

# SCIENCE AND REVOLUTION

On the Importance of Science and  
the Application of Science to Society,  
the New Synthesis of Communism and  
the Leadership of Bob Avakian

An Interview with  
Ardea Skybreak

Excerpt from *Science and Revolution*

## A Need for a Big Societal Debate: Reform, or Revolution?

**AS continues:** There's a big mass societal debate that needs to go on among all strata on the question of reform or revolution: Which is the way forward? Reform means you tinker with the system, you try to fix it here or there. An example of reform, for instance, is that you would try to deal with police brutality and murder by things like having civilian review boards, and putting body cameras on policemen, and in other ways trying to fix things *within* the existing relations in society, *within the existing system*. And people do try these things. Civilian review boards have been around since at least the 1960s, you know. People keep falling into these traps of these reformist notions that, somehow, if you could just fix and tweak this a little bit here and there, you could get rid of these outrages and abuses. And what that comes from is a lack of profound scientific understanding of why these kinds of

outrages are not just accidental or occasional, and why they're deeply rooted in the fabric of this system, in its very foundation, which has everything to do with the white supremacist origins of this particular society in the United States, how this country was founded on slavery, and everything that came from there that's never been surpassed. It's not just a question of backward racist ideas on the part of some white people. That is in the mix. But much more deeply, **there is an institutional fabric in how this capitalist-imperialist system is structured and how it works**, in such a way that it cannot resolve these deep, deep divisions and problems, that requires that certain sections of society be kept down and oppressed, in particular, Black people in this country, and other people of color as well.

That's a whole bigger discussion, there's a whole deep analysis of why that's true. This has been deeply gotten into by Bob Avakian and the RCP, and people should check that out. I'm not going to try to get into it more here. But in the context of what we're talking about right now, I'm saying that, if people are just looking for some ways of making a few token **reforms**, a few "tweaks" to the system, or looking for ways to maybe improve a few things in just one neighborhood or local area...it's not that all those kinds of projects and plans are really bad in themselves, but it's that they **won't lead to the fundamental change that's needed**. For instance, look at the environmental movement. What is happening with the environment is a global emergency that requires big-scale measures of restructuring the way the economy, and society overall, operates, to prevent the constant exploitation and degradation of the environments of the planet that's going to end up leading people to extinction, you know. I firmly believe that humanity is either going to find the ways to transform its forms of social organization in the direction of viable socialism and eventually moving towards planet-wide communism, or humanity's going to go extinct because of what it's doing to this planet. I can make scientific arguments about why I think that's really true. And time is getting short. So that's just one example: why the environmental problem has to be tackled on a really big scale, by making really fundamental, radical change in the whole way society is organized, structured and run. Just a little more enlightenment and just a few tweaks and minor reforms of the existing system are simply not going to cut it.

But a lot of progressive-minded middle strata people...often they'll get into things like, "it might be better not to use plastic bags at the grocery stores," or "let's have green light bulbs," "let's recycle more," "or "let's see if we can work on hybrid and electric cars to reduce pollution, and let's have more solar panels, for clean energy." There's actually a lot that can be learned from a lot of these initiatives, and many of those kinds of changes

**are** things that you would actually want to implement in a new society. And I'm not saying that it's bad to be encouraging some of those small steps even today. But what I would like people to recognize more honestly is how puny, limited and tokenistic these changes are, especially relative to the actual scope and scale of the environmental crisis. **It's not even scratching the surface of the problem.** What is needed is much more profound, radical change. And I think a lot of the middle strata people are always looking for these "little ways of tinkering," trying to reform just a few things, in a way that seems more comfortable and manageable, rather than confronting the need for a total dismantling of the system and institutions that are necessarily **driven**, by their own **underlying laws of functioning**, to despoil and degrade the environment. **The system of capitalism-imperialism cannot stop doing this, it is structurally unable to stop doing this—that's what you have to confront.** People sincerely concerned about the global environment really should seriously study Bob Avakian's analyses, which make the case, and provide evidence, for why problems such as these are so deeply rooted in the very functional core of this capitalist system that they can't be dealt with just through a series of minor adjustments. What is required is a profound and radical overhaul of the whole way society is set up at its foundations, of the whole way it functions in a comprehensive sense. But to effect this radical restructuring it is necessary to have an actual revolution—so **that**, more than anything else, is what people genuinely concerned about the global environmental emergency should be working towards.

These arguments are backed up by a lot of sound and concrete scientific evidence. Nevertheless, a lot of these middle strata people are uncomfortable with the prospect of such radical change. In some cases, it's more that they just haven't yet encountered these analyses, they're unfamiliar with them, nobody's ever talked to them about this, they haven't yet explored the revcom.us website and *Revolution* newspaper or the works of Bob Avakian. But I'm sure many of them—especially among the younger people who are not so invested in reformist methods and approaches—will find their way to these resources, and will start seriously digging into all this themselves, and I think many will end up being willing to confront "the logic of the logic." In other words, when they seriously dig into the analyses, they will increasingly recognize that, "Yes, this does make sense, this is what the evidence points to." And even though revolution is not an easy road, and there will necessarily be sacrifices, it would all be worth it to have a genuine possibility of making a much better world, of constructing much better societies, on a new basis and foundation that could very quickly address the major problems of capitalist society, and which would greatly benefit the vast majority of people. The irony is that all those middle class people who constantly complain about the way things are today but who shy away from radical change and revolution...many of them, most of them in fact, would, I am quite sure, end up very much benefitting from, and appreciating, life in a new socialist society, especially a socialist society of the type envisioned by Bob Avakian's new synthesis. Once again, on the foundation of that solid core, but with lots of elasticity based on the solid core, there would be air to breathe for these people in such a society. They would not be pushed to the side or crushed or stifled, as long as they were not trying to actually destroy the new society, and they would find that they could themselves help institute a lot of the progressive social changes that they get so frustrated at not being able to implement under conditions of the current system. So they should look forward to it, and help work towards it.

But again, right now, especially among the middle class, a lot of these people are more inclined to stick with what they're more familiar with—the known rather than the unknown. They haven't dug into any of this, really. They haven't checked it out. They haven't discussed and debated it. Many seem more content with puttering around with little reformist schemes, making little minor criticisms, and just basically complaining about the way things are, but without really doing anything that's substantial to get beyond this. And the crime is that, meanwhile, while they do that, while they cultivate and promote their illusions, and when they try to tear down a revolutionary leader like Bob Avakian and try to prevent him from getting his message out broadly to the people—while they're doing all that, the world continues as it is, with the unrelenting grinding down of the masses of people here and around the world. The blood and the bones—this is real, it is ongoing, and it will continue to go on, on a daily basis, as long as this system is allowed to persist.