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THE NEED TO GO BEYOND FRANTZ FANON TO AN ALL-THE-WAY COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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There truly is nothing else like The Bob Avakian Interviews on *The RNL Show*. Up close and personal they reveal BA's leadership, his understanding of the people, and his vision and concrete plan for an emancipating future for humanity. BA is "hard-core for revolution, with a largeness of mind, generosity of spirit, and lively sense of humor—all of which shines through in these Interviews."



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Every week *The RNL Show* exposes and digs deep into the problem that people here and around the world face in the capitalist-imperialist system and brings to life the only solution through a real revolution to emancipate humanity. *The RNL Show* brings the timely leadership of Bob Avakian to guide getting organized for revolution.



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Along with *The RNL Show*, REVCOM.US is the resource for both timely articles from Bob Avakian as well as his full body of work. Every week revcom.us applies the scientific method of the new communism to analyze events in the world providing essential guidance to preparing for revolution on a nationwide basis.

THE NEED TO GO BEYOND FRANTZ FANON TO AN ALL-THE-WAY COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Editors' note: The following discussion of Frantz Fanon was originally published two years ago, as a supplement to our coverage of Andy Zee's discussion with Cornel West on the occasion of the republication of Fanon's major work, The Wretched of the Earth. We think it is extremely timely today at a time when significant forces in the movement against the U.S.-Israel war on the Palestinian people draw on Fanon as their guide and conceive of what's needed in terms of "decolonization." The article discusses the contributions but also the very significant limitations and shortcomings of Fanon, in light of "what has been learned over the decades since, and more specifically through the development of the new communism brought forward by Bob Avakian." We urge everyone active in the movement against or concerned about that war to get into this article.

The Wretched of the Earth offers some important insights about the colonial mentality, and the importance of overcoming this, among the colonized in the Third World struggles in the 1960s, and is important to the understanding of that historical period, as well as stinging condemnation of western colonialism and a trenchant critique of the bourgeoisie in those Third World countries and their inability to lead a struggle for real liberation. In this way, *The Wretched of the Earth* contributed to the last great upsurge of national liberation struggles in the 1960s, and is important to the understanding of that historical period.

At the same time, in retrospect—and from the standpoint of what has been learned over the decades since, and more specifically through the development of the new communism brought forward by Bob Avakian—it is possible (and necessary) to conclude that there are some significant shortcomings that can lead to real problems.

To cite one important aspect of this, Fanon argues that violence against the colonial oppressor is necessary in order for the colonized to rid themselves of the imposed colonial mentality. It is not that there is nothing to the idea that actually waging struggle, including armed struggle, against the oppressor can, if it is part of an overall correct approach, contribute to casting off “superstitious awe” toward the oppressive force that has ruled over and degraded the oppressed. But violence against the oppressors is not, or should not be, the purpose (or end in itself) in waging revolutionary struggle.

The purpose, the goal is—it needs to be—something much higher and more profound: putting an end to the oppressive system, putting an end to all oppression and exploitation, emancipating all the oppressed and ultimately all of humanity. And the violence, which historical experience and the application of the scientific method demonstrate is necessary to achieve this fundamental goal and purpose, must be waged in a way consistent with and

SUGGESTED READINGS

These works can be found at www.revcom.us and at Revolution Books in NYC and Berkeley

Bob Avakian, *Breakthroughs: The Historic Breakthrough by Marx, and the Further Breakthrough with the New Communism—A Basic Summary*

Bob Avakian, **THE NEW COMMUNISM: The science, the strategy, the leadership for an actual revolution, and a radically new society on the road to real emancipation**

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

Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America (Draft Proposal), authored by Bob Avakian

Break ALL the Chains!—Bob Avakian on the Emancipation of Women and the Communist Revolution

Communism: The Beginning of a New Stage, A Manifesto from the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

You Don't Know What You Think You 'Know' About... The Communist Revolution and the REAL Path to Emancipation: Its History and Our Future, by Raymond Lotta

Bob Avakian, **THIS IS A RARE TIME WHEN REVOLUTION BECOMES POSSIBLE—WHY THAT IS SO, AND HOW TO SEIZE ON THIS RARE OPPORTUNITY**

This can be seen in the many works of BA that are available at Revolution Books, here in New York City and in Berkeley, and in the Collected Works of BA that are available through revcom.us—speeches and films, books, essays and articles, including *Hope For Humanity On A Scientific Basis*, especially the section: “Differing Views on the Meaning of Life, and Death: What *Is* Worth Living and Dying For?” which quotes at length from the discussion of this in another important work by BA, “Ruminations and Wranglings”—the full title of which is *Ruminations and Wranglings: On the Importance of Marxist Materialism, Communism as a Science, Meaningful Revolutionary Work, and a Life with Meaning*, in particular the section “Life With a Purpose: Different Experiences, Different Spontaneous Views, and Fundamentally Different World Outlooks.”

So, again, we must respectfully—but strongly—insist that, particularly in terms of the urgent needs in this time, while there are things to learn, positively and in some ways negatively, from Fanon, the best of what is represented and has been contributed by Fanon—and, beyond that, the most advanced, scientifically based synthesis of revolutionary thinking overall, the most important body of work of an intellectual, theoretical and practical revolutionary—is what has been developed, and even now is being furthered developed, by BA.

It is a fact that far too few people have even heard of BA, and still fewer have seriously engaged the crucial work that he has done (and is continuing to do). This is a serious problem that all of us have an important responsibility to change, if the profound, and yes even existential, situation with which the masses of people in the world, and humanity as a whole, are confronted can be transformed in a positive way, if we ever want to get out from under the horrors of this system and really get free.

as an expression of this goal and purpose—and not something in contradiction and conflict with it, nor something as a purpose in itself.

Along with this, and contrary to Fanon (as well as to what is in Cornel West’s new introduction), the goal should not be that “the last shall be first” but, as Bob Avakian (BA) has repeatedly emphasized: getting to a point where, throughout the world, there are no longer those who are first and those who are last—getting to a communist world, with the achievement of the “4 Alls” throughout the world. The “4 Alls” refers to overcoming *all* classes and class divisions of society...*all* of the enslaving relations of exploitation that come from the capitalist-imperialist mode of production...*all* the social relations that correspond to those relations...and *all* the ideas that reflect and reinforce those exploitative and oppressive relations throughout the world.

In this connection, Fanon’s approach to the relation between nationalism and internationalism is an eclectic “two-into-one” combination, which is in opposition to the correct understanding—another very important development and contribution of BA’s new communism—that, first of all materially, in an overall and fundamental sense the international dimension is principal and decisive, and this must be reflected in an ideological and practical internationalist orientation of: *putting the advance of the world revolution first and above all*, while waging the revolutionary struggle in a particular country (or nation) as a process which is, on the one hand (and as an overall secondary aspect) a relatively discrete process, but which fundamentally—and in the principal aspect—takes place as part of the larger process on a world level.

Cornel West’s introduction affirms some correct and important points including Fanon’s role in the sixties siding with revolutionary struggles against colonial and national oppression, and for

national liberation. At the same time, there are some specific strong and crucial disagreements that must be raised.

To begin with, there are the first two sentences of this introduction:

Frantz Fanon is the greatest revolutionary intellectual of the mid-twentieth century. He also is the most relevant for the twenty-first century.

And there is this concluding statement:

Frantz Fanon is one of the few great revolutionary intellectuals who always connected the psychic and the political, the existential and the economic, the spiritual and the social.

In our present-day moment of imperial decay and capitalist decrepitude (be it in the USA, China, or Russia)—including our ecological emergency, escalating neo-fascism, and pervasive xenophobia (against Muslims, Arabs, Jews, and LGBTQ+ peoples) as well as deep white supremacy—the spirit of Fanon is most manifest in my American imperialist context in the revolutionary internationalist wings of the Black Lives Matter movement and the Palestinian Lives Matter movement aligned with the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions efforts. Yet the task of full-fledged decolonization and wholesale democratization with genuine socialist options remains unfinished. Let us not betray our mission—just as Frantz Fanon never sold his soul nor betrayed his prophetic vocation!

With the first sentence, at the beginning of Cornel West's introduction, we must respectfully—but strongly—disagree. The greatest revolutionary intellectual of the mid-20th century (and up until his death in 1976) was Mao Zedong—and, yes, Mao was a revolutionary intellectual, and a theoretical as well as a practical revolutionary leader. It was Mao who, in the middle of the 20th century (in 1949), led the long process of the Chinese revolution to victory, emancipating hundreds of millions of Chinese people

And that is not all. BA has also developed—and is continuing to further develop—the strategic orientation and approach for how to carry out an actual revolution, yes right in this country—the bringing forward of a revolutionary force of millions who, when the necessary conditions have been brought into being, are led to fight all-out to overthrow this monstrous system of capitalism-imperialism, which has all manner of horrific oppression, here and worldwide, *built into it*. And BA has provided a sweeping vision and concrete blueprint for a radically new, emancipating society, beginning immediately upon the overthrow of this system and the seizure of power by the revolutionary masses of people: *The Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*.

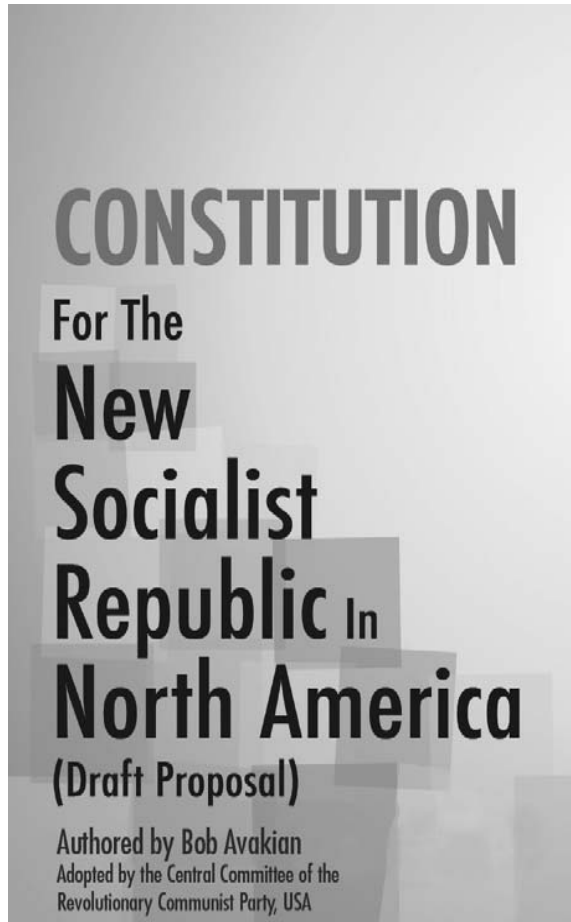
As we revcoms have put it in *A Declaration, A Call To Get Organized Now For A Real Revolution*:

There never has been a leader like this in this country and there is no other leader like this in the world now. We cannot afford *not* to follow this leadership if we ever want to get free and put an end to this madness.

As a last point here, it is worth returning to the following statement in the conclusion of Cornel West's introduction:

Frantz Fanon is one of the few great revolutionary intellectuals who always connected the psychic and the political, the existential and the economic, the spiritual and the social.

Here again, as a revolutionary intellectual, theoretician, and practical revolutionary leader, far more than anyone else today (and even beyond what is true of the previous great leaders of the communist movement) Bob Avakian has connected the economic, the political, the social, as well as the cultural, and yes the existential, and (in the right sense) the spiritual and the psychic, in a comprehensive synthesis that is grounded in a thoroughly materialist and dialectical scientific method and approach.



Available at revcom.us

from centuries of horrific, inhuman oppression and exploitation by imperialist and “domestic” exploiters and oppressors, and then led in the continuation of this revolution, while providing inspiration to billions of the oppressed throughout the world, including Black people in the U.S., whose struggle against their oppression Mao very strongly supported.

In the course of doing this, Mao developed the theoretical, political, and strategic as well as ideological lines that scientifically exposed the features of colonial oppression, and its relation to the overall system of capitalism-imperialism, not only in China but in the colonized (and neo-colonized) countries generally, *and* provided important orientation and guidance for the revolutionary struggle in those countries, with significant relevance for the revolutionary struggle in the world as a whole, including in imperialist countries like the U.S. (And, yes, Mao also spoke to the problem of the “colonial mentality” among the oppressed in countries of the Third World—for example, there is his typically earthy comment that, “As soon as a foreigner farts here, there is always someone Chinese to say it smells good!”)

Following the initial victory of the Chinese revolution, and with the advance on the road of socialist construction and transformation for several decades after this initial victory, Mao continued advancing the scientific theory of revolution, including his crucial contribution that, in socialist society, even when the means of production have been (mainly) socialized, there remain important contradictions in the economic relations, the social relations (for example, between city and countryside, between different nationalities within the country, between men and women, and between mental and manual labor) as well as contradictions in the realms of politics and culture—all of which, in addition to imperialist encirclement and threats against the socialist country, provides the material basis for forces to arise within socialist society which will seek to restore capitalism. And given the leading

role of the Communist Party in this society, the most concentrated expression, and greatest danger, of this lies *within* the Communist Party itself, in particular at its leading levels, among those who, as Mao put it, are “people in authority taking the capitalist road”—an understanding that, all too unfortunately and with terrible consequences, was borne out after Mao’s death with the seizure of power by those “capitalist roaders,” led by Deng Xiaoping.

Mao provided all this leadership and guidance while at the same time leading China in providing practical as well as ideological orientation and concrete assistance to people fighting against imperialism throughout the world, in particular the Third World, with an outstanding example of this being the self-sacrificing assistance that China provided to the Vietnamese people in their war of liberation against U.S. imperialism, which costs the lives of two to three million Vietnamese.

And, again, Mao was not just a practical revolutionary leader of the highest caliber, but also the most advanced theoretician of revolution in his time—and a true intellectual in the most meaningful sense, whose interests were not simply in politics and revolution but ranged to science, art, and other spheres, while being grounded in the scientific method and approach of communism. It is Mao who authored the important statement that Marxism *embraces but does not replace* physics and other spheres of science and culture—in fact, all of human existence and endeavor.

As for the second of the first two sentences in Cornel West’s introduction—the assertion that Fanon is the most relevant revolutionary intellectual for the 21st century—here again we must respectfully, but strongly, disagree. In fact, as an article on our website revcom.us states simply and clearly, on a scientific basis: *Bob Avakian (BA) is the most important political thinker and leader in the world today.*

And, yes, Bob Avakian is a revolutionary intellectual on the highest level, who has brought forward a further advance in communism—a new synthesis, popularly known as the new communism. In developing the new communism, BA has, with a critical scientific approach, drawn from the mainly positive experience but also from the secondary (and in some cases serious) errors of the communist movement, and the experience of revolutionary struggle broadly (including an early reading of Fanon) and from a broad range of human endeavor. The result of this is that, with the new communism, communism has been put on an even firmer scientific foundation, with an even more consistently scientific approach and method, and with an even more thoroughly internationalist orientation (including by critiquing and moving beyond certain secondary but significant tendencies in Mao that went against his overall internationalist orientation and approach).

One of the most important expressions of the new communism is the determined struggle BA has waged to root out of the communist movement the poisonous notion that “the ends justify the means” (that any means are justified if the goal is, or is proclaimed to be, righteous). In opposition to this, in the struggle to overthrow the system of capitalism-imperialism and bring into being a radically emancipating socialist system, on an entirely different foundation—aiming for the final goal of a communist world with the abolition of all exploitation and oppression, everywhere—BA insists that *the means utilized in this struggle must be in keeping with, and an expression of, this emancipatory goal*. This is concentrated in BA’s repeated emphasis on the fact that the purpose of this revolution is not revenge, and the fundamental goal is not “the last shall be first, and the first last,” but is *the emancipation of humanity*—the bringing into being of a world in which there will no longer be those who are “first” and (many) others who are “last.”