

# WHY WE NEED AN ACTUAL REVOLUTION AND HOW WE CAN REALLY MAKE REVOLUTION

## A Speech by Bob Avakian

This talk will elaborate on and go more deeply into what is set forth in *HOW WE CAN WIN, How We Can Really Make Revolution* (a statement from the Revolutionary Communist Party), which provides a crucial guideline that should be taken up and acted on by *everyone* who hungers for, and wants to be part of bringing into being, a world without the horrors to which the masses of humanity are continually subjected. In line with that, in speaking here about what “we” need to be doing, I am not just talking about those of us who are already involved, but *all those who need to become part* of this revolution.

This will consist of two parts: **I. Only an Actual Revolution Can Bring About the Fundamental Change That Is Needed**; and **II. How We Can Really Make Revolution**. So let’s get right into it.

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## I. Only an Actual Revolution Can Bring About the Fundamental Change That Is Needed

In 2012, in *REVOLUTION—NOTHING LESS!* I talked about the outrageous murder of Ramarley Graham earlier that same year—shot down in his own house in the Bronx by the New York City police. He was only 18 years old. Do I have to tell you what “race” he was?! His mother kept saying: “This has to STOP!” And his father repeated over and over: “WHY did they kill my son?! WHY did they kill my son?!” New York cops then loudly rallied around their fellow pig who murdered Ramarley in cold blood, viciously taunting Ramarley’s family and loved ones, demonstrating yet one more time the ugly truth that, **in the way this country has been built, and for the powers that be in this country, the humanity of Black people has never counted for anything**—they have never been valued as human beings, but only as things to be exploited, oppressed, and repressed. Six years later, and with cold-blooded murders by police continuing in an unbroken chain, I will say again what I said then: **How many more times** does this have to happen? How many more times do the tears and the cries of anguish and anger have to pour forth from the wounded hearts of people?! How many more times, when

another of these outrageous murders is perpetrated by the police, do we have to hear those words that pour gasoline on the already burning wounds: “justifiable homicide, justified use of force” by police?! **How many more?!**

Ramarley Graham... Nicholas Heyward, Jr... Tamir Rice... Eric Garner... Darius Pinex... Oscar Grant... Manuel Diaz... Joel Acevedo... Laquan McDonald... Aiyana Stanley-Jones... Sandra Bland... Jack Sun... Renee Davis... Michael Brown... Freddie Gray... Maurice Granton Jr.... Harith Augustus... *the list goes on... and on... and on*—**thousands and thousands**, especially Black and Latino, and Native American.

**If this were the only thing wrong with this system, it would be more than enough reason to sweep it off the Earth!**

But this is only a part of the intolerable outrages that are continually perpetrated by this system and that cause so much unnecessary suffering for the masses of humanity. So let’s go back to “*why*”—and what it will take to make all the outrages really stop.

*Why* are Black people, Latinos, and Native Americans subjected to genocidal persecution, mass incarceration, police brutality, and murder?

*Why* is there the patriarchal degradation, dehumanization, and subjugation of all women everywhere, and oppression based on gender or sexual orientation?

*Why* are there wars of empire, armies of occupation, and crimes against humanity?

*Why* is there the demonization, criminalization, and deportations of immigrants and the militarization of the border?

*Why* is the environment of our planet being destroyed?

These are what we call the “5 STOPS”—deep and defining contradictions of this system, with all the suffering and destruction they cause, which must be protested and resisted in a powerful way, with a real determination to *stop* them, but which can only be finally ended by putting an end to this system itself.

*Why*, along with all this, do we live in a world where large parts of humanity live in stark poverty, with 2.3 billion people lacking even rudimentary toilets or

latrines and huge numbers suffering from preventable diseases, with millions of children dying *every year* from these diseases and from starvation, while 150 million children in the world are forced to engage in ruthlessly exploited child labor, and the whole world economy rests on a vast network of sweatshops, employing large numbers of women who are regularly subjected to sexual harassment and assault, a world where 65 million refugees have been displaced by war, poverty, persecution, and the effects of global warming?

*Why is this the state of humanity?*

**There is one fundamental reason: the basic nature of the system of capitalism-imperialism that we live under and the way, because of its very nature, it continually perpetrates horror after horror.** And, in fundamental terms, we have two choices: either, live with all this—and condemn future generations to the same, or worse, if they have a future at all—or, **make revolution!**

But what is the *scientific basis* for saying that this system is the source of all this, that it is *built into* this system, and therefore it is impossible to do away with these outrages through reforming this system, and instead it must be overthrown? Let's go back to those "5 STOPS."

*The oppression of Black people and other people of color*

This system in this country was founded in genocide and slavery. From the beginning, African-Americans and Native Americans were treated as "pariahs," a caste of people less than human and not deserving of the same rights and opportunities as the European settlers of the territory. White supremacy was poured into the foundation and into every institution of the country. The uniting of the "United States" was accomplished through the "compromise," written into the founding Constitution, that institutionalized slavery; and for generations slave labor produced a great part of the wealth of this country. As I said in *BASICS* 1:1: "**There would be no United States as we now know it today without slavery.** That is a simple and basic truth." And then, when it was no longer possible to contain the conflicts that had been somewhat held in check by the founding "compromise," the Civil War erupted between the southern slave states and the northern states which increasingly were based on the exploitation of wage labor by capitalists. But, shortly after the end of this Civil War, another "compromise" was engineered, which was a continuation of the original "compromise" under the new conditions: The country was put back together on the basis of reaffirming and

reinforcing white supremacy—with the masses of Black people, still overwhelmingly in the South, subjugated and terrorized into “second class citizen” status, exploited in conditions of near-slavery (and sometimes still literal slavery) by white plantation and other property owners; and the land and way of life of the native peoples was further stolen through armed conquest and decimated by slaughter, confinement in reservations, and cultural genocide, which has resulted in the poverty, oppression, and repression that continues to be inflicted on Native Americans to this day.

Under slavery, it was the armed patrols and militias, organized by the slave owners, that hunted down slaves who rebelled, or just tried to escape, and terrorized the masses of Black people as a whole. After slavery, with Jim Crow segregation, it was the Ku Klux Klan, together with local sheriffs, who largely played this role. Today, in the conditions in which masses of Black people in the ghettos of the inner cities find themselves, the role that was played in the past by the slave patrols, and then the Ku Klux Klan and local sheriffs, is now carried out by heavily armed urban police forces. This is a big part of the overall role of the police—which, as I said in *BASics* 1:24:

“...is not to serve and protect the people. It is to serve and protect the system that rules over the people. To enforce the relations of exploitation and oppression, the conditions of poverty, misery and degradation into which the system has cast people and is determined to keep people in. The law and order the police are about, with all of their brutality and murder, is the law and the order that enforces all this oppression and madness.”

In the days of slavery, and then Jim Crow segregation after the Civil War, the oppressors viciously exploited and terrorized Black people, brutally murdering those they saw as posing a threat, or “not staying in their place,” but they did not kill off or incarcerate a huge part of the Black population, because their labor was needed as a backbone and crucial source of profit for the cotton plantations and the overall economy in the South (and the country as a whole). Today, with great numbers of Black people concentrated in the inner cities, and with many factories and other capitalist enterprises having moved away from the urban cores, the police have killed thousands of Black people in the last few decades, and they play a key part in forcibly maintaining masses of Black people in a situation where, especially youth robbed of any decent future under this system, are killing each other in the thousands, and millions are either incarcerated or in some other way under the control of the so-called “justice system.”

Because white supremacy is such a defining part of this country, it is not just African-Americans and Native Americans but people of color generally who are subjected to discrimination, degradation, and brutality, and this applies now in very acute ways to those whose roots lie in Mexico, El Salvador, and other parts of Central America and the Caribbean, which are tightly ensnared in a net of domination and exploitation by the imperialists of the USA, whose ravaging of these countries has driven many to emigrate to the U.S. itself.

White supremacy and capitalism—they have been completely interwoven and tightly “stitched together” through the whole development of this country, down to today; to attempt to really put an end to white supremacy while maintaining the system of capitalism *would tear the entire fabric of the country apart*. **White supremacy and capitalism—it is not possible to overcome and finally abolish the one without overthrowing and finally abolishing the other.**

### *The oppression of women and oppressive gender relations*

Not only is white supremacy completely interwoven and tightly “stitched together” with the development of capitalism in this country, but *male* supremacy is also completely interwoven and tightly “stitched together” with the whole historical development of the division between exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed, throughout the world, including the capitalist-imperialist system which is dominant in the world today. Thousands of years ago, with the development of human societies in such a way that *means of production* (land, domesticated animals, tools, and so on) were no longer the common resource of people but instead became privately owned—and with the “division of labor” resulting in women being responsible for child-rearing and men dominating ownership of these means of production, and wanting to pass this along to *their* (male) heirs (and *not someone else’s*)—this led to the dominance of the patriarchal family, with the man having power over his wife (or wives) and children, and women in society overall being subordinate to men, with all the brutality and terror, both mental and physical, that has been used to enforce this and the whole ideology and culture of male supremacy and misogyny (regarding women as lesser, despised beings whose essential purpose is to serve men) that has rationalized and reinforced this inequality and oppression. This patriarchal oppression has also been bound up with the suppression and punishment of relations among people, including intimate relations, that run counter to and challenge “traditional” gender relations.

It is crucial that there be determined struggle against this terrible oppression, in all of its manifestations, but in order finally to abolish and move beyond all this—in society as a whole and not just in one country but for all of humanity—it is necessary to *abolish the private ownership of the means of production, converting them into the common property of the people as a whole, and to replace the traditional patriarchal family with relations among people, including intimate relations, that are freely entered into, and freed from all vestiges of oppression.* This, of course, is impossible under capitalism. Only through the revolution to overthrow this system, and uproot all the relations of exploitation and oppression that are embodied in this system, will it be possible to finally end the fundamental division in which half of humanity is subordinated to and dominated by the other half, and all the brutality and agony bound up with that. This is why, in the new socialist society that will be brought into being with the overthrow of capitalism, the goal (as set forth in the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*) must be to overcome: “all ‘tradition’s chains’ embodied in traditional gender roles and divisions, and all the oppressive relations bound up with this, in every sphere of society, and to enable women, as fully as men, to take part in and contribute to every aspect of the struggle to transform society, and the world, in order to uproot and abolish all relations of oppression and exploitation and emancipate humanity as a whole.”

### *Wars of Empire, Armies of Occupation, and Crimes Against Humanity*

Raiding and other forms of violent conflict between different peoples can be found going back to early human societies long ago, but the emergence of class-divided societies and civilizations based on conquest, slavery, and other forms of exploitation and oppression, has for millennia led to wars that have caused death and destruction on a massive scale. This has been especially so once the production and exchange of *commodities* (things produced for exchange rather than for direct use by those who produce them) developed on a large scale, and means of transport were developed that enabled commodities to be exchanged, and markets for exchange to be actively sought, over a large and increasingly expanding territory. Wars were then fought to conquer markets and trade routes, as well as sources of raw materials, and to enslave and exploit conquered peoples.

With the development of capitalism over the past several centuries, commodity production and exchange has been greatly extended, to become the *generalized way* in which production (and exchange) has been carried out. (If you think about it, all the things that you use, or almost all of them, you do

not make them yourself—you exchange something, namely money, to buy them from some other source. And this is what people all over the world are now doing; this is what capitalism has generalized.) And capitalism has more and more tightly bound things together, under its domination, into an overall world system. But this system of capitalist imperialism is marked by profound divisions: between different classes and groups of people within each country; between a small number of capitalist-imperialist countries and the countries under the domination of these imperialists, particularly in the Third World (Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia); and divisions between imperialist countries themselves, whose rivalry has revolved to a significant degree around their contention for control of colonies and people to exploit in the Third World. (And when, for a time in the last century, there were socialist countries, first in the Soviet Union and then also China, there was the conflict between the imperialist powers and those socialist countries, which the imperialists worked to isolate, suffocate, and destroy.) All this led to two world wars, in the last century, in which tens of millions of people were killed, including huge numbers of civilians. Since the end of World War 2 in 1945, the divisions that mark the world, within the overall framework of domination by the capitalist-imperialist system, have led to continual wars: wars where imperialist powers have unleashed massive violence against people fighting for liberation from imperialism in countries in the Third World—such as the war in Vietnam, where the U.S. slaughtered several million Vietnamese and poisoned much of the soil of that country with chemical weapons (war crimes and crimes against humanity that the U.S. imperialists have continued in all parts of the world, including today in the Middle Eastern country of Yemen, where, because of bombing and other actions by Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, *backed, armed and aided by the U.S., one million people*, including large numbers of *children*, are suffering, and many are dying, from the terrible disease cholera, and eight million people, more than a fourth of the population, are facing starvation)—and there are wars between different oppressive forces, including wars where imperialist powers fight each other not directly but through “proxies,” such as the war which has devastated Syria over the past several years, where the U.S. and Russia have backed, armed, and aided different factions. While another world war—which, especially with the arsenals of nuclear weapons in the hands of the U.S. and Russia, China, and some other countries, could lead to destruction and death on a massive scale, and could even bring about the extinction of the human race—has so far been avoided, so long as the capitalist-imperialist system continues to dominate the world, and the profound divisions this embodies and enforces continue to exist, the danger remains of a far more devastating war than anything previously endured by humanity.

Only through the overthrow of this system, including in its greatest centers of power in the imperialist countries themselves—an overthrow carried out also with the aim of preventing these imperialists from launching an all-out war of annihilation—only in this way can we advance toward the goal of overcoming the divisions among human beings that embody exploitation and oppression, and lead to violent conflict, and finally make a reality of the aspirations of so many for a world without war.

*The demonization, criminalization and deportations of immigrants and the militarization of the border*

The borders of this country were first established through war, and repeatedly expanded through armed conquest of land, especially in wars against the native peoples and a war against Mexico in the middle of the 19th century. This war resulted in over half of the territory of Mexico coming under the control of the U.S.; and it was fought, on the U.S. side, for the purpose of expanding slavery as well as greatly enlarging *its* territory. Since the end of the 19th century, the U.S. empire has been expanded not only by seizing countries (such as the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam) as colonies or near-colonies, but also through invasions and other means, installing rulers dependent on and obedient to the U.S. Today, the U.S. has military forces and “intelligence” operatives stationed in over 100 countries around the world, and it provides military backing, and other aid, to governments, including brutally oppressive regimes, that it maintains as part of the U.S. empire. And, relying on its military as well as its economic power as coercion, U.S. imperialism not only continues to politically dominate but to economically exploit and plunder countries throughout the Third World. Again, the countries of Latin America, and in particular Mexico, El Salvador and other parts of Central America, and the Caribbean—which the imperialists of the U.S. arrogantly regard as their “back yard”—have been the special targets of all this. Not only has the U.S. repeatedly carried out military invasions and coups to overthrow governments there, and backed murderous dictatorships with their bloodthirsty death squads terrorizing the people, but it has imposed economic “agreements” that have further bled these countries and intensified the misery of the masses of people there. (For example, contrary to the lies spouted by Donald Trump, NAFTA [the North American Free Trade Agreement], engineered under Bill Clinton’s presidency, has not resulted in the U.S. getting “screwed,” but actually has resulted in the ruin of large numbers of farmers in Mexico and increased the number of desperately poor people there, which has been a major factor in driving many people from Mexico to the United States. Trump only wants to make all this even worse.)

For all these reasons, along with other factors such as global warming and the accompanying crisis of water shortage in many countries, there are tens of millions of refugees in the world today, driven from their home countries and seeking asylum, or simply a means to survive, in the U.S. (and in capitalist countries in Europe). And, given all this, it is the height of hypocrisy, and of cruelty, for the U.S. government, and in particular the Trump/Pence regime, to talk about “the right of countries to secure their borders!”—and bray about “building a wall” to do so—let alone to denounce the masses of immigrants from a country like Mexico as rapists, drug dealers, and murderers, and to enact such barbaric measures as separating children, even very young children, from their parents if they are attempting to enter the U.S. without the required papers, and even if they are seeking asylum from persecution and violence.

Here again, while determined and massive struggle needs to be waged against these inhuman actions by the U.S. (and other oppressive governments), it should be clear that there can be no solution, under the system of capitalism-imperialism, to the situation involving masses of immigrants and refugees. The only solution lies in the revolution to *overthrow* this system—a revolution aiming not just to abolish oppression, exploitation, poverty, and misery in one country but having as its fundamental goal the abolition of all this throughout the world, and the elimination of all borders and boundaries that erect walls between different parts of humanity.

### *The destruction of the planet by capitalism-imperialism*

The very fact that global warming is one of the major reasons why there are today a greater number of refugees (65 million) than at any time since World War 2, is one powerful indicator of the severity of the climate crisis, which is increasing in intensity at an accelerating rate. The scientific evidence is overwhelming: This climate crisis poses a very real, and growing, threat to human civilization; and human activity—in particular the production and use of oil and other fossil fuels—is a major cause of this intensifying crisis. The accelerated melting of the ice sheets in Antarctica, the destruction of vast expanses of rain forests, the despoiling of other key parts of the earth, including the oceans, with the terrible consequences for plant and animal species which are also vital for human existence—all this can only continue, and even further accelerate, with human society under the domination of the capitalist-imperialist system. Despite conferences and agreements which claim to be addressing this crisis, but which are dominated by the countries that are the biggest contributors to this crisis; despite talk, and even some

steps, to develop sources of energy as alternatives to fossil fuels; despite all this, the very nature of the capitalist-imperialist system dictates that competing capitalists, controlling billions of dollars of investments, and the governments of the major world powers in particular, are compelled to contend with each other for markets, cheap labor, and raw materials, including fossil fuels, and for control of strategic parts of the world. This leads not only to economic and political conflicts, but repeatedly to wars, which themselves have a devastating effect on the environment. And it is worth noting that the U.S. military is the single largest institutional consumer of oil in the world.

To make matters even worse, this system has now brought forth a fascist regime to power in the U.S., which is determined to shatter agreements and roll back regulations that offer even minor, if completely insufficient, protections for the environment, and to unleash forces whose effect on the environment, if persisted in, could actually lead to the destruction of human civilization.

Obviously, we have only one Earth as a home for humanity, and this climate crisis can only be fundamentally and ultimately addressed on a world scale. But a first great step, or leap, can be taken by wresting power from the capitalist-imperialist system in its most powerful stronghold, and making this a source of inspiration and base of support for people around the world in rising up to overthrow and abolish all systems and relations of exploitation, oppression, plunder, and destruction, of the environment and of human beings who can only continue to exist, and to thrive, through a rational and planned interaction with the rest of nature.

From all this, it stands out very sharply that we live in a grossly lopsided world—a world where a few dozen billionaires have as much wealth as the poorer half of humanity, and a small number of ruling classes, in a small number of countries, dominate, oppress, and control the destiny of the masses of humanity, with consequences that are already terrible and could before long become catastrophic. And, in everything that I have been shining a light on—regarding the world we live in, under the domination of capitalism-imperialism—we are seeing the consequences of a system based on the *private appropriation*, by competing centers of capital, of wealth that is *socially produced* through networks of production involving vast numbers—ultimately billions—of people all over the globe, who are forced to work in relations of production and conditions that exploit and dehumanize them. It is not simply greed that drives these capitalists to constantly seek out ways to more ruthlessly exploit people—it is the fact that, if they do not do this, or if some other capitalists do it more successfully (that is, even more ruthlessly),

then they will face the prospect of not just falling behind but actually going under, eaten up by other capitalist sharks. It is *the private appropriation of socially produced wealth*, and the *anarchy*—the feverish competition and contention—that results from this, which ultimately underlies and drives all the horrors that are concentrated in the “5 STOPS” and the conditions to which the masses of humanity are subjected.

The solution is to replace this system of private appropriation with a system where the *socially produced wealth* is also *socially* appropriated (by a government actually representing the masses of people, instead of a class of capitalist exploiters) and this wealth is utilized, on the basis of conscious planning, in the interests and for the benefit of the people of society, and ultimately the whole world. (How this can be done is spelled out in the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*.) This is the fundamental difference between the society, and world, we have—with the system of *capitalism-imperialism* that we are forced to live under—and the world we *could* have. The bridge between these two worlds is *revolution*, a *real* revolution. Let’s be honest: This is a difficult road. But there is no other way to finally put an end to the horrors that are continually brought forth by this system. And as hard as this is, it is *possible*—*if* we go about it the right way, with the right outlook and approach, the right goals and methods, the right strategy and plan. So this is what I am going to dig into through the course of this talk.

First, let’s return to the crucial question of what revolution really means. At the very beginning of *HOW WE CAN WIN*, this is made very clear: “An actual revolution does not mean trying to make some changes *within* this system—it means *overthrowing* this system and bringing into being a radically different and far better system.” “Radical” means getting to the *root*—digging up the old system by its roots and replacing it with a fundamentally different system. And what opens the way to doing this is *shattering the rule of capitalism over society*, through defeating and dismantling its institutions, such as the police and armed forces, that violently enforce this system’s rule, and then bringing into being new institutions that serve the radical transformation of society (and ultimately the world as a whole).

How this could be done is something I will speak to in the second part of this talk; here I want to underline the point that this is completely different than just winning some reforms under this system. Certain government concessions to the fight against injustice—for example, civil rights legislation; DACA, which granted temporary legal status to some immigrants brought here as children; court decisions establishing the right to abortion and gay marriage—were

hard-fought victories, but the problem is that they are, and can only be, *partial* victories, dealing with only some aspects of oppression under this system, but not eliminating the oppression as a whole, or the *source* of this oppression—which is the system itself. And even where such partial victories *are* won, so long as this system remains in power, there will be powerful forces who will move to attack and undermine, and seek to reverse, even these partial gains.

It is also very important to understand the difference between the possibility for certain *individuals*, or even a certain section of the oppressed, to improve their conditions (or to “make it”) under this system, and the reality that, for the *masses* of oppressed people the only way they can escape their conditions of oppression is by *abolishing the system* that maintains them in these conditions. Of course, the rulers of this system and their political operatives and media mouthpieces are forever pointing to the “success stories” of people who have “risen” from the ranks of the poor and oppressed to become rich and famous, or at least to realize the great “American dream” of becoming middle class! This is like going to a casino, where, by far, most people who play are played for suckers and sink deeper into a hole, while every time there is a winner it is loudly celebrated, often with bells, sirens, and so on—to make people believe that, if they just keep playing, they too can become “winners.”

This touches on something of great importance: the relation between individuals and the larger society (and world) of which they are a part. Everyone, of course, exists as an individual. But, at the same time, the larger society (and world) establishes the conditions within which individuals exist and function, and shapes their outlook and values. Even the aspirations and the “felt needs” of individuals are shaped in this way. To cite a simple example, no one in 1970 felt that they needed to be on their cell phone continually—because cell phones did not yet exist. But once people have them, they have great difficulty doing without them, as we know!

Here, a formulation by the founder of communism, Karl Marx—a formulation that has come to be known as the “4 Alls”—is very relevant. Marx wrote that the communist revolution requires and involves the abolition of *all class distinctions* among people; the abolition of *all the production relations* (the economic relations) on which those class distinctions rest; the abolition of *all the social relations* that correspond to those production relations; and the revolutionizing of *all the ideas* that correspond to those social relations. Among other important insights that can be gained, from what Marx is getting at here, is the understanding that while, again, people exist as individuals and

their individuality is important and should be given due weight, overall it is the prevailing economic relations and the corresponding social relations, and ideas, that, in a fundamental and overall sense, shape individuals and individual aspirations.

The divisions among people in a society like this—including the unequal and oppressive divisions between rich and poor, white and non-white, men and women, and so on—are *real* and *objective*. Democratic Party politicians keep saying things like “Trump is dividing us instead of uniting us.” But these divisions are not caused by the “divisiveness” of someone like Trump. Trump *makes use of* these divisions in pursuit of his fascist agenda, but neither he nor anyone else has caused, or *could* have caused, these divisions—they are rooted in the very nature, functioning, and requirements of this system, in the way all this has historically evolved. *To eliminate these divisions, it is necessary to eliminate this system.*

From everything that has been said so far, it should be clear why the fundamental change that is needed cannot be brought about by voting. Of course, those who care about and are determined to do something about oppression and injustice are constantly bombarded with the notion that it is crucial to vote for the Democrats, because at least they sometimes say they care about this. And this has become all the more intense and insistent with the rise to power of the Trump/Pence fascist regime and its backing by the politicians of the Republican Party, which has itself become a fascist party at its core. It is crucial to vote for the Democrats, *they* tell us, in order to do something to limit the harm Trump can do (the leaders of the Democratic Party refuse to say Trump should be removed from office *now*, and they insist that talking about that only plays into Trump’s hands!). But, because of the way the electoral system has been set up from the beginning of the country, with the electoral college instead of direct popular election of the president, and small states having as many senators as states with much larger populations—all of which was part of the “compromise” with the slave states, and which represents today the continuing legacy of slavery—and, with the way elections for Congress have been manipulated, through suppression of the votes of especially Black people and Latinos, as well as the “gerrymandering” of districts (structuring them in ways that are geographically distorted, so that the people who would tend to vote against the Republicans are concentrated in a few voting districts, while those, especially “conservative” white people, who would vote Republican are spread out through a number of such districts, giving them a greater disproportionate number of congressional representatives)—because of all this, it is far from

certain that in the upcoming midterm elections the Democratic Party will be able to pull off its “blue wave” to regain a majority in Congress. And what is the approach of the Democrats in attempting to achieve this? To a large degree it is to run candidates and campaigns that they hope will appeal to “Trump voters,” including candidates who boast of their “service” in the U.S. military, carrying out bombing raids and other devastation in the Middle East and Afghanistan. The truth is that, not only is it necessary to overthrow this system in order to put an end to what is concentrated in the “5 STOPS” and the horrific conditions to which the masses of humanity are subjected in a world dominated by this system of capitalism-imperialism, but even short of revolution—even in order to prevent the Trump/Pence regime from further consolidating its rule and more fully implementing its fascist program—it is necessary to rely, not on the Democratic Party, but on masses of people, breaking out of the confines of “politics as usual” and carrying out sustained nonviolent mass mobilization to drive out this fascist regime.

In fact, a major role of the Democratic Party is “corralling” and “domesticating” dissent. For example, at the time of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, when there was a massive outpouring of opposition to that war, the Democratic Party as such was not in a position to co-opt and derail this dissent, because (with some exceptions) Democrats in Congress voted for this war. So, they utilized the organization “Move On” as a kind of “oppositional” force whose main role was to lure people who were alienated by the war, and by the Democratic Party’s support for the war, back into politics as usual—back into the framework and confines that had produced that war in the first place. More recently, the Democratic Party, and those aligned with it, have done the same thing with regard to the anger and disgust that literally tens of millions feel toward Trump—and in some ways the Democrats have actually positioned themselves “to the right” of Trump, especially in their insistence that the basic problem with Trump is that he is undermining America’s dominant position in the world, when in reality the “America first” actions of the Trump/Pence regime are aimed at *increasing* that domination in ways that represent a grave threat to humanity.

In case there were a need for further evidence of what the Democratic Party is really about, here are two other striking examples. At the Democratic Party convention in 2016, former CIA head Leon Panetta and Marine General John Allen, a former commander of U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, were featured speakers; and when some people at the convention responded by chanting “No More War!” they were met by attempts of the convention officials to silence them and then were drowned out by the mainstream of the

Democratic Party delegates bellowing “USA! USA! USA!” And it’s just as ugly as that. And let’s not forget that, when Black youths in Baltimore rose up in righteous rebellion after the police murdered Freddie Gray, Barack Obama denounced these youths as “thugs”—but he never denounced the police who killed Freddie Gray as murdering thugs!

I could go on and on—there is more than a mountain of evidence that shows the actual nature and role of the Democratic Party as a major instrument of this monstrously oppressive system—but there is an even more basic problem. The truth is that the governing politicians, the owners and operatives of the multibillion-dollar media, of various kinds, and others who sit atop the major institutions of this society, are *the political and cultural representatives of this system*. Just listen to them when they talk about the role of the U.S. empire in the world—it is “our” interests, “our” military, “our” allies, and on and on. And the deeper truth is that it would be impossible for them to be *anything other* than representatives and functionaries of this system. This is why even stubborn efforts by well-intentioned people to turn the Democratic Party into a positive force are bound to fail. Once again, we are back to the economic relations and the operation of the economic system, the social relations bound up with this, and how this determines the character of the political system and the dominant culture. If the political system operated in conflict with these underlying relations, *the society could not function*. For this fundamental reason, political parties which have a major role and influence in this society are, and could only be, *ruling class parties*—representatives of the ruling capitalist class; instruments of *this system of ruthless oppression; administrators and enforcers of a worldwide empire of exploitation and plunder*, responsible for massive destruction and devastation of countries and people, and posing a very real, and growing, threat to the very existence of humanity, through environmental destruction or nuclear annihilation.

Here is another very important truth they won’t tell you: The police, the armed forces, the “intelligence agencies,” the courts, and so on—all this represents the *dictatorship* of the capitalist-imperialist system. We are always told that a dictatorship is a powerful Leader pounding on a podium and issuing orders that everyone has to follow. But the essence of dictatorship is *a monopoly of armed force and violence carried out by the “official” institutions and declared “legitimate”*—which is exactly what this system claims, that the violence repeatedly used by its institutions, here and all over the world, is “legitimate” violence, when in fact it is completely **illegitimate**, murderously enforcing brutal relations of exploitation and oppression.

Through the media, and in other ways, we are subjected to constant brainwashing about the military and the so-called “intelligence community” of this country. To bring out again the actual truth: along with the massive war crimes and crimes against humanity continually carried out by these enforcers of the U.S. empire, which have involved the slaughter of millions and millions of people—in Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Iraq, and on and on—a personal experience also captures the depraved nature of the U.S. military. In 1974, in returning from what was then a *revolutionary, genuinely socialist* China, during a stopover in Japan, I went to a bathroom in a Tokyo airport—and the walls were *covered* with declarations from U.S. soldiers saying things like “Japanese pussy is good, but there is nothing anywhere near as good as South Korean pussy!” This was not some kind of aberration—it typifies the mentality of the U.S. military. I recall reading that, in the earlier invasion of Iraq, in 1991, U.S. pilots watched hours of pornography to get “revved up” to carry out their bombing raids. Still today, U.S. military installations around the world are surrounded by whorehouses where women are reduced to “servicing” U.S. soldiers, and the U.S. military has one of the highest institutional rates of sexual assault against women. It is an important truth that any military is a reflection of the system for which it is fighting—and this is certainly true of the military of U.S. imperialism.

In recent times we have been subjected to a barrage of bullshit glorifying the Navy Seals as some sort of especially heroic badasses. Well, there is nothing heroic about being part of the mechanized and digitized machinery of death, devastation, and degradation that is the U.S. military, or the missions they carry out to violently enforce the dictates of the system this military serves. What is truly heroic, and what will represent a great service to humanity, is *standing up against* this system and its unending war crimes and crimes against humanity—and, when the time comes, going up against and *defeating* the violent force that is used to maintain this system.

We are also subjected to an endless glorification of the police—on TV, in the movies, in the “popular culture” as a whole—at the same time as Black people and Latinos, especially the youth in the ghettos and barrios of this country, are repeatedly portrayed as depraved, sub-human animals. All this is meant to condition people, particularly people in the middle class, to support, or at least not oppose, the mass incarceration of these youths, and the brutality and murder that is continually carried out by the police, particularly against those already viciously oppressed under this system, and those, from any part of society, who dare to rebel against this system, especially in ways that are not confined to ritualized “protest as usual.”

And then there are the ruling class “news media.” There are media, like Fox (I can hardly say it) “News,” that represent the *fascist* section of the ruling class—which aims to impose undisguised capitalist dictatorship without the rule of law, with open hostility toward other sections of the ruling class itself, that these fascists regard as enemies, and vicious repression against immigrants, Black people, Muslims, women, and LGBT people—all those whose degradation and criminalization is essential for the fascist program of “making America great again.” Lying, systematically distorting reality, is a *function and mission* of these media. On the other hand, there is the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN, MSNBC, and so on, which represent the “*mainstream*” section of *the ruling class* that advocates governing “norms” and “democratic principles and procedures” that actually embody and facilitate capitalist dictatorship but at the same time *disguise* this dictatorship. These “mainstream” media tell some of the truth, some of the time—when it serves their sense of ruling class interests—and they lie and distort a lot of the time, whenever they see *that* as serving those interests.

The differences and conflicts between these different sections of the ruling class have been sharpened with the ascendancy of the fascist Trump/Pence regime. But, even with these differences, they all represent *the same system of capitalism-imperialism*, and specifically the U.S. empire of exploitation. And, as I wrote in *THE NEW COMMUNISM*, these media “are not vehicles for providing people information about important things in society and the world—and they are certainly not ‘objective,’ if that means presenting reality as it actually is, nor are they a ‘free press,’ in the sense of not being beholden to and controlled by powerful interests. They are in fact *the propaganda machinery of the capitalist-imperialist ruling class.*”

All these representatives of this system claim to speak in the name of the people and insist that what they are doing, and how this system operates, is in accordance with “the will of the people.” Yes, the “will of the people”—*exactly as it has been shaped by this system!*—by the nature and dynamics of the economic relations and the social relations, and by the influence of the political system and the dominant culture which serve to reinforce those economic and social relations.

So, how can all this be changed, in any fundamental way, if so many people, including people who suffer so terribly under this system, are so brainwashed and caught up in so much bullshit? This is something I will get into more fully in the second part of this talk, but as a basic point of understanding and orientation, it is important to recognize that people can change in radically positive ways—and this has happened many times throughout history,

including more recent history in this country, in a big way in the 1960s—but this can happen only by *breaking out of the framework of this system*, and only in a fundamental way by **overthrowing this system** and moving on to thoroughly transform society, and ultimately the world as a whole.

This year is the 50th anniversary of 1968. Even the representatives and advocates of this system cannot simply ignore the significance of that year and the very positive upheaval, rebellion, militant defiance, and radicalization that characterized it and that period overall. However (as can be seen in the CNN series *1968*), they are once again trying to force all this into the framework of ruling class interests and ruling class politics, and in particular the presidential election of that year. And there are “progressives” who insist that “the left” made a terrible mistake in 1968 by not supporting the Democratic candidate for president, Hubert Humphrey—which, they say, allowed Richard Nixon to win the election and gave support and impetus to the “rightwing” in its “backlash” against the “progressive” movements and gains of the 1960s. What is revealed in this critique is the utter inability, or the refusal, of such “progressives” to see and think beyond the confines of capitalist relations and capitalist rule, *even* in attempting to analyze the kind of situation that existed in 1968, when great numbers of people were precisely challenging and breaking out of those confines. By 1968 and for several years after, there were large numbers of people in this country, including millions of youth from the middle class as well as masses of poor and oppressed people, who were motivated by a thoroughly justified hatred of this system and aspirations for a radically different and better world—and this reached deeply into the system’s own armed forces—even if the understanding of most was marked by revolutionary sentiment which, while righteous, was lacking in any deep and consistent scientific basis. And the real failure of that time was that there was not yet a revolutionary vanguard with that scientific foundation and method, and the orientation, strategy, and program that could give organized expression to the mass revolutionary sentiment and lead a real attempt at actually making revolution.

That is the challenge before us now. And now, particularly because of the work I have done and the leadership I have been providing over the decades since the 1960s, we do have the further development of the scientific method and approach to revolution, with the new communism; we have the strategic approach and plan for making this revolution; we have the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*, a sweeping vision and concrete “blueprint” for a radically new and emancipating society aiming for the emancipation of humanity as a whole. But let’s be straight up: what we

do *not* have, yet, are *masses* of people who are won to revolution and driven to work for it, especially youth, who are always the driving force of any revolution; and, although we have the foundation and scaffolding of revolutionary organization that could be built on and expanded into a vanguard force capable of actually leading the revolution all the way through, we do not yet have the necessary cadre of leadership, on all levels and in all parts of the country, who have not only the determination but also the scientific grounding to lead the masses who must be brought forward in making revolution. While some of us who came forward during the 1960s have retained, indeed deepened, our revolutionary passion, and the scientific grounding that sustains it, many others have given up on revolution; and, although there are literally tens of millions in this country who hate the injustices and indignities that people suffer under this system, and who can be awakened to the possibility of a radically different and better world, as yet far too few have been brought forward into the ranks of the revolution and developed and trained as revolutionary leaders. This is what all those who cannot stand to live another day under this monstrosity of a system, and are filled with passionate intensity to bring this system down and bring a radically different world into being, this is what we all need to be actively working toward: *building up the ranks of the revolution*—first, in the thousands and then, as things develop toward the decisive point, millions—as an organized force, and *learning to become leaders of this revolution* who can enable those millions to be in a position to fight, all-out, with a real chance to win, when the time comes.

This is not a revolution for revenge—the goal is not for exploited and oppressed humanity to have a chance to become exploiters and oppressors themselves—it is a *communist* revolution whose goal is nothing less than putting an end to all relations of exploitation and oppression, and all the degradation and destruction bound up with this, throughout the world.

Next (after a short break), we will move on to the big question: **How we can really make revolution.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## **II. How We Can Really Make Revolution**

Many people, including many who say they would like to see a radical change in society, insist that revolution is not possible because “they” are too powerful, and “people are too messed up.” Well, it is true that, shaped as they

are by this system, the masses of people, in any part of society, don't know shit and have their heads up their asses, when it comes to an understanding of how things really are, *why* they are the way they are, and what could and should be done about this. But this stands in sharp contradiction to another important truth—that millions of people really do care about one or more, and many care about all, of the “5 STOPS.” This is a contradiction that we have to *go to work on*, to move masses of people in the direction of the revolution that is needed to finally put a stop to those “5 STOPS” and the horrific conditions to which the masses of humanity are constantly subjected.

It is also true that the ruling powers of this system, with the machinery of death and destruction they wield to enforce this system, are indeed very powerful. But a big part of people's difficulty in imagining that we could actually defeat them is the inability to conceive of a situation that is radically different than the “normal” functioning of this system, a situation where, for large parts of society, the “hold” of the ruling class over people—its ability to control, manipulate, and intimidate them—is broken, or greatly weakened. Fundamentally, people cannot imagine this because they are not approaching things with a scientific outlook and method. As *HOW WE CAN WIN* emphasizes: “To make this revolution, we need to be serious, and scientific.” Now, some people, particularly among those most bitterly oppressed, are suspicious of talk about being scientific—they distrust science—because truly terrible things have at times been done *in the name of* science. Ardea Skybreak, a professionally trained scientist and advocate of the new communism, speaks to this in *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*. She makes the point that one of the reasons that “people are sometimes turned off by science is because there has been **bad** science”; and she cites the example of how “sometimes in the course of history science has been used to promote the idea that some races are inferior to other races.” But, she goes on to emphasize, “that's **junk** science. In fact you can use rigorous scientific methods to prove that was all bad science. It's not just ‘morally’ bad—it is that, but it's also scientifically bad—it's completely false and **you can use good science to prove that.**”

It is the “good science”—the scientific method and approach of proceeding from the evidence about reality to understand how reality actually is, why it is the way it is, and how it is changing and could be changed further—that we need to consistently apply if we want to transform the world to uproot oppression and exploitation. To dig further into what this means, and how we

go about doing it, let's begin with the statement from *HOW WE CAN WIN* that everything we are doing is "aiming for something very definite—a **revolutionary situation**: Where the system and its ruling powers are in a serious crisis" and "millions and millions of people refuse to be ruled in the old way—and are willing and determined to put everything on the line to bring down this system and bring into being a new society and government that will be based on the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*. **That is the time to go all-out to win. That is what we need to be actively working for and preparing for now.**" Key components and signs of a *revolutionary* crisis are that the violence used "to enforce this system is seen by large parts of society for what it is—murderous and illegitimate" and that "the conflicts among the ruling forces become really deep and sharp—and masses of people respond to this *not* by falling in behind one side or the other of the oppressive rulers, but by *taking advantage* of this situation to *build up the forces for revolution*." This underlines the great importance of ongoing work and compelling struggle to break people away from the "hold" of the political operatives and media mouthpieces of this system.

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

A big problem for the revolution is what could be called the "encirclement and suppression" of the people at the base of society who are subjected to one injury and insult after another under this system, and who yearn for an end to all this madness, but who are, in a certain sense, "surrounded" in the society at large by sections of people who do not directly suffer the same daily outrages. To put it simply, there are large numbers of poor and bitterly oppressed people in this country, but there is also a big middle class. Although much of this middle class is not doing as well economically as in the

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

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

**CAN WIN**, speaking specifically to “How We Could Defeat Them,” are particular applications of the approach to dealing with this contradiction.

An overall principle that flows from this contradiction is the fact that, once underway, the all-out fight would need to be *protracted* but also *finite*. “Protracted” means drawn out—it would not be a situation where the outcome, if it were favorable for the revolution, could be decided in a very short period of time. “Finite” means having definite limits—not extended indefinitely. Given that, at the beginning, the balance of power would almost certainly be heavily in favor of the forces of *counter*-revolution (the forces of the old ruling class and those fighting with it to defeat the revolution) in terms of their military organization and experience, as well as their armaments, the revolutionary forces would need to draw out (protract) the conflict for a certain period, in order to transform the situation into one in which they could overcome those strategic disadvantages. At the same time, because this all-out fight should only be launched by the revolutionary forces in a situation marked by a deep and acute revolutionary crisis and a revolutionary people in the millions and millions, if it were protracted over *too long* a period, without the revolution advancing in a fairly limited period of time toward the situation where it began to have the upper hand, then the advantages of a revolutionary situation would tend to be lost, the overall initiative would return to the counter-revolution, and the allegiance of significant sections of society, including in the middle classes, that was lost by the old ruling class, would be regained to a degree that could spell defeat for the revolution. This touches on a very important point of strategic orientation: When it comes down to it, what happens on the battlefield will be decisive in determining the outcome but, for the revolutionary forces, one of the key objectives of the fighting would be to demoralize and disintegrate the ranks of the other side, both their actual fighting forces and their broader “civilian support,” leading to further loss of allegiance and of initiative on the counter-revolutionary side; and, to the degree this succeeded, it would be a key element in shifting the balance of forces in favor of the revolution. The all-out struggle will not just mean going up against the institutional forces of the old ruling class but will also involve “a civil war between two sections of the people,” requiring the revolution to both defeat and disintegrate but also, as far as possible, win over parts of the armed forces among the population that started out on the other side.

Rupert Smith, a British military officer and strategist, has noted that an insurrectionary force that is “defining the parameters of the conflict” has “by default presented an alternative force and power.” This means that, if a revolutionary force is to a large degree determining the character of the

conflict, it will be seen not as a bunch of “outlaws” but as a legitimate force contending against the old order; and this relates to why it is so important that the initial actions of the revolutionary fighting forces, accompanied by a bold declaration to the world, “make clear that there is an organized force determined to defeat the forces of the old order and bring into being a new, revolutionary system.” This would play a crucial part in demolishing the “superstitious awe” that people have toward the existing system, the nearly religious belief that this is the best, or at least the only, way that things could be, and that the power of this system is unchallengeable; it would further undermine the “legitimacy” and “authority” of the old order and its ruling class and the allegiance to it of broad sections of the population, and lay more of a basis for winning over even broader sections, including from within the fighting forces of the other side.

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

Similarly, providing for the basic logistical needs of this revolutionary fighting force, to enable it to initiate the all-out fight, without being immediately crushed, and then to quickly regroup and once again take the initiative and maintain momentum overall, without being “fixed” and annihilated, would also involve intense struggle, and would require defeating enemy blockades and attacks and penetration directed against strongholds of the revolution and focused on locating and destroying those who make up the revolutionary fighting forces and their logistical sources. All this would require “misdirection” and surprise in operations. And all this would depend on millions more, beyond the backbone fighting forces, being organized concretely as “reserves” and as networks of support and supply for these fighting forces,

and the willingness and ability of these “reserves” to “absorb” and protect the fighting forces and their equipment and logistical supplies, and enable them to repeatedly regroup and seize the initiative. This would also require continual “calibration” of the size of fighting units and their operations, at any given time, to enable these fighting units, upon completion of an engagement, to “melt back into” the larger revolutionary “reserves,” while at the same time the conditions are being created to allow them to remain active, in training and in initiating further engagements with the enemy.

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

As stressed in *HOW WE CAN WIN*, the revolutionary forces would need to fight only on favorable terms and avoid decisive encounters, which would determine the outcome of the whole thing, until the balance of forces had shifted overwhelmingly in favor of the revolution. This flows from what has been discussed regarding the overwhelmingly superior destructive force of the counter-revolution at the start of the all-out fight. What is also very important to underline is that this is not merely a question of *orientation and intent* on the part of the revolutionary forces. Given its overwhelming superiority of force, for some time the enemy would continually seek precisely to *force* the

revolutionaries into situations where they would either be compelled to fight decisive battles that they were bound to lose, or they would have to surrender outright—leading to the total defeat of the revolution, or putting it well on the road to defeat. The point is that being able to avoid potentially disastrous decisive encounters with the enemy would itself be a matter of *intense struggle*, including that the revolutionary forces could often find themselves having to wage a determined struggle just to avoid being trapped in a situation where they would have to fight such a decisive encounter, or surrender. This is why *HOW WE CAN WIN* speaks of *actively* avoiding unfavorable decisive encounters and fighting only on favorable terms. It is why it also emphasizes that, even when the “balance of forces” has shifted in favor of the revolution, it would still be necessary, when conducting operations aimed at achieving final victory, to continue to “calibrate” those operations, “so that decisive encounters are still avoided until the forces of the old order have been brought to the brink of total defeat”—which would then be the time to “fully, finally, rout and dismantle the remaining enemy forces.”

And it is because of the same concerns that *HOW WE CAN WIN*, while speaking to the importance of building up political and logistical bases of support for the revolution, at the same time stresses that the revolutionary forces should “*not attempt to openly control and govern territory*, until the necessary ‘favorable balance of forces’ has been created.” To attempt to do so prematurely would make this territory, the people within it, and the revolutionary forces defending and governing it, highly vulnerable to attack from an enemy that, again, would have overwhelming destructive power; and it would put the revolutionaries in the position of having the responsibility—and what, under the circumstances, would be an unsupportable burden—to meet the basic requirements of a functioning society, and the people within it. The point, the goal, is to carry forward the fight to thoroughly defeat, and dismantle, the forces of the old order, and *on that basis* to bring into being a new, revolutionary state that can embark on the thorough transformation of society with the ultimate aim of overcoming and eliminating all relations of exploitation and oppression, everywhere in the world.

This ultimate aim and internationalist orientation of the revolution is also why *HOW WE CAN WIN* speaks to the need for the revolutionary forces in this country to correctly handle the relation between the all-out fight, when the time comes, and the situation—including the character and level of revolutionary struggle—in countries to the south (and the north). As we know, this country was created through and amidst warfare; and, as I spoke to earlier, it has continually expanded its territory and extended the reach of its

empire through armed conquest, enslavement and other forms of extreme exploitation. In carrying out the fight to overthrow the violent rule of this system, both as a matter of orientation and principle, and in terms of strengthening the basis for succeeding, it will be crucial to refuse to be bound by the borders that have been established and the walls that have been erected through the murder and marauding of the ruling capitalist imperialists of this country, but instead to actively unite with peoples to the south, and the north, in the struggle against this capitalist-imperialist monster, and advance the revolution overall, in this part of the world and in the world as a whole.

In contrast to the revolutionary forces, the forces of the old order, especially when faced with the prospect that their oppressive system could actually be overthrown and dismantled, would resort to all kinds of barbarity to preserve this system. As it is put in “On the Possibility of Revolution”:

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

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

“Decapitating” the leadership of the revolution, and destroying or crippling the means of coordination and overall direction for the revolutionary forces, would also be one of the major objectives of the counter-revolution. *HOW WE*

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

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

So let’s get deeper into *what we need to do now*. Let’s go back to the crucial point that we need to be serious, and scientific. A scientific approach and method leads to the understanding that the basis for revolution lies not in what most people are thinking or doing right now (or at any given time) but in *the deep and defining contradictions of this system*—what is concentrated in the “5 STOPS” and all the terrible suffering to which this system subjects millions, and billions, of people—which cannot be eliminated *within* this system. But this revolution will not be brought about “magically” or just by the way this system causes people to suffer. This revolution must be *consciously and systematically built for*, from here forward, with ever-growing numbers of people, first in the thousands and ultimately in the millions, who are brought forward into the *organized ranks* of the revolution to *actively work* for this revolution. *HOW WE CAN WIN* lays out the plan and the means for how we can make this real.

First, it is important to understand that, although it is true (as I have said in *THE NEW COMMUNISM*) that revolution cannot and will not be made just by “spreading the idea of revolution around, and perhaps getting some

positive responses”—thumbs up. At the same time, however, it is *also* true that *spreading the word* about this revolution can itself be very important *revolutionary work*—an *important part* of building the movement for revolution. The fact is that, among those who really need to know about this, including those who most desperately need this revolution, very few have even heard about it—and they are living with the belief that this world, as it is, is the only one that’s possible, and for many this means that, on top of being subjected to continual brutality, degradation and torment, they are suffocated by the lack of hope. Raising people’s sights to the possibility of a radically different world can not only bring hope to people, *on a scientific basis*, but can also awaken a potentially powerful force for the revolution that could make this hope a reality. For these reasons: “We need to be on a mission to *spread the word*, to let people know that *we have the leadership, the science, the strategy and program, and the basis for organizing people for an actual, emancipating revolution.*” Here again is the importance of the point I emphasized earlier about the great strengths we *do* have—and what is still missing: masses of people “who catch the worst hell under this system, and those who are sickened by the endless outrages perpetrated by this system,” who need to be brought forward, wave after wave, and developed into conscious revolutionaries and revolutionary leaders.

Spreading the word, particularly as this is done together with others in a planned, systematic way, can be *an important step in joining the organized ranks of the revolution and taking part in the process of building the revolution.* A crucial next step in making this revolution real is that, “*Thousands need to get organized into the ranks of the revolution now, while millions are being influenced in favor of this revolution.*” Getting organized into the ranks of the revolution means acting together with others in a unified way, as an organized force, guided by the strategic plan and leadership for the revolution, building the revolution among broader masses of people, while also getting deeper into the principles, methods, and goals of this revolution, the basics of which are concentrated in the “Points of Attention for the Revolution.” A key form of revolutionary organization are the Revolution Clubs, which live by, propagate, and fight for the “Points of Attention.” The core of the Revolution Clubs are people deeply committed to revolution who closely follow the leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Party, which has the basis, in the new communism, to provide overall leadership for the revolution; but the Revolution Clubs also need to reach out to and involve growing numbers of people who are new to the revolution. The Revolution Clubs are a means through which “people can take part in and powerfully represent for the revolution in an organized way,

as they learn more about the revolution and advance toward joining the Party.”

Networks of people, working together to spread the word about and organize people into the revolution, need to be built, and expanded, in all parts of the country—and linked together. In areas where the Party and the Revolution Clubs have not yet established an organized presence, or in circumstances where people have not yet come into direct contact with this organized presence of the revolution but have become aware of the core principles and goals of the revolution, they should reach out to and involve others they can draw forward around those core principles and goals; they should link up with the central leadership of the revolution for assistance and direction in organizing a Revolution Club among the people they are bringing into the revolution, on the basis of the “Points of Attention for the Revolution,” which are included in the pamphlet *HOW WE CAN WIN*, and are posted at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us). A crucial “connecting link” in all this is the Party’s website [revcom.us](http://revcom.us) and newspaper *Revolution*, which “sharply expose the crimes of this system, scientifically analyze why it cannot be reformed, and give guidance and direction for people to *work in a unified way* for revolution.” In everything we do, it needs to be clearly kept in mind, and boldly put forward to people, that, whatever part of the country we are in, and whatever the size of our forces at any given time, we are doing all this as part of a *national* movement, together with people in other parts of the country, aiming to impact all of society and building a revolution to overthrow the whole system, with the whole world in mind.

An important principle and method in organizing people into the revolution is the understanding that, while revolution requires serious commitment, people’s level of commitment will, at any given time, “essentially correspond to and [be] grounded in what aspirations have been awakened, or brought forward [in them], and what they are coming to understand is required in relation to that,” and this commitment “should proceed from what they themselves have been won (yes, won through struggle, even at times sharp struggle) to see as a necessary and essential contribution to the revolution.” People can start with basic tasks that they can readily carry out and feel confident doing which make a real contribution to building the revolution, and can learn to take on more responsibility as they gain more experience and a deeper understanding. The important thing is that they are part of the *process* of building the revolution, together with others. **These principles and methods should be kept clearly in mind and applied at all stages of**

**people's involvement with the revolution, to enable them to continue advancing in understanding and commitment.**

At this point, when the ranks and the reach of the revolution are still way too limited, and a key immediate objective is to organize thousands into the revolution, while working to influence millions, there is great importance to “critical masses” of organized revolutionary forces, in different parts of the country, among “those who catch the worst hell under this system,” and among broader sections of society, especially youth and students. A “critical mass” means a force which, although it may be small at first, has sufficient numbers and determination to fight through obstacles to have a real impact on the “political terrain.” This relates to an important process that I discussed in *THE NEW COMMUNISM: Accumulating organized forces for revolution*. As is I put it there:

“it’s not just accumulate over here, off in some corner.... It’s accumulate, impact; accumulate further, impact more; accumulate further...and on and on—even while taking into account the larger picture of what’s happening out in the world.... What do I mean by accumulate, impact? I mean that when you have organized forces, you can have a magnified impact on political situations [such as protest and resistance,] and on the political terrain overall....

“You are affecting the terrain by having organized forces united around a revolutionary line...it goes out to the world, especially in this age of the internet. It goes all over the place. And then people do want to know: *Who are* those forces that did that?....It’s not that they all join up with you right away, or that you should bring them fully into the ranks of the revolution right away, before they even have a chance to get a basic understanding of what this revolution is all about. There’s work and struggle that has to go on. But you’re able to get this dynamic going where you’re growing, you’re wielding your organized forces for revolution in a way to significantly impact society and drawing people to you, and through struggle accumulating more organized forces...and then you are able to do more to affect the situation, once again through a lot of struggle.... This is the dynamic we have to advance while, once again, not narrowing our sights to just that dynamic, but looking at the whole world and how we affect the whole world toward the goal of revolution....

“This is the correct basis for...understanding the point...about the ‘thousands’ and their relation to the ‘millions.’ It’s not just some vague notion of ‘thousands of people’ who sort of go ‘thumbs up’ on the idea of revolution (or even are very enthusiastic about it). If you’re talking about leading millions, you need

an organized force of thousands of people, a growing number of people, in the thousands, who are oriented, organized, trained and led to be an actual revolutionary force and pole of attraction.”

And let me emphasize it again: At this point, even smaller but determined “critical masses,” particularly in some key areas, with this orientation and approach, *acting as part of a national movement*, can impact not just people in their immediate area but also people more broadly in society, propelling forward that dynamic leading to the situation where there are “thousands, who are oriented, organized, trained and led to be an actual revolutionary force and pole of attraction,” influencing millions and contributing to the basis to organize millions into the revolution, when the conditions for this are ripened.

This is all part of a strategic approach of *hastening while awaiting* the emergence of the conditions to go all-out to actually overthrow this system. It is because we need to approach this in a serious, and scientific, way that we are awaiting, rather than just trying to “jump off” an armed struggle now. To quote *HOW WE CAN WIN* on this critical point: “Now is not yet the time to wage this kind of fight—to do so now would only lead to a devastating defeat.” However, as pointed out sharply in *THE NEW COMMUNISM*, “this is different than the masses of people rising up spontaneously against their oppressors, or defending themselves in a given situation. Anyone with a decent orientation should be able to understand why that is justified.”

And in today’s situation, before the conditions have been brought into being for the all-out fight, we are not, and cannot be, just “waiting,” passively hoping that somehow the favorable conditions for revolution will just appear. No, we need to be working actively, vigorously, tirelessly to *hasten* the development of things toward those favorable conditions. That is what is captured in the formulation the “**3 Prepares**”: “Prepare the Ground, Prepare the People, Prepare the Vanguard—Get Ready for the Time When Millions Can Be Led to Go for Revolution, All-Out, With a Real Chance to Win.”

Here, it could be helpful to look at the similarities, and the differences, between the revolutionary process in a country like this and, on the other hand, what has happened in some Third World countries where conditions have allowed the revolutionaries to wage an armed struggle from the *beginning* of the revolutionary process—to start by fighting battles against small parts of the enemy forces, and to wage war over a long period of time, to wear down the enemy and build up their own forces, with the aim of reaching the point where the “balance of forces” has shifted in their favor, and they can then fight larger-scale battles to finally defeat the forces of the old

order. This does have some things in common with how the all-out fight would be waged in a country like this, *once the conditions for that had been brought into being*. But there are important differences. In this kind of country, an armed struggle would not—should not—be launched until a revolutionary situation had been brought into being in society overall, and then this struggle, while having a certain aspect of being protracted, would also be considerably shorter (more finite) than the overall process of protracted revolutionary wars that have been carried out in Third World countries. In a country like this, there needs to be a process of political, ideological, and organizational work to carry out those **“3 Prepares,”** to *hasten* the development of things toward the revolutionary situation, when it would *then* become possible to launch an all-out struggle with a real chance of winning, through a somewhat protracted *but also finite* process. To summarize briefly: Third World revolutionary wars—armed struggle from the beginning, over a whole protracted period, to create the basis for the final decisive battles; revolution in a country like this—a process of political, ideological, and organizational work to hasten and prepare for the development of a revolutionary situation, whereupon the all-out fight could be launched, and carried out over a somewhat protracted but also finite period.

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

So, with this understanding and orientation, how do we go about *hastening while awaiting*? The means for doing this is concentrated in the formulation: **“Fight the Power, and Transform the People, for Revolution.”** Let’s start with the aim of all this—**Revolution**. In *Basics* 3:1, I put it like this: “Let’s get down to basics: We need a revolution. *Anything else, in the final analysis, is bullshit.*” That is another simple and basic truth. **We need to go to**

**people—not just one or two people, not just a small number of people, but masses of people, reaching all over the country, in every part of society—straight up with *revolution***—instead of just letting “where they are at” set the terms, and trying to somehow “bring in” some idea about revolution within that limited framework. As *BASics* 3:1 goes on to say: We do need to unite with people in all sorts of struggles short of revolution; but it is frankly ridiculous to think that something short of revolution could solve all the monumental problems and monstrous outrages that people face under this system. On the basis of going to people straight up with revolution, then, *coming from that place*, we need to unite with people in fighting injustice and oppression, *and* struggle to win more and more people to see the need and the possibility for revolution, and to get with this.

We need to “protest and resist the injustices and atrocities of this system, and win people to defy and repudiate this putrid system and its ways of thinking, and to take up the outlook and values, and the strategy and program of the revolution, build up the forces for this revolution, and defeat the attempts of the ruling powers to crush the revolution and its leadership.” As *HOW WE CAN WIN* also points out, “We have seen the potential for this in the protests that have taken place against police brutality and murder, and other ways in which large numbers of people have gone up against the established authorities and the political ‘rules of the game.’” But *HOW WE CAN WIN* goes on to emphasize that, while such protest and resistance is important, “this needs to be transformed...into revolutionary understanding, determination, and organization.” Transformed how? Through *struggle*. This goes back to the important contradiction that millions and millions of people really do care about one or more, and many care about all, of those “5 STOPS,” but in terms of understanding where all these outrages come from and what is necessary to really put a stop to them, most of the same people don’t know shit and have their heads up their asses. So, while uniting with and working to bring forward still greater numbers of people in protesting and resisting the atrocities of this system, there is a need for sharp struggle to win them to confront and grasp the fact that, in fundamental terms, *this system* is the source of all these horrors, and *it cannot be reformed but must be **overthrown***.

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

normally accept.” We have witnessed many such jolts in recent times, including with the election of Trump/Pence and then the continuing atrocities carried out by this regime in power. It is crucial that all such “jolts” be seized on by the revolutionaries, and others, to bring forward growing numbers of people to become part of the massive, nonviolent but sustained mobilization that is needed to drive out this regime; but, beyond that, revolutionaries must do all this “to advance the revolution and expand its organized forces,” toward the fundamental goal of finally *overthrowing* this whole system.

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

What has already been shown about these politicians and media makes clear why sharp and compelling struggle needs to be waged to expose their actual role and win people to reject and repudiate what they represent. Earlier, I spoke to how there are the *fascist* and the “*mainstream*” sections of the capitalist-imperialist ruling class; in a fundamental sense, *capitalist-imperialist*—the fact that, even with their very real differences, they all represent the same system of exploitation, oppression, degradation, and devastation—is the essential thing and the essential reason why their “authority” must be rejected and repudiated by masses of people.

As for those—posers in religious robes and others—who preach about “reconciliation” with this system and front for the oppressors, here is a variation on what I said in “All Played Out”:

Reverends and the rest—  
not ones who really stand with the oppressed,  
but those who strut and preach  
to keep the people down,  
on their knees,  
suffering indignities,  
who put the blame on those un-free  
for ways that they are kept in misery;  
pompous, self-righteous asses  
who breathe contempt for the masses,  
fools who worship the powers-that-be,  
insisting that things stay locked

within the bounds  
of bargains with the bourgeoisie  
[people must come to see  
that this is] ALL PLAYED OUT!

It is necessary, and important, to unite with preachers, with everyone, who *can* be united with in the fight against oppression and injustice; and people who are attracted to the revolution while still holding religious views should be welcomed and involved, while at the same time the struggle needs to be waged to win people to a consistently scientific approach, which leads to the understanding that there is no god and that trying to rely on a supposed god as the savior of oppressed humanity can only lead away from the real solution, and ultimately leave people at the “mercy” of this merciless system. Many religious people say that they accept the conclusions of science (or much of this), while also insisting that a science has its limits, and that there is something greater than this—“faith.” But “faith” is belief in things *not* because they have been shown to be true through examining what the evidence shows about reality, drawing conclusions from that, and testing those conclusions in practice in the actual material world, but because it is *comforting* to believe these things (or frightening *not* to), and because people have been conditioned to believe this by powerful religious traditions and institutions whose scriptures were written by human beings who were deeply mired in superstition and ignorance, and for that matter advocated things that everyone today should recognize as depraved and barbaric, such as rape, pillage, and slaughter of innocents (in *Away With All Gods!* I cited many examples of this, and people can also see this for themselves by looking, without blinders, at the Bible, as well as the Qur’an). As I said in *BASics* 4:1: “Oppressed people who are unable or unwilling to confront reality as it actually is, are condemned to remain enslaved and oppressed.” And, in contrast to that, *a scientific method and approach leads to an understanding of the possibility of putting an end to slavery and oppression, of every kind, through revolution.*

It has been raised that when *HOW WE CAN WIN* insists that the authority people look to cannot be “those who turn people against each other when they need to be uniting for this revolution,” it is talking about gangs, among others. Well, in making this revolution we are not going out to make an enemy out of the gangs. We are working to win people to revolution and to build up the forces for this revolution, in line with what is concentrated in the “Points of Attention for the Revolution,” to put an end to everything that enslaves and degrades people, including all the conditions that have led to the creation of the gangs in the first place and the situation where so many of our youth are

fighting and killing each other—and let everyone decide where they stand in relation to this revolution that we are working for. But we do need to struggle, hard, against the way of thinking that says that it's everybody for themselves, and you got to do what you got to do to get over on everybody else and get big bank and have lots of property, including turning women into property. All of this is just an imitation of the outlook of the oppressor, and it is a big part of what has kept masses of people oppressed and degraded for so long. Once again, "All Played Out" calls this shit out:

"I got my mind on my money,  
and my money on my mind,"  
that craziness  
about being like "Scarface,"  
acting without a trace  
of humanity,  
plundering and violating without remorse,  
killing and dying for no good purpose.  
Give it up—it's ALL PLAYED OUT!

In thinking about people who have gotten into "the life," often from a very early age, I am reminded of the lines in a song from back in the day by the R&B group "The Whispers" [singing:] "Seems like I gotta do wrong—gotta do wrong—gotta do wrong...before they *notice* me."

Well, **fuck** "they"! To invoke a statement by Frederick Douglass from the days of slavery that very well captures the truth today: "They" are guilty of "crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages"; "for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival." All this relates to what I said in "An Appeal to Those the System Has Cast Off" (*BAasics*3:16):

"Raise your sights above the degradation and madness, the muck and demoralization, above the individual battle to survive and to 'be somebody' on the terms of the imperialists—of fouler, more monstrous criminals than mythology has ever invented or jails ever held. Become a part of the human saviors of humanity: the gravediggers of this system and the bearers of the future communist society."

In opposition to those who mislead the people, the authority of the revolution and its leadership can be extended and strengthened as it brings to light, through scientific analysis, what is really going on in all the major events in society and the world and where the fundamental interests of the masses of humanity actually lie, and as it mobilizes increasing numbers of people to fight

for those fundamental interests. But building up this revolutionary authority will not happen “automatically”—it must be consistently worked for, and vigorously fought for, as a concrete goal and important part of carrying out the “**3 Prepares.**”

This basic guideline is set forth in *HOW WE CAN WIN*: “**we need to approach everything—evaluate every political program and every organized force in society, every kind of culture, values and ways of treating people—according to how it relates to the revolution we need.**” A revolution to do what? To “**end all oppression.**” Here again is the importance of the “Points of Attention for the Revolution”—and winning more and more people to uphold, live by and fight for this in building the revolution we need, to end all oppression.

We need to combine a firmness of principle and unwavering grip on the strategic goal of revolution with a broadness of mind and generosity of spirit. We need to work with many different kinds of people in building resistance against the crimes of this system while keeping our eye clearly on the prize of revolution and struggling, in a good way, to win people, from all parts of society, to active involvement in, positive support for, or “friendly neutrality” toward this revolution. *HOW WE CAN WIN* puts it in basic terms: “**We should unite with people whenever we can, and struggle with them whenever we need to, to advance the revolution.**” And it gives a sense of the breadth of people that should be involved in the revolution: “People in the inner cities, and in the prisons, students, scholars, artists, lawyers and other professionals, youth in the suburbs and rural areas—people in all parts of society—need to know about this and seriously take it up.”

Again, there is special importance to the youth and students—both among the most oppressed and among the middle classes—because, even with all the bullshit that this system works to get the youth caught up in, they are less “invested” in the way things are and less worn down to accepting that this is the only way things could be. Another section of society among whom it is both possible and essential to win people for the revolution: tech experts (or what we might call “digital wizards”). This is important now, and going forward in building toward the all-out showdown—and when it comes to that all-out struggle, and how we could defeat them, it will be all the more important. Think about it.

This orientation of winning people broadly to the revolution, from all different parts of society, also has everything to do with what this revolution is all about, as well as how we can have the best chance of winning. This closely relates

to the problem of “encirclement and suppression” that I spoke to earlier. As *HOW WE CAN WIN* puts it: **“We need to oppose and disrupt the moves of the ruling powers to isolate, ‘encircle,’ brutalize, mass incarcerate and murderously repress the people who have the hardest life under this system and who most need this revolution. We need to ‘encircle’ them—by bringing forth wave upon wave of people rising up in determined opposition to this system.”**

Going back to what was said earlier about what is the same, and what is different, in terms of this revolution and revolutionary wars that have been waged in Third World countries, we should not be attempting to wage a literal, military war against these ruling powers *now*, but we *do* need to be waging *now* a determined “*political war*” against them, to in fact “encircle” and isolate *them*, precisely through “bringing forth wave upon wave of people rising up in determined opposition to this system,” exposing the real nature of this system and the consequences of its rule, and in the process winning increasing numbers of people to recognize that its authority and rule over society is unjust and illegitimate, and must be rejected and opposed. This, too, must be taken up as a clear and definite goal and fought for systematically, as a crucial part of “*hastening while awaiting*” and carrying out the “**3 Prepares.**” And this political battle also needs to be waged in bold and determined opposition to the “base” that is being mobilized by the fascist section of the ruling class—this is important in its own right now, *and* is important preparation for and will have an important bearing on the “civil war between two sections of the people,” once conditions have fully ripened and the all-out struggle is underway.

As a decisive part of all this, we need to confront, and wage a determined fight to defeat, the moves of the ruling powers to attack and destroy this movement for revolution and in particular the leadership—transforming this into further advances for the revolution, as the brutally dictatorial nature of their rule is exposed and the repression they carry out is turned back against them, with growing numbers of people compelled to shed illusions about the nature of this system and its ruling class, and propelled into resistance against its oppression and repression.

To come back to the most fundamental point: “All this is aiming for something very definite—a **revolutionary situation.**” What we are doing *now* is making revolution—it is all part of, and must be consciously and systematically carried out as, an overall strategic plan and approach to getting to the point where millions can be brought forward to wage the all-out fight to overthrow this system, with a real chance of winning.

A great immediate challenge that bears heavily on the prospects for revolution is what is represented by the Trump/Pence regime. In another talk (*THE TRUMP/PENCE REGIME MUST GO! In The Name of Humanity We REFUSE To Accept a Fascist America, A Better World IS Possible*) I have spoken to how this is in fact a fascist regime; the basis on which it has risen to power in this country; how, so long as it remains in power, this regime will commit ever greater atrocities and poses a very real threat to the future and very existence of humanity through its assaults on the environment and its arsenals of nuclear annihilation; and why, in the name of humanity, it is necessary, and how it is possible, to force the removal of this regime through a massive, nonviolent but sustained mobilization of people demanding that this regime must go! Here, I am going to speak to the relation between this and the fundamental goal of revolution.

If this regime is able to further consolidate its power and more fully implement its horrific agenda, the prospects for revolution could then be greatly set back and the conscious revolutionary forces decimated—or completely destroyed—at least for a time. On the other hand, if a mass movement is built to drive out this regime, *and* if the revolutionaries work to build this movement from the perspective of how it relates to the revolution that is needed as the fundamental solution, then the situation in society (and the world) will become much more favorable for the fight against injustice and oppression, and crucial advances can be made toward the overthrow of the whole system. To a significant degree now, the conflict between the sections of society upholding this fascism and those opposing it, from various different perspectives, is shaping the terrain on which the struggle for revolution must be carried out; this conflict is likely to intensify, and could erupt further in violent confrontation, and in any case it would be a significant factor in the context of an all-out struggle between revolution and counter-revolution.

The relation between the struggle against this fascist regime and building the revolution is not a “straight road” or a “one-way street”: It must not be approached, by those who understand the need for revolution, as if “first we must build a mass movement to drive out this regime, and then we can turn our attention to working directly for revolution.” No. It is crucial to unite and mobilize people, from different perspectives, very broadly, around the demand that this regime must go, but it will be much more difficult to do this on the scale and with the determination that is required to meet this objective if there are not, at the same time, greater and greater numbers of people who have been brought forward around the understanding that it is necessary to put an end not only to this regime but to *the system out of whose deep and defining*

*contradictions this regime has arisen*, a system which by its very nature has imposed, and will continue to impose, horrific and completely unnecessary suffering on the masses of humanity, until this system itself is abolished. And the more that people *are* brought forward to be consciously, actively working for revolution, the growing strength and “moral authority” of this revolutionary force will in turn strengthen the resolve of growing numbers of people to drive out this fascist regime now in power, even as many will not be (and some will perhaps never be) won to revolution. So, both to meet the immediate challenge of creating a political situation in which this regime will be removed from power—and in which the political initiative has been seized to a great degree by those who are determined to turn back the assault on humanity that is being carried out by this regime and to strive for a better world, however they understand that—and to advance toward the fundamental goal of revolution, it is vitally important that all those who have come to understand the need for revolution actively contribute to building the movement to drive out this regime, *and* do so from the perspective and in the overall framework of building for revolution.

Facing these monumental challenges and looking toward these world-historic objectives, with the small forces that are right now part of the revolution, how do we go forward from here to rise to what the fundamental needs of humanity require of us? Starting with those of us who have come to see not just that this revolution could bring a much better world into being but also that this revolution is urgently needed, *and is possible*; drawing guidance from the website [revcom.us](http://revcom.us) and *Revolution* newspaper, to act on the basis of a unified understanding and approach; using *HOW WE CAN WIN* as a basic guideline, and what has been gone into more fully in this talk as a further elaboration of this (and using *the film* that will be made of this talk and the film *THE TRUMP/PENCE REGIME MUST GO!* as important tools); while digging into *Basics* and other key works of the new communism to get a continually deeper grounding in the scientific method and approach to revolution, we **go to work** to build this revolution: spread this revolution everywhere, organize people into the ranks of the revolution and give them the ways to work for this revolution, **fighting the power, and transforming the people, for revolution**, carrying out the “**3 Prepares**”... to, in turn, further spread this revolution, with more people actively doing so, organize more people into the ranks of the revolution, working actively for this revolution... to spread this revolution even further throughout society... through all the challenges and difficulties, and in the face of the attempts by the powers that be to derail and crush this revolution and its leadership, advance toward the situation where the system is in a deep and acute crisis *and* “millions and millions of people

refuse to be ruled in the old way—and are willing and determined to put everything on the line to bring down this system and bring into being a new society and government that will be based on the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*.”

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

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