

50 Years After the March on Washington & “I Have a Dream” Amerikkka Is STILL a Goddamn Nightmare WE NEED A REVOLUTION!

By Carl Dix

It's 50 years since the March on Washington and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Let's face reality—**Amerikkka is still a goddamn nightmare!** This country built up its wealth and power by dragging Africans to these shores in slave chains and stealing the land from and committing genocide against the native inhabitants. It has never stopped bringing vicious oppression down on Black people and billions of people around the world. Dreams of changing America into something that would end this oppression, or any of the horrors inflicted on humanity, are toxic illusions that keep people chained to the very system that's responsible for all this oppression.

This is not a time to be dreaming of “perfecting” America's union. Instead, it must become a time that people look back on and say, that's when people said you couldn't reform this shit, and a whole different way—a revolution—was needed.

As *Revolution* (July 19, 2013 issue) put it, “58 years ago, a Black teenager named Emmett Till was murdered in Mississippi by some white men who decided he had ‘acted wrong,’ and those white men were acquitted. Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Till, said ‘NO MORE’ and the uproar that she stoked was one big beginning factor that led millions of people to stand up and over the next 15 years to rock this country to its foundation. People needed revolution, and many fought for revolution, many of those heroically laid down their lives—but we got reforms. Now after all those reforms ... after all the promises ... all the excuses ... after all the Black faces in high places including even a Black president ... a Black teenager named Trayvon Martin is murdered by a white man who decided Trayvon was ‘acting wrong,’ and he too is acquitted.”

This verdict was America saying, once again, that Black people have no rights that whites must respect. This is a concentration of the way this system has criminalized Blacks and Latinos on a genocidal scale and created a generation of suspects at a time when it has no real future for tens of millions of these youth.

The Trayvon verdict left many, many people with a profound sense of betrayal and had them asking big questions about the unjust nature of this society and whether the people ruling over us are fit to run society. People are righteously outraged and asking: how long will such horrors continue and how many more of our youth will have their lives stolen for no reason other than the color of their skin?

America has had its chances to do right by Black people. First through the Civil War and Reconstruction, and then during the 1960s, when people struggled mightily to deal with the horrors Black people faced. And each time, America changed the forms of oppression but kept it in effect. What is the situation today? The New Jim Crow. More than two million people in prison, and more

than five million formerly incarcerated facing discrimination when looking for work, and barred from living in public housing and receiving government loans. Racial profiling, stop-and-frisk, and a school-to-prison pipeline. Voting rights being snatched back. It's long past time to say, “That's it for this system. Time's up!”

There are those calling for a new civil rights movement. That's not what's needed. The old civil rights movement contributed to the struggle to end legal segregation, and people sacrificed heroically as part of it. But that movement had reached its limitations by the mid-1960s. It aimed to get America to make good on a promise of equality that cannot be achieved in the framework of this system.

From the “founding fathers” onward, this has been a system driven by the needs of capitalism and then capitalism-imperialism with its profit-above-all mentality and its expand-or-die logic. No civil rights movement is going to change that. We need a revolution to get rid of this system and bring a totally different and far better one into being.

And let's pull the lens back. Everywhere America has gone in the world, it has wreaked havoc on humanity: from the slave trade in Africa centuries ago, to the theft of half the land of Mexico, to the genocidal war in Vietnam, to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the U.S.-supplied tanks massacring people in the streets of Egypt. One in three women in the U.S. will suffer sexual assault in their lifetime. This country carries out the most massive spying operation in world history, targeting people and countries all over the world. The U.S. is ravaging the environment of the planet. As Bob Avakian, the leader of the RCP, has said: “What the U.S. spreads around the world is not democracy, but imperialism and political structures to enforce that imperialism.”

As for those who say, “Things may be bad, but Obama is working on making them better.” People need to have the moral courage to face the truth. And that truth is that Barack Obama is the top enforcer and defender of this system. The truth is that Obama is the commander-in-chief of the American empire. The truth is that he presides over the drone strikes that destroy whole villages in Pakistan and Yemen. The truth is that he presides over the torture prison in Guantánamo Bay. The truth is that he has presided over an unprecedented number of deportations of immigrants.

The capitalist-imperialist system has only brought horrors to the world. But the good news is that things don't have to be this way. There's a whole other way that society could be organized—and through revolution, communist revolution, we can get rid of this system and bring a far better society into being. The kind of society that could end all exploitation and all oppressive divisions and inequalities all over the world, that could emancipate all of humanity and safeguard the planet for current and future generations. The kind of society and world in which human beings could truly flourish.

In Bob Avakian, we have the leadership needed for this revolution; a leader who came out of the 1960s and who has given his heart and his knowledge, skill and abilities to dealing with everything that stands between humanity and its ultimate emancipation. He has deeply studied the experience of revolution—the shortcomings as well as the great achievements. He has drawn from other fields of human activity. And he has brought the science and method of revolution to a whole new level, concentrated in the new synthesis of communism. In Bob Avakian, we have a great champion and a great resource for people here, and indeed people all over the world.

The Revolutionary Communist Party he leads has developed a strategy for making revolution when the time is right. And it has developed a vision of the kind of world we could bring into being through revolution, a vision that is concretized in the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America (Draft Proposal)*. To bring all this about, we are building a movement for revolution NOW. And what's missing is you.

All of our outrage, our energy and our dreams can become powerful fuel in this movement for revolution. This must be a watershed moment—one in which we break with the illusion of trying to make this system something it cannot be, but work and struggle to end this nightmare once and for all.

**Fight the Power, and Transform the People,
for Revolution!**

Three Strikes by Bob Avakian

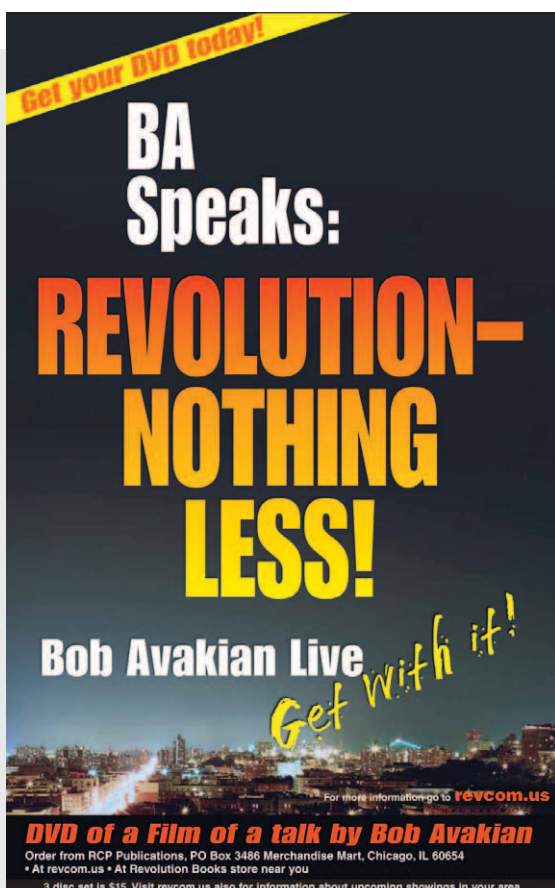
The book by Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, has shined a bright and much needed light on the reality of profound injustice at the very core of this country.

And this brings me back to a very basic point:

This system, in this country, in the whole history of its treatment of Black people, what has it been?

First, Slavery... Then, Jim Crow—segregation and Ku Klux Klan terror... And now, The New Jim Crow—police brutality and murder, wholesale criminalization and mass incarceration, and legalized discrimination yet again.

That's it for this system:
**Three strikes
and you're out!**



From this film,
BA Speaks: REVOLUTION—NOTHING LESS!
“Those this system has cast off, those it has treated as less than human, can be the backbone and driving force of a fight not only to end their own oppression, but to finally end all oppression, and emancipate all of humanity.”

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50 Years... Of the Amerikkkan Nightmare

The 50th anniversary of the civil rights movement has been the occasion to sum up the last 50 years of history around the struggle of Black people in the U.S. But in most accounts, the level of *struggle, sacrifice, and repression* has been played down. And the amount of progress—between the days when Emmett Till was lynched by white racists and his killers walked free, to today, when Trayvon Martin was murdered by a white racist vigilante who walked free—has been *widely exaggerated*.

What was the real story? What actually resulted? And what do people need to do today to finally overcome this madness?

The Lynching of Emmett Till—How and Why the Civil Rights Movement Arose, the Real Sacrifices That People Made, AND the Ugly Face of America Revealed to the World

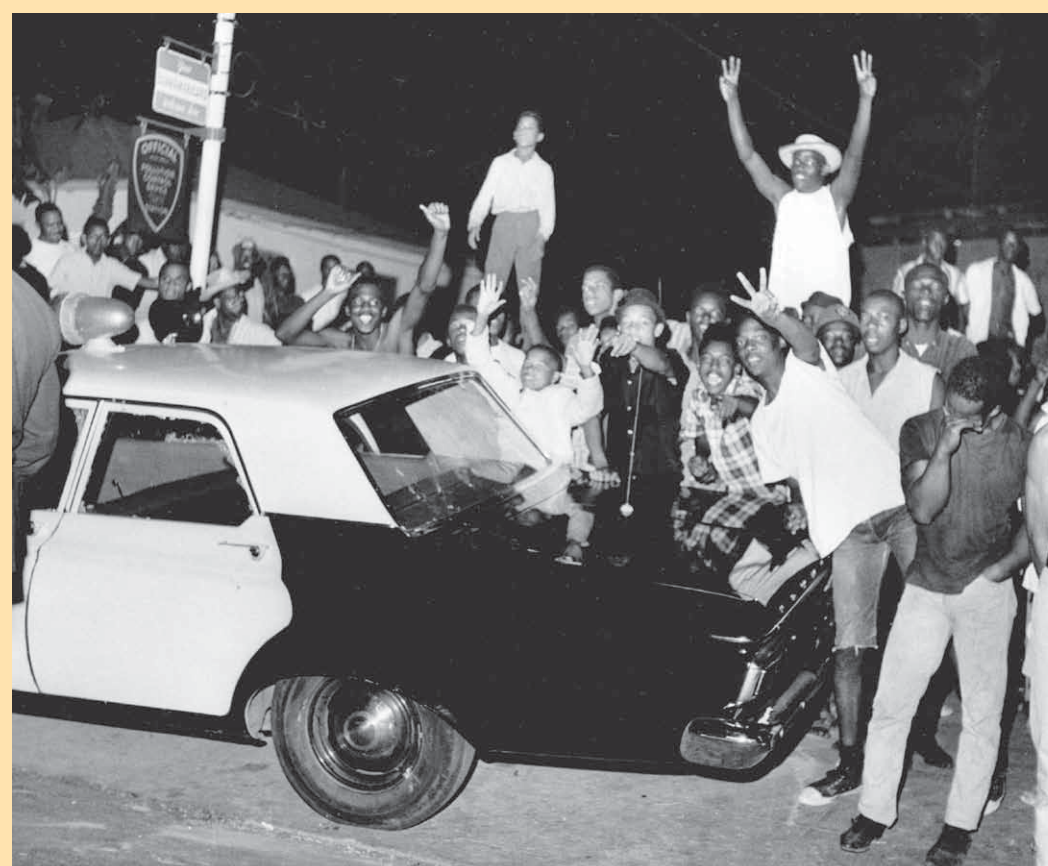


The lynching of Emmett Till (left) in 1955 was an outrage that concentrated a powerful truth about the lives of Black people at that point, and it crystallized a feeling that things have to change. For centuries—first as slaves (who built up the great wealth and power of America) and then as sharecroppers working the land and brutally exploited—Black people had been held in a subjugated, oppressed position in the South. A superstructure of racist ideas and institutions—including the documented lynching of 3,446 Black people between 1882 and 1968—arose on this foundation. With the lynching of Emmett Till and the courageous stance of his mother, who insisted on an open-casket funeral, a powerful sense that this must end arose among Black people and progressive people more generally.



Despite the very basic and fundamental character of the rights that people were fighting for in the late '50s and early '60s—those who fought for these rights were brutally and violently repressed. People were beaten, fired, jailed, and killed by police and white racists just for demanding the right to travel freely without harassment, for the right to be treated like human beings, to go to equal schools, or to use public facilities. People, including Medgar Evers, were murdered for, among other things, merely registering people to vote. The FBI orchestrated a national media campaign charging that the civil rights movement was “communist-inspired”—the FBI even went after Martin Luther King in vicious and underhanded ways right up to the very minute of his assassination. In Birmingham, Alabama, police commissioner Bull Connor ordered vicious police attacks on protest marches, and white racists bombed a church in Birmingham that hosted protest meetings, killing four young Black girls right before Sunday services. Above: Police attack civil rights marchers with dogs in Birmingham, Alabama, 1965.

The 1960s and the Black Liberation Movement



By the late '60s, some things had changed, but for the millions of Black people in the big cities, more still had not. These millions had been drawn by the promise of jobs and freedom. Instead, they experienced superexploitation and continued denial of rights. They continued to be hounded by police, discriminated against in hiring, forced into rotten housing and miserable segregated schools, etc. Powerful urban rebellions rocked America, tearing its democratic mask even further. Above: Watts, Los Angeles, 1965.



Fred Hampton in 1969

The Black Panther Party arose, as did a whole trend of revolution. This was met with even more vicious repression. The combination of vicious tactics, along with that movement itself coming up against certain limitations in its understanding and approach, led to the eclipse of that movement. December 4, 1969: Chicago police along with agents of the FBI Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) operation stormed into Illinois Black Panther Party Chairman Fred Hampton's apartment and assassinated him and BPP member Mark Clark.

The Counter-Revolution: “War on Drugs,” the New Jim Crow, and Blaming the People



In the '70s, the rulers of the country adopted dual tactics—formal concessions to legal equality, but combined with vicious new forms of oppression and repression. Formal legal equality was, in the main, granted (even as things like the right to vote are under assault again today); some concessions were made to some sections of Black people like admission to formerly “whites-only” public employment, professions, and colleges. But the millions still locked down in the urban cores faced a “new Jim Crow.” There may be a Black man in the White House, but Detroit has lost over half the population since 1950; of those who remain, 85 percent are Black, and almost half the children live below the official federal poverty level. Above: Abandoned streets with the General Motors building in the background, Detroit, 2008.

This Oppression—and the Need for Fundamental Revolutionary Change—Keep Asserting Themselves



Every once in a while, events like the Rodney King beating and the criminal abuse and repression brought down on the poor and Black people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina forced reality to the surface and people in their millions here and around the world saw how, after all these years, America remains both separate and unequal. Above: People waded through flood waters in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Amerikkka Is STILL a Goddamn Nightmare WE NEED A REVOLUTION!



Photo: AP

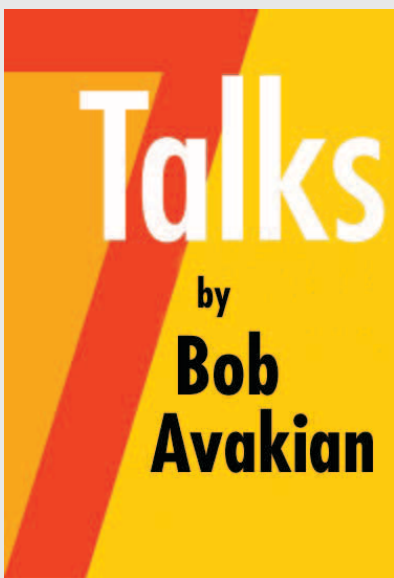
“Liberal” President Bill Clinton “ended welfare as we know it.” New laws denied welfare to millions of people, especially women—forcing millions of women into the labor market working for the bare minimum, often in health care or the very low-paying retail trade, and forcing many into various hustles and desperate acts, including prostitution, in order to survive and feed their children. Accompanying all this was a vicious and insidious campaign, championed by Clinton and others, that since formal, open, legal segregation was no longer the law, Black people had only themselves to blame for the oppression imposed on them. This lie has been a constant refrain from Barack Obama, who insists that if Black youth just pulled up their pants, they would have equal opportunity and access to jobs, education, and a life outside prison or early death. Left: Clinton poses for a photo-op in front of a “boot camp” full of locked-up Black youth.

The Acquittal of the Murderer of Trayvon Martin, 60 Years After the Acquittal of Emmett Till’s Murderers, Must Mark a Watershed: The Beginning of the End of This System

Trayvon Martin: lynched by a racist vigilante who was set free by a white supremacist system. Once again America has shown its true nature; once again many people are asking why these things keep happening and some are acting to put a stop to them. **We need revolution to finally uproot this madness, and we ARE BUILDING a movement for revolution.**



Trayvon Martin



Talk #6:
“Conservatism, Christian Fundamentalism, Liberalism and Paternalism ... Bill Cosby and Bill Clinton ... Not All ‘Right’ But All Wrong!”



revcom.us/avakian/ba-seven-talks-en.html

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At the March in D.C.

August 24, 2013. Tens of thousands gathered in Washington, DC, 50 years after the 1963 March on Washington where Martin Luther King gave his “I Have a Dream” speech. The murder of Trayvon Martin and the fact that this system let his killer walk free left millions with a profound sense of betrayal, confronting big questions about the unjust nature of this society—and what it will take to put an end to the ongoing oppression of Black people. But the overall message from the organizers and from the stage served to lead people to channel their anger and energy into the dead-end of working with and within the very system that has oppressed and exploited and betrayed Black people from day one of this country up until today. In the midst of this, revolutionaries got into people’s hands 5,000 copies of the poster with the quote from Bob Avakian “Three Strikes...” [see photo] and more than 1,700 copies of *Revolution* newspaper with the front page: “50 Years After the March on Washington & ‘I Have a Dream’—America Is STILL a Goddamn Nightmare: WE NEED A REVOLUTION!”



Photo: Li Onesto/Revolution