting them to genocide. The actual situation is the **opposite** of that.

**Israel is a nuclear-armed military power, heavily supplied and supported by the dominant imperialist power in the world, the U.S.; and in its relation with the Palestinian people, Israel is the dominant nation that has, for generations, imposed apartheid oppression on the Palestinians.**

(That is from my statement *Some Basic Truth About Israel And Palestine*, which you can find at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us).)

Here’s another excuse raised by Israel and its supporters to “justify” its mass slaughter of Palestinians: “Hamas is hiding among the Palestinian population in Gaza, so Israel can’t help killing civilians in going after Hamas.”

This is more bullshit. The fact is that Israel is attacking Gaza with massive (2000 pound) bombs that are bound to kill huge numbers of civilians, not just Hamas fighters. *More than 2 million Palestinians are packed into the tiny territory of Gaza, confined there under Israeli control*, so is it really surprising that Hamas is “mixed in” among the larger Palestinian population? It is disgusting hypocrisy for Israel to complain that Hamas is mixed in among the overall population in Gaza and to use that as an excuse for slaughtering Palestinian civilians.

“Well, what is Israel supposed to do, just let this attack by Hamas go unanswered, encouraging further attacks? What about Israel’s right to defend itself?” That is another argument raised by Israel and its supporters.

The truth is that Israel, like apartheid South Africa before it, is an *illegitimate* state—and as such, it has no legitimate right to “defend itself”—and its so-called “defense” has repeatedly involved the deliberate killing of civilians, including large numbers of children.



What is Israel supposed to do? **Israel is “supposed” to stop brutally oppressing the Palestinian people.** But Israel, as a racist, Jewish-supremacist (Zionist) state, cannot do that: it cannot do that, because murderous oppression of the Palestinian people has been *built into* the state of Israel from the very beginning, and Israel could not exist *without* brutally oppressing the Palestinian people.

And, since Israel cannot stop brutally oppressing the Palestinian people, Israel—as a racist, Zionist state—must cease to exist.

The real question is: *what is the legitimate way to fight against the state of Israel, and what is a just solution to all this?*

The answer is definitely not to “kill off all the Jews in Israel” or “drive them into the sea.” The answer is the *abolition of the state of Israel*, and in its place *the creation of a revolutionary state in which the government and the laws do not promote any religion and do not favor one people over another, and instead there is equality between Jews and Palestinians.*

The answer is also definitely *not* the “two-state solution” being promoted by the Biden administration. Such a “two-state solution” would really amount to nothing more than a powerful state of Israel continuing to occupy land stolen from the Palestinian people, while the so-called “Palestinian state” created with this “solution” would be a bitter joke—a *puppet* state—merely a patchwork of separated small territories, surrounded and dominated by Israel, with the Palestinian people still subjected to terrible oppression and deprivation.

The answer is that the fight against the state of Israel must be waged on a *revolutionary* basis, with the goal of putting an end to *all* oppressive relations and all inequality among people based on race and nationality, sex and gender, and all relations in which one part of society exploits others. And the urgent need is for a revolutionary force to emerge to lead the struggle *on that basis*....

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## **Why is Biden, and basically the entire government and ruling class of the U.S., supporting Israel in carrying out genocide against the Palestinian people, before the whole world?**

Revolution 7 from @BobAvakianOfficial, January 28, 2024

This is Bob Avakian (BA), bringing out more of the truth about what is happening with Palestine: why the U.S. is supporting and aiding Israel’s genocidal slaughter of Palestinian people, how this shows once again the barbaric nature of this system of capitalism-imperialism, and the truth that only a real revolution can put an end to all these horrors constantly perpetrated by the rulers of this country and the system that they serve and enforce.

In the face of all the lies, it is crucial to keep coming back to this basic, essential reality: *Here is the entire ruling class of the U.S., and all its major politicians, both Democrat and Republican, fully supporting an apartheid state, Israel, carrying out the genocidal slaughter of Palestinians in front of the whole world.*

And for those of you who think that politicians just act in their own narrow personal interests, think deeper—think about this: Biden has not only been a long-time fanatical backer of Israel, with its terrible crimes against humanity, but now Biden is fully supporting the genocide being carried out by Israel, *even though* this is likely to cost Biden the votes of large numbers of people who are *righteously outraged* by this genocide, and this could end up costing Biden the election. (And don’t be fooled by Biden putting on the act of telling Israel to be more careful in killing civilians—Biden has continued to send military aid to Israel, and to provide it with “political and diplomatic cover,” as the bodies of Palestinian civilians massacred by Israel pile up in the tens of thousands.)

Why is Biden, and basically the entire government and ruling class of the U.S., supporting Israel in carrying out genocide against the Palestinian people, before the whole world? Here is the answer to that crucial question:

This is *not* because of “the power of the Jewish lobby”—or because of some ignorant, ridiculous and outrageous notion that

“Jews are controlling everything.” It is because *Israel plays a “special role” as a heavily armed bastion of support for U.S. imperialism in a strategically important part of the world (the “Middle East”). And Israel has been a key force in the commission of atrocities which have helped to maintain the oppressive rule of U.S. imperialism in many other parts of the world.*

(That is from my statement *Some Basic Truths About the U.S.-Supported Israeli War Against Palestine*, which is posted at revcom.us.)

**It’s the system!** The system of *capitalism-imperialism* that Biden serves. The system he *has* to serve—the system that *anybody and everybody* has to serve if they want to hold office, and especially “high office,” like president, within this system. *That* is why Biden is doing what he’s doing—what all these politicians are doing—above and beyond their more narrow personal interests.

**It’s the system!** This system of capitalism-imperialism that embodies and enforces white supremacy, patriarchal male supremacy and other brutal oppression—this system resting on ruthless life-stealing exploitation of masses of people in this country and literally billions of people worldwide, including more than 150 million *children*—all enforced with massive violence and destruction, of people and the environment, posing a very real threat to the future and the existence of humanity.

This system **that needs to be overthrown at the soonest possible time, through an actual revolution.**

These imperialists make the Godfather look like Mary Poppins.

*Basics 1:7*

## Internationalism—The Whole World Comes First.

*Basics 5:8*

Imperialism means huge monopolies and financial institutions controlling the economies and the political systems—and the lives of people—not just in one country but all over the world. Imperialism means parasitic exploiters who oppress hundreds of millions of people and condemn them to untold misery; parasitic financiers who can cause millions to starve just by pressing a computer key and thereby shifting vast amounts of wealth from one place to another. Imperialism means war—war to put down the resistance and rebellion of the oppressed, and war between rival imperialist states—it means the leaders of these states can condemn humanity to unbelievable devastation, perhaps even total annihilation, with the push of a button.

Imperialism is capitalism at the stage where its basic contradictions have been raised to tremendously explosive levels. But imperialism also means that there will be revolution—the oppressed rising up to overthrow their exploiters and tormentors—and that this revolution will be a worldwide struggle to sweep away the global monster, imperialism.

*Basics 1:6*

## The Decisive Question of Internationalism, 2019

First of all, there is the decisive question of *internationalism*.... I want to touch briefly here on the material and the philosophical basis for communist internationalism and the further synthesis of this in the new communism.

The material basis lies in the development of capitalism more fully into an international system of capitalist imperialism and the various features of that, including its investment and exploitation much more fully on an international scale (rather than in the earlier stages of capitalism where production took place mainly in the home country and the search was carried out for markets for those products internationally). The process of production has been much more fully internationalized, increasingly so in the last several decades. This is one overall system with many different component parts and dynamics to each of those component parts within this overall system. The dynamics of this system as a whole on a world level—not solely, but principally and in dialectical relation with the situation within particular parts of the world and particular countries—is the main factor in setting the objective stage for the revolutionary struggle in particular countries. And when, through this dialectical process, the contradictions assume a particularly acute form in particular countries, that can lead to the emergence of a revolutionary situation there. So you have the dynamics within the particular countries but it's not only, and not even essentially, out of that, that the material conditions emerge which influence the development of the revolutionary struggle and which can ultimately lead to the emergence of a revolutionary situation in those particular countries.

From ***BREAKTHROUGHS: The Historic Breakthrough by Marx, and the Further Breakthrough with the New Communism, A Basic Summary***, 2019. Available at [TheBobAvakianInstitute.org](http://TheBobAvakianInstitute.org).

## Why We Are Confronted With the Situation We're In,

January 2021

To understand why we are confronted with the situation we are, it is necessary not merely to respond to—and in effect be whipped around by—what is happening on the surface at any given time, but to *dig beneath* the surface, to discover the underlying mainsprings and causes of things, and arrive at an understanding of the fundamental problem and the actual solution. This means coming to the scientific understanding that we are living under a *system*, and *what that system actually is* (the system of *capitalism-imperialism*); working to grasp *the deeper relations and dynamics of this system* and how this is setting the framework for how different sections of society spontaneously think and react to events in society and the world, and what is the possible way forward to transforming all of this in the interests of the masses of humanity and ultimately humanity as a whole. A crucial part of this is a scientific understanding of major changes, resulting from the very dynamics and functioning of this system, that have led to upheaval in society and have in significant ways fed this fascism: changes in the capitalist-imperialist economy and correspondingly in the social structure and “social composition” within this country, as well as internationally, which have undermined “traditional” forms of oppression without, however, leading to the *ending* of this oppression but establishing and enforcing it in new forms, while provoking what is truly a deranged, sadistic and often violent reaction on the part of the sectors of society who have identified their interests, and in effect their very being, with the *traditional* forms of oppression.

As an introduction, and overarching point, in regard to some of these important changes, it is important to emphasize that these changes, and especially those that have occurred in the last few decades, are bound up with the heightened *parasitism* of capitalism-imperialism in the contemporary world. As I explained in *Breakthroughs: The Historic Breakthrough by Marx, and the Further Breakthrough with the New Communism, A Basic Summary*, parasitism refers to

the fact that an increasingly globalized capitalism relies to a very great degree for production and for maintaining the rate of profit on a vast network of sweatshops, particularly in the Third World

of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, while capitalist activity in the capitalist-imperialist “home countries” is increasingly in the realm of finance and financial speculation, and the “high end” of (not the production of the basic physical materials for) high tech, as well as the service sector and the commercial sphere (including the growing role of online marketing).

...

♦ As a result of the intensifying climate crisis, war and repression—and, as a driving force in all this, major changes in the capitalist-imperialist dominated world economy, including the further growth and increased impact internationally of corporate agribusiness and labor-displacing technology, increasingly monopolized control of seeds and chemicals, greater monopolization of marketing, and vast land-grabbing investments—there is massive dislocation and upheaval, particularly affecting people in the global South (the countries of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia—the Third World). An important feature of all this is mass urbanization: more than half of the world’s population now lives in urban areas, with huge shantytown slums, involving more than a billion people, in the urban areas of the Third World, even as tens of millions of people from the Third World have been forced to migrate to the U.S. and countries in Europe. And the situation has developed where, in some of these countries—with the U.S. a prime example—the economy could not function without the exploitation of large numbers of immigrants, while many are subjected to the constant threat of deportation, which also makes them even more vulnerable to extreme exploitation.

The ruin of much of traditional small-scale farming in Third World countries and the dramatic increase of an urban population there (as well as in the U.S. and some other imperialist countries) which in large numbers is unable to find work within the “formal economy”—this has also fostered the growth of an illegal economy and of gangs (and, particularly in Third World countries, cartels) based on this illegal economy, in particular the drug trade, but also the trafficking of human beings, especially women and girls viciously victimized in prostitution, the “sex industry,” and literal sexual slavery.

This dramatically changed and often highly volatile situation has also been a major factor in the rise of religious fundamentalism, in the Third World and notably in the U.S., where Christian fundamentalism is a powerful negative social and political force. Interconnected and interacting with these economic and related social changes in a way that has contributed to the increased influence of religious fundamentalism, particularly in the Third World, has been the defeat, or abandonment, of movements in the Third World led by communists or revolutionary nationalists against old-line colonialists and neo-colonial oppressors, above all the U.S., in the period after World War 2—with the greatest setback being the reversal of socialism and the restoration of capitalism in China in the 1970s, which transformed China from a powerful socialist country and a beacon and bastion of support for revolutionary struggle throughout the world, into a rising imperialist power and itself an exploiter of masses of people in Africa and other parts of the Third World.

The rise of religious fundamentalism has occurred together with, and in opposition to, the increase of secularism (people who are not religious, or at least not part of traditional religions), especially among the more educated urban populations. This secularism is not in itself conceived or intended as an attack on people who continue to hold religious beliefs, but it does objectively undermine religion—and it is taken as an attack “on everything holy” by religious fundamentalists who refuse to even attempt to reconcile religious belief with the results of scientific inquiry, as strongly reflected in their irrational attack on the solidly established scientific fact of evolution.

What is essentially involved in this division is the acceptance, or the denial and rejection, of evidence-based rational thought, including the importance of critical thinking, that has, in a broad sense, been the extension of the Enlightenment, which arose in Europe (in particular France) several centuries ago. In that time, and since, the advance of science and important discoveries this has brought forward have given impetus to the questioning of religion in a way that was not really possible before, since many of these scientific discoveries clearly contradict long-entrenched religious scripture and dogma, and the scientific method rejects the recognition of things as “real” if concrete

evidence for their existence cannot be shown, in the real material world. And, as emphasized by Ardea Skybreak, author of the very important book *The Science of Evolution and the Myth of Creationism: Knowing What's Real and Why It Matters*, science provides plenty of evidence that human beings have invented every religion that exists anywhere in the world. (In a book consisting of an interview with Skybreak, *Science and Revolution*, she also emphasizes that, although at times “bad science” has been used for very negative purposes, including to promote racism, the actual scientific method itself provides the means for refuting this: “you can use rigorous scientific methods to prove that was all bad science.”)

It is true that science itself cannot put an end to religious belief, as shown by the fact that there are large numbers of religious people who consider themselves advocates of enlightenment and accept the discoveries and conclusions of science (up to a point at least) but insist that there is a realm of existence—involving a supernatural being, or beings—which is beyond the scope of science. And it is a fact that in general the representatives of the ruling class in this country, whether they are “liberal” or “conservative”—and whether they themselves personally believe in god or not—definitely regard religion as a crucial part of maintaining the “social cohesion” of the country on a capitalist basis, and work to promote religion, in particular Christianity, in one form or another. (They are all essentially practitioners of the statement attributed to Napoleon: society is impossible without inequality; inequality is impossible to maintain without a morality to justify it; and such a morality is impossible without religion.) Nevertheless (to paraphrase an important statement by the physicist Steven Weinberg), although science itself does not eliminate religious belief, it does provide a basis for people not to believe in god and to reject religion. This is in conflict with those who believe religion is necessary for an orderly and “moral” society, and all the more so with those who insist on a religious fundamentalism that is wildly out of keeping with reality and with a rational approach to reality.

Yet, while it is true that, in order to win their full emancipation, the masses of people in the world will ultimately need to cast off religious belief in general, it is important to emphasize that, in the world today,

the polarization does not simply come down to those who have rejected religion in the name of enlightenment vs. those who cling to religious belief. An important polarization now is that between what can rightly be called decent people (including large numbers of religious people) who are opposed to injustice, and on the other hand those who are determined to revive and enforce traditional forms of oppression. In regard to all this, one of the important questions is whether people come to embrace, or reject, two distinguishing qualities: *largeness of mind* and *generosity of spirit*.

From “*January 2021: New Year's Statement by Bob Avakian: A New Year, The Urgent Need For A Radically New World—For The Emancipation Of All Humanity.*” Available at [TheBobAvakianInstitute.org](http://TheBobAvakianInstitute.org).

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### The Two Historically Outmodeds, April 29, 2007

What we see in contention here with Jihad [Islamic fundamentalism] on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade\* [increasingly globalized western imperialism] on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity up against historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system. These two reactionary poles reinforce each other, even while opposing each other. If you side with either of these “outmodeds,” you end up strengthening both.

While this is a very important formulation and is crucial to understanding much of the dynamics driving things in the world in this period, at the same time we do have to be clear about which of these “historically outmodeds” has done the greater damage and poses the greater threat to humanity: It is the historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system, and in particular the U.S. imperialists.

From *Bringing Forward Another Way*, April 29, 2007.

\* “Jihad” here refers to Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, and “McWorld/McCrusade” to increasingly globalized western imperialism, infused with a poisonous sense of “the superiority of Western Christian Civilization.”

## The Answer Is Not Fundamentalist Islamic Jihad...

March 2016

This system of capitalism-imperialism has been built on, and continues to perpetrate, slavery and white supremacy and all manner of atrocities against Black people, other oppressed peoples, and the masses of humanity throughout the world, including the half of humanity that is female. Some claim that the answer to this is Islam, and in particular fundamentalist Islamic jihad. But that is **not** the answer—it is not a radical alternative to this system and its monstrous crimes—it is itself another form of enslavement, oppression, and atrocity, against women and the masses of people overall. The answer is an actual revolution—a **really radical and emancipating** revolution—**communist revolution**, to bring an **end**, at long last, to **all** oppression, everywhere.

First appeared on revcom.us in March 2016.

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## Israel and Its “Special Role” for U.S. Imperialism

April 29, 2007

To put it in basic terms, Israel is a colonial-settler state which was imposed on the region of the Middle East, at the cost of great suffering for the Palestinian people (and the people of the region more broadly). Israel could not have come into being without the backing of imperialism, and it acts not only in its own interests but as an armed garrison and instrument of enforcement for U.S. imperialism, which supplies the Israeli state with aid, and in particular military aid, to the tune of billions of dollars every year. But, along with this general nature and role of Israel and its relation to U.S. imperialism, if we take into account the strategic orientation that has guided the Bush regime—based on an assessment that for U.S. imperialism there is now not only a certain freedom but very urgent necessity to recast the whole nature of the regimes and of the societies across a wide arc centered in the Middle East—then you can see even more clearly how absolute support for Israel is crucial in all this. There can't be any wavering or even the appearance, or suggestion, of more “even-handedness” in dealing with Israel, on the one hand, and the

Palestinians (and others in the region) on the other hand. You have to have your ducks in a row. You have to have your priorities very clear. You have to have a regime there, at the center of your policy for that region, which is completely reliable for U.S. imperialism.

If you look at any other regimes in the region, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are big allies of the U.S. But in Saudi Arabia and in Egypt, the situation is very unstable and potentially very volatile: there are serious tremors beneath the throne, so to speak—there is the growing danger of “social earthquakes” that could threaten to topple, or actually topple, those regimes. You don't have that in Israel. Hopefully, as things develop overall, there will not be just a “loyal opposition peace movement” among Israelis but the development of a much more powerful progressive movement with a much more radical view in Israel—and this is something that progressive people in Israel, or with ties to people in Israel, should work to foster and develop. But right now a positive and truly radical movement of that kind does not exist in Israel, and the dynamics with regard to Israel are not now such that the more that the regime in Israel is hard-core, the more it is going to run into antagonism with the bulk of its population. In the short term, the dynamic is essentially the opposite, unfortunately.

From *Bringing Forward Another Way*, April 29, 2007.

(This is a selection from earlier work by Bob Avakian, and though some circumstances may have changed since it was written, this selection remains highly relevant to the world today.)

The essence of what exists in the U.S. is not democracy but capitalism-imperialism and political structures to enforce that capitalism-imperialism. What the U.S. spreads around the world is not democracy, but imperialism and political structures to enforce that imperialism.

*Basics* 1:3

## The Reality Behind the Myth of American Exceptionalism

Revolution 17 from @BobAvakianOfficial, March 20, 2024

... further exposing the *reality* behind the *myth* of “American exceptionalism”: the ridiculous and outrageous notion that there is something exceptionally *good* about this country and its “great American democracy.”

In reality, this “great democracy” is actually *a system of brutal exploitation and murderous oppression*, the system of *capitalism-imperialism*, enforced by the *dictatorship* of the capitalist class—which, *on the basis of its dominant position economically, controls the political process and the police and military that violently enforce this system*. Contrary to what is constantly proclaimed by representatives of this capitalist ruling class and its media (its propaganda machinery), the people in this country don’t “govern themselves”—they are “governed,” *ruled over, by a class of capitalist exploiters*. What is proclaimed as the heart and essence of this so-called “great democracy”—“the right of people to choose their leaders through free and fair elections”—really just comes down to the “right” to “choose” between political parties that *represent the same system of capitalism-imperialism*.

The whole history of this country, down to today—not the distorted and “white-washed” history taught in textbooks and portrayed in the dominant media and culture, but the *actual* history and reality of this country and its role in the world—provides profound, undeniable proof of the real, truly monstrous, nature of this country and this system. In previous messages I have shined a light on some of these horrors, and I have pointed to works of mine, and others at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us)—in particular the “American Crime” series—which get into this more fully and deeply. As I said in my last message: *No honest person could read these works at revcom.us and continue to parrot the perverse notion of the USA as exceptionally good!*

And what is going on right now is providing further, living proof that this so-called “great American democracy” is in reality *a dictatorship*, where the power of the ruling institutions is used to viciously persecute, punish, and even eliminate people who pose a threat to the interests of the ruling class. Along with the murder by police and mass incarceration

of thousands and millions of people in this country, which is continuing as you are listening to this, there is the vicious repression being brought down against people protesting the *genocide* in Palestine carried out by Israel, *with the full backing of the U.S. government* and both ruling class political parties (Democrat and Republican). Colleges, and especially “elite” universities, have been a focus of this repression—repression which has crudely violated supposed “rights of free speech” and “standards of academic freedom.” Students and faculty have been targeted, and even university presidents have been driven out of their positions for failing to fully repress these protests.

Why is this happening? Because fundamental interests of U.S. capitalism-imperialism are at stake. Because *Israel plays a “special role” as a heavily armed bastion of support for U.S. imperialism in a strategically important part of the world (the “Middle East”). And Israel has been a key force in the commission of atrocities which have helped to maintain the oppressive rule of U.S. imperialism in many other parts of the world.*

And this repression is happening because representatives of the ruling class in this country have a definite sense that if youth especially at “elite” universities begin to seriously question and act against what this system is doing—if the system “loses the allegiance” of large numbers of those students—that can be a big factor in creating a real crisis for the system as a whole, as happened in the 1960s: a crisis that, now more than ever, this system really cannot afford, when the whole country is already being torn apart by deep divisions, with bitter clashes right among the ruling powers. So, at the same time as they are bitterly divided, the ruling powers of this country are firmly united in their determination to punish and intimidate especially students at elite universities who have stepped forward to protest the genocidal slaughter of Palestinians. The ruling class is desperate to prevent opposition to its fundamental interests from spreading and involving masses of people, from all parts of society.

All this reveals, more “nakedly” than in “normal situations,” the actual **dictatorship** behind the outer shell of “democracy” of this country—and it shines a light on the *strategic weakness* of this system, when it does lose the allegiance of major sections of the people and this has the potential to spread to all parts of society, including among the dominant institutions of this system.

I'll be coming back soon, with more truth you need to know—truth the powers-that-be are determined to *keep* from you—the *truth* beneath the claim that this country is continuing to “create a more perfect union.”

“Never underestimate the great importance of ideology.”

We have a very negative example of this with the Islamic fundamentalists. The way in which they are proceeding to do what they're doing has a very powerful ideological component to it.

How do people respond to the conditions that they find themselves in? What course or road do they take, and what do they respond to, in the face of those conditions? This is not predetermined. There is not just one way that people respond, automatically and regardless of influences on them. And even the level on which people sacrifice depends on their ideological orientation to a very significant degree.

*Basics 5:15*

## The Oppression of Women and the “Two Outmodeds,” 2009

In today's world, with regard to the woman question we see again the relevance of the “two historically outmodeds.” In *A Declaration: For Women's Liberation and the Emancipation of All Humanity*, published by our party earlier this year (2009), the following is cited:

What we see in contention here with Jihad [Islamic fundamentalism] on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade [increasingly globalized western imperialism] on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity up against historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system. These two reactionary poles reinforce each other, even while opposing each other. If you side with either of these “outmodeds,” you end up strengthening both.

That *Declaration* immediately goes on to emphasize the point that:

Between these two “outmodeds” it is the imperialist ruling classes, and that of the U.S. in particular, which have, by far, done the most harm to humanity and pose the greatest threats. In fact, imperialist domination itself in the Middle East, Indonesia, and elsewhere—along with the massive disruption and dislocation that this domination causes, and the corruption, venality and vicious repression characteristic of the local governments that are dependent on and serve imperialism—gives great fuel to the fire of Islamic fundamentalism as a response to all this, although a reactionary one.

This brings into relief the way in which the other “outmoded”—that is, medieval forms of the oppression of women by Islamic fundamentalists and others in parts of the Third World—is being utilized by those who, at least objectively, side with the imperialist “outmoded” and attempt to prettify—and in some aspects even to promote—the “modern” forms of the oppression of women that are more common in the imperialist countries, and to divert attention and struggle around the oppression of women into a framework that reinforces the imperialist system, which is in reality the main and most fundamental force perpetuating oppression, including of the most horrific kinds, in all parts of the world.

...

In sum: “Modern” capitalist society—or in reality the global system of capitalist imperialism—has inherited the oppression of women from past societies out of which capitalism has emerged, and while changing some of the forms in which this takes place, it has not eliminated, and cannot eliminate, this oppression; it has incorporated pre-capitalist forms of this oppression, in various parts of the world, particularly the Third World, into its overall, worldwide system of exploitation and oppression, and it perpetuates all this through the fundamental relations, the ongoing process of accumulation and the overall functioning of this capitalist-imperialist system itself. (*Declaration*; emphasis in original)

From *Unresolved Contradictions, Driving Forces for Revolution*, 2009.

(This is a selection from earlier work by Bob Avakian, and though some circumstances may have changed since it was written, this selection remains highly relevant to the world today.)



## “Why Is Religious Fundamentalism Growing in Today’s World?” 2008

All this—and, in relation to it, a relentless ideological offensive by the imperialists and their intellectual camp followers—has led to the notion, widely propagated and propagandized, of the defeat and demise of communism and, for the time being, the discrediting of communism among broad sections of people, including among those restlessly searching for a way to fight back against imperialist domination, oppression and degradation.<sup>2</sup>

But it is not only communism that the imperialists have worked to defeat and discredit. They have also targeted other secular forces and governments which, to one degree or another, have opposed, or objectively constituted obstacles to, the interests and aims of the imperialists, particularly in parts of the world that they have regarded as of strategic importance. For example, going back to the 1950s, the U.S. engineered a coup that overthrew the nationalist government of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran, because that government’s policies were viewed as a threat to the control of Iran’s oil by the U.S. (and secondarily the British) and to U.S. domination of the region more broadly. This has had repercussions and consequences for decades since then. Among other things, it has contributed to the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and the eventual establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran, when Islamic fundamentalists seized power in the context of a mass upheaval of the Iranian people in the late 1970s, which led to the overthrow of the highly repressive government of the Shah of Iran, who had been backed and in fact maintained in power by the U.S. since the ouster of Mossadegh.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In addition to what is contained in a number of writings and talks of mine that speak to this subject, an analysis of important aspects of the actual experience of socialism in the Soviet Union and in China—including very real mistakes and shortcomings as well as historically unprecedented achievements—and answers to the slanders and distortions of this experience, is provided by the project Set the Record Straight. This can be accessed, and more information about this provided, online at The Real History of Communist Revolution.

<sup>3</sup> An important source of information and analysis in regard to these events in Iran and their consequences is *All The Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, by Stephen Kinzer, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Publisher, 2003.

In other parts of the Middle East, and elsewhere, over the past several decades the imperialists have also consciously set out to defeat and decimate even nationalist secular opposition; and, in fact, they have at times consciously fed the growth of religious fundamentalist forces. Palestine is a sharp example of this: Islamic fundamentalist forces there were actually aided by Israel—and the U.S. imperialists, for whom Israel acts as an armed garrison—in order to undermine the more secular Palestine Liberation Organization. In Afghanistan, particularly during the Soviet occupation of that country in the 1980s, the U.S. backed and provided arms to the Islamic fundamentalist Mujahadeen, because it was recognized that they would be fanatical fighters against the Soviets. Other forces, including not only more secular nationalists but Maoists, opposed the Soviet occupation and the puppet governments it installed in Afghanistan, but of course the Maoists in particular were not supported by the U.S., and in fact many of them were killed by the “Jihadist” Islamic fundamentalists that the U.S. was aiding and arming.

...

In all this it is important to keep in mind that over a number of decades, and at least until very recently, the U.S. and Israel have worked to undermine secular forces among the opposition to them in the Middle East (and elsewhere) and have at least objectively favored, where they have not deliberately fostered, the growth of Islamic fundamentalist forces. During the “Cold War,” this was, to a significant degree, out of a calculation that these Islamic fundamentalists would be much less likely to align themselves with the Soviet camp. And, to no small degree, this favoring of religious fundamentalists over more secular forces has been motivated by the recognition of the inherently conservative, indeed reactionary, essence of this religious fundamentalism, and the fact that, to a significant degree, it can act as a useful foil for the imperialists (and Israel) in presenting themselves as an enlightened, democratic force for progress.

Now, one of the ironies of this whole experience is that Nasser, and other Arab nationalist heads of state, viciously and murderously suppressed not only Islamic fundamentalist opposition (such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt) but also communists. But, with what has taken place on the world stage, so to speak, in recent decades—including what has happened in China and the Soviet Union... and the widely propagated verdict that

this represents the “defeat” of communism; the seizure of power in Iran by Islamic fundamentalists, with the fall of the Shah of Iran in the late 1970s; the resistance to the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan, which by the late 1980s forced a Soviet withdrawal and contributed significantly to the downfall of the Soviet Union itself; and the setbacks and defeats for more or less secular rulers like Nasser (and more recently someone like Saddam Hussein) in the Middle East and elsewhere—it has, in the short term, been the Islamic fundamentalists, much more than revolutionaries and communists, who have been able to regroup, and to experience a significant growth in influence and organized strength.

...

All this—what has taken place in ... Palestine and other parts of the Middle East—is a political dimension which has been combined with the economic and social factors mentioned above—the upheaval and volatility and rapid change imposed from the top and seemingly coming from unknown and/or alien and foreign sources and powers—to undermine and weaken secular, including genuinely revolutionary and communist, forces and to strengthen Islamic fundamentalism (in a way similar to how Christian fundamentalism has been gaining strength in Latin America and parts of Africa).

This is obviously a tremendously significant phenomenon. It is a major part of the objective reality that people throughout the world who are seeking to bring about change in a progressive direction—and still more those who are striving to achieve truly radical change guided by a revolutionary and communist outlook—have to confront and transform. And in order to do that, it is necessary, first of all, to seriously engage and understand this reality, rather than remaining dangerously ignorant of it, or adopting an orientation of stubbornly ignoring it. It is necessary, and indeed crucial, to dig down beneath the surface of this phenomenon and its various manifestations, to grasp more deeply what are the underlying and driving dynamics in all this—what are the fundamental contradictions and what are the particular expressions of fundamental and essential contradictions, on a world scale and within particular countries and regions in the world—that this religious fundamentalism is the expression of, and how, on the basis of that deeper understanding, a movement can be developed to win masses of people away from this

and to something which can actually bring about a radically different and much better world.

From *Away with All Gods! Unchaining the Mind and Radically Changing the World*, 2008.

(This is a selection from earlier work by Bob Avakian, and though some circumstances may have changed since it was written, this selection remains highly relevant to the world today.)

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## There Is No Such Thing As “Human Nature”

Revolution 21 from @BobAvakianOfficial, April 6, 2024

One big reason why so many people believe that a revolution and a fundamentally different and much better world is not possible is because of the notion that there is a “human nature,” which cannot really be changed. **But the fact is that there is no such thing as “unchanging human nature.”** People can and do change all the time, especially with changing circumstances.

Things like racism and misogyny (hatred of women) are *not* “built in” characteristics of white people and men—and the attitude of looking out for yourself, and to hell with everybody else, is not “hard wired” into human beings. All these things are products of the system that people are forced to live under—the oppressive economic, political, and social relations of the system, and the ideas and culture that reflect and reinforce those relations.

Let’s get deeper into this.

Over a number of centuries, beginning more than 500 years ago, various European powers carried out conquest and colonization of peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Americas—and a big part of this was the enslavement and trafficking of millions of human beings. As I pointed out in an article explaining what exploitation is, and how to put an end to it:

It is a fact that some of the earlier societies in the Americas—such as the Inca empire in South America and the Aztecs in Mexico—were themselves based on exploitation of masses of people by the ruling classes in those societies; and it is true that there was slavery within Africa itself for some time before the invasion of

that continent by European exploiters. But all this took on much greater and more horrific dimensions, beginning several centuries ago, with the conquest and colonization of these continents, the development of the international slave trade and the relentless machinery of capitalist exploitation, through which generation after generation of people, in the millions and millions, have been ruthlessly used up and killed off, quickly or more slowly, in the manic capitalist quest, and merciless competition among capitalists, for profit and more profit.

And, what went along with all this—the thinking that “justified” it—was the notion that certain groups or “races” of people are superior, and others inferior, and therefore it was right and good for the supposedly “superior” people to enslave and exploit those who were supposedly “inferior.”

But oppressive divisions among people is not just some “European thing,” and the poisonous idea that certain people are “superior,” and others are “inferior” is *not a uniquely “European”* notion. *In general throughout human history, in any part of the world where people have been divided into masters and slaves, “upper and lower classes,” this has been accompanied by the idea that those in the superior position are somehow, by their very “nature,” superior as human beings, and those in the lower position are “inferior” human beings.* This has been true in ancient, as well as more modern, empires and countries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, as well as Europe.

Once more, it is the *dominant relations of the system* that fundamentally determine the ideas and the culture that dominate in that system. **As long as you have a system built on exploitation and oppression, you will have the corresponding culture promoting the idea that some people are, by nature, superior to others.**

But let’s get even deeper into this—into the question of whether, regardless of what system people live under, there is a certain basic “human nature” that runs through every system.

In terms of what might be considered the “nature” of human beings, there are certain common characteristics of people everywhere. As a result of natural evolution, along with other biological features that human beings have in common, we have a consciousness and the capacity for “abstract

thought,” in a way that is not true for other beings. We can think about what it would mean to “be in someone else’s shoes”—to see things and feel as they do. We can reflect on what has happened in the past, and we can project our thoughts into the future. We can create in our imaginations all kinds of beings, and other things, that do not exist in the real world. We can envision, and then set out to build, all kinds of physical structures. We use language to create all kinds of poetry and other literature, as well as music with many different kinds of lyrics. And so on.

The *most important* characteristic of human beings is the ability to *consciously adapt—to change*—especially with changing circumstances. And people *have* changed, throughout history.

In early human societies, when people lived in small communal groups, without the kinds of divisions that are so familiar to us today, people thought very differently than they did once large-scale private ownership of land, slavery and other forms of exploitation and oppression developed, or when *feudal* societies were ruled by kings and other monarchs whose word was law, or in this “modern world,” dominated by the capitalist-imperialist system.

In all of this, the dominant ideas in society have reflected and reinforced the dominant relations. And the dominant ideas have *changed* with changes in how the society is organized and functions.

In a system based on slavery, and ruled by slave-owners, the ruling idea is that slavery is “natural”—is right, just, and necessary. But, once a slave system has been eliminated and replaced by a system based on *capitalist* exploitation—like the system we now live under in this country—then (even though there are still some people who try to “justify” slavery) the dominant idea, promoted by the ruling institutions, is that slavery is not (or is no longer) right, just, and necessary.

Or, when revolutions overthrow the rule of a system headed by a king—as happened with the American revolution, 250 years ago—then the idea that it’s “god’s will” that kings should rule (“the divine right of kings”) has been overthrown, along with the actual rule of the king.

Still, with all these changes, the slave system, the feudal system, and the “modern” system of capitalism all have *this* in common: *They are all systems divided into exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed, rulers and*

*those who are ruled over.* As one big part of this, they have all embodied and enforced patriarchal, male supremacist relations. And the ruling ideas in all these systems have *this* in common: the notion that it is right, just, and necessary for society to be organized and function the way it does, with all these unequal and oppressive relations. These ruling ideas are promoted and propagated, in many different ways, by all the dominant institutions, including the educational system, the media, and the “popular culture.”

In this “modern,” capitalist system, the ruling idea is that it is right, just, and necessary for some people, the capitalists, to own the *means of production* (land, raw materials, machinery and other technology) and to profit by exploiting people who do *not* own means of production, and therefore can only live by being employed, and exploited, by capitalists. Yet, all the wealth and technology of this “modern” capitalist system was not *created* by the capitalists—it was *created through the labor of masses of people, all over the world, going back centuries, under conditions of exploitation in one form or another.* (In basic terms, *exploitation is profiting from the labor of others—* whether those “others” are slaves, or poor farmers, or wage-workers.)

Along with all this, there is the basic fact that human beings are individuals, who do have individual needs. Under this system of capitalism-imperialism—as with all systems based on relations of exploitation and oppression—the needs of individuals can only be met through the efforts of those individuals, acting for themselves (and for those who may be dependent on them, like their children). This system *forces* people to compete with each other, in the struggle to meet their individual needs, and in the contest to achieve their individual goals and advance their individual positions.

At the same time, as we have seen, individuals are not *just* individuals—they are part of the larger society, and world, which today is still dominated by relations of exploitation, inequality and oppression, and by ruling institutions that promote and reinforce those relations.

All this shapes the conditions in which people live and function, and it strongly influences the way they think. And all this is a big part of why it is commonly thought that there is some kind of unchanging, and un-changeable, “human nature,” which makes people selfish, and which makes oppressive relations among human beings unavoidable and inevitable.

But there are always contradictions in any system; and there are always some people who see those contradictions and recognize in those contradictions the basis for change, of one kind or another. To get rid of one system, and replace it with another system, requires *revolutionary* change—and in those times when the contradictions of a particular system become really sharp and deep, it becomes possible for *masses of people* to come to see the need and the basis for such revolutionary change, and to act to bring it about.

*This is one of those times.* And the revolutionary change that is possible now is not just a change from one system of exploitation and oppression to another such system—like what happened with the American revolution 250 years ago. What is possible now is an *historic, fundamental change*, which will finally bring about the *end* to *all* exploitation and oppression. This is the *communist* revolution.

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## The Communist Revolution and the Radical Change in Supposedly Unchanging “Human Nature”

Revolution 22 from @BobAvakianOfficial, April 9, 2024

Communism will utilize the technology and resources in the world, and the knowledge and abilities of people in the world, *for the common good.* This will make possible the creation of a *common abundance* for all of the people, *doing away with the need for individuals to struggle just to survive, and eliminating the need for people to compete with each other in order to get the basic necessities of life.* On this basis, it will make possible a fundamental transformation of what is now thought of as “human nature.”

How is this possible? As I emphasized in message Number Nineteen:

With all the very real horror this has involved, the development of human society, up to and through capitalism, has created the basis for a world *without* all those horrors. **The basis exists now—the technology, knowledge and scientific foundation—to provide a decent and continually enriched life, in an all-around way, for everyone on this earth, *without any oppressive divisions among human beings.***

*And the basis exists for human beings to finally become fit caretakers of the earth as a whole.*

The fundamental force preventing this from happening is this system of capitalism-imperialism, which rules in this country and dominates the world. This system treats as the “private property,” of a few, the productive capacity and productive knowledge of human beings, *which has been produced through the physical and intellectual labor of masses—of billions—of people.* This system is driven by ruthless competition and conflict between different capitalist exploiters and different capitalist countries—leading to the ongoing, accelerating destruction of the environment, and the continual wars, posing a growing danger to the future and the very existence of humanity.

**This system *has to go***—and be *replaced* by a system based on collective ownership by the people of the productive means that human beings everywhere have created—utilizing this *for the benefit of human beings as a whole*, now and for future generations: a *socialist* system, aiming for a *communist world* where relations of exploitation and oppression, and the culture that goes along with and reinforces those relations, will be *eliminated and uprooted*, and *humanity can truly flourish—with a continually developing scientific approach, building on everything from the past that can contribute to this emancipating future, drawing from the rich diversity of human beings, enabling a flowering of all the people who make up the human race, in the context and on the foundation of cooperation and mutual benefit.*

In future messages, I will be speaking about previous communist revolutions, and the development of the *new communism*, which has resulted from decades of work I have carried out, drawing from the positive and negative experience of those previous communist revolutions, and from a broad range of human experience.

But, from what I have gotten into in this message, and the previous one, it should be clear that there is *no such thing* as a fixed and unchanging “human nature,” and in fact people’s ways of thinking and acting continually undergo changes of one kind or another, in the context of larger changes in the society and world in which they live. The most important thing to understand—the necessary and crucially important

conclusion—is this: **It is in the process—and only in the process—of going up against and finally overthrowing this system of capitalism-imperialism and all oppressive relations, and bringing into being a radically different and much better world, that masses of people, and ultimately human beings as a whole, can also radically change their way of thinking and acting: breaking with the poisonous culture, “values” and mentality promoted by oppressive systems, of all kinds, and taking up the emancipating values of revolution aiming for a communist world without oppressive and exploitative divisions among human beings.**

*That is the fundamental, profound answer to the question of “human nature.”*

It is up to those who have come to an understanding of this, to wage the necessary struggle to win continually growing numbers of people to understand this—and to *act* on it—to make revolution. And this is all the more crucially important in this rare time when, as I have shown in previous messages (especially numbers One through Eleven), this revolution is not only urgently necessary but is possible.

### **The Future Lies Not with the (Real or Imagined) Past But in Going Forward, January 2021**

The future lies not with the (real or imagined) past but in going *forward*, to an actual socialist society, and ultimately a communist world, where the fundamental orientation and practical policy are geared to meeting the material, intellectual and cultural needs of the people, while giving increasing scope to individual initiative, on the basis of and within the framework of the collective and cooperative foundation and ethos of society, where age-old economic and social relations of exploitation, inequality and oppression are surpassed, and no longer does the well-being of some rest on the misery of others.

From “*January 2021: New Year's Statement by Bob Avakian: A New Year, The Urgent Need For A Radically New World—For The Emancipation Of All Humanity.*”

## About the Author

# BOB AVAKIAN: A RADICALLY DIFFERENT LEADER— A WHOLE NEW FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN EMANCIPATION

Bob Avakian (BA) is the most important political thinker and leader in the world today.

Bob Avakian 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 that is founded on and perpetuates itself through cruel and literally life-stealing exploitation, murderous oppression, and massive destruction, in all parts of the world. BA is a revolutionary who bases himself on the scientific understanding that this system must finally be overthrown through an organized struggle involving millions of people, and replaced with a system that is oriented to and capable of meeting the most fundamental needs of humanity and enabling humanity to become fit caretakers of the earth.

Bob Avakian is the architect of a whole new framework of human emancipation, the new synthesis of communism, which is popularly referred to as the “new communism.”

BA is the author of the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*, an inspiring application of the new communism—a sweeping vision and concrete blueprint for a new socialist society, whose fundamental goal is to bring about a world without classes and class distinctions, a world without exploitation and oppression, and without the destructive divisions and antagonisms among people: a communist world.

Ardea Skybreak, a scientist with professional training in ecology and evolutionary biology, and a follower of Bob Avakian, speaks to the importance of what he has brought forward:

Bob Avakian ... on the basis of decades of hard work [has been] developing a whole body of work—theory to advance the science of

communism, to advance the science of revolution, to more deeply explain where the problems come from, what the strategy is for getting out of this mess, what the methods and approaches should be to stay on track and actually build a better world, to build a society that most human beings would want to live in. (From *Science and Revolution, On the Importance of Science and the Application of Science to Society, the New Synthesis of Communism and the Leadership of Bob Avakian, An Interview with Ardea Skybreak*)

BA is a leader who is firmly convinced, on the basis of a consistently scientific method and approach, that the goal must be nothing less than all-out revolution, and who at the same time has emphasized:

the new communism *thoroughly repudiates* and is determined to root out of the communist movement the poisonous notion, and practice, that “the ends justifies the means.” It is a bedrock principle of the new communism that the “means” of this movement must flow from and be consistent with the fundamental “ends” of abolishing all exploitation and oppression through revolution led on a scientific basis. (From *Breakthroughs: The Historic Breakthrough by Marx, and the Further Breakthrough with the New Communism, A Basic Summary*)

As a revolutionary leader, BA also embodies this rare combination: someone who has been able to develop scientific theory on a world-class level, while at the same time having a deep understanding of and visceral connection with the most oppressed, and a highly developed ability to “break down” complex theory and make it broadly accessible.

**A leader like this has never before existed in the history of this country, and this leadership is of tremendous importance for the emancipation of all humanity.**

What is urgently needed now is for continually growing numbers of people—in the thousands, and ultimately millions—to become conscious and active followers of BA, building the revolutionary movement, based on the new communism, for which BA provides this unprecedented leadership.

# The Bob Avakian Interviews on The RNL Show

Experience BA up close and personal as he grapples with the most excruciating questions humanity faces today with science, creativity, humor and even with song. Never flinching from the horrors of today, he shows how through a real revolution there is the potential for a truly emancipating future.

**HEART & SOUL & HARDCORE FOR REVOLUTION**



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not afraid of the truth...”**

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The Bob Avakian (BA) Institute is a nonprofit institute whose mission is to preserve, project, and promote the works and vision of BA with the aim of reaching the broadest possible audience.



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