

Party's Speech at July 4th 'We Make Society Run, Why Can't We Run Society?'

Excerpts from the speech by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA at the July 4th demonstration in Philadelphia.

"The capitalists come around and talk about national unity—all together, make America more productive, get it back to be number one. Well you know, I like to put it this way: It's like you got a tapeworm in society—because that's what they are—a tapeworm down inside society and it says to us, 'Look here, boy. Shovel some more food on down, will you? After all, the more you put in there, the more there is for both of us.'

"But that ain't the way it works. Because if you got a tapeworm inside of you and you put more down, it grabs more and more, gets bigger and bigger, wants more and more, and you get sicker and sicker. And there's only one thing to do with a tapeworm—you got to get rid of it. You got to kill it. You got to take it out of that body. [applause]

"And that's the same thing—that tapeworm ain't nothing but their drive for profit. They come around and say, 'Give me a little more and I'll trickle a little down to you.' And we're not going for any of their trickles because they shut it off a long time ago. And we ain't satisfied with trickles anyway. We're cutting you out of society, buddy. We're taking over and your day is through. That's all. [applause]

"And they tell us, they say, 'You got to go to war to defend me.' But they can't say that. They don't say go to war to defend Standard Oil—all these other monopolies, U.S. Steel, GM, Chrysler, what have you. They say 'Defend the country. It's all of our country. After all, we might have differences. And I might be sucking your blood. But when it comes down to it, we got to fight to defend the country.'

"Like the brother from the Vietnam Veterans Against the War said: the capitalists always talk about how we got to defend them from the Russians.

"Well we got something to say about that: Yeah, we're going to defend the country, we're going to defend it when it belongs to us. That's when we're going to defend it. So the first thing we got to do is to put things straight. First of all we got to take over the country. Then we'll set about defending it—against you. [applause] And against any other slave drivers that might come over and try to take advantage of the situation.

"We'll deal with them too. Because once the working class is in power, nobody is going to take it away from us. We don't struggle and strive to get power just to hand it over to somebody else.

"What have we accomplished with this demonstration? We've stood up right in their face and we've smacked them right in the face. And we've done something more. Not only have we made a statement that we're not going along with the way they try to picture the past and we certainly are not going along with the way that they're handing down the present and more than that we're not going along with their version of the future. Also, we built our own organization. We began to get a sense of our own strength...

"You know there was a strike in Milwaukee a little while ago—went on for over a year. A strike of meat-cutters. Those workers realized that they were trying to cut their wages and bust their union. And I'll tell you something. That struggle was not won in the short run...

"But something important happened there. We can learn in every battle we're involved in, whether we win or lose in the short run. The workers, like we're doing today, built their strength and built their organization. And one worker said: 'Some day, somebody's going to have to pay for what they've done to us.'

"And that's what we're standing up and saying here on July 4 in this bicentennial demonstration. Some day—and the day's not that far off and it's a day we're building for—you're going to have to pay for what you've done to us all these hundreds of years. [applause]

"We're partly here for revenge, but we're here for a lot more than just revenge. Because revenge by itself is not going to solve the problem...But if we just concern ourselves with that, then we could have a new exploiting group develop inside maybe even our own ranks. We could turn to fighting among ourselves if we weren't concerned with something more than revenge, and that's transforming this whole society.

"Because we don't want to have a situation where



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a hundred years later the next generation of kids comes along and says: we're going to get those bloodsuckers off our backs! We want to do away with the situation where there's anymore bloodsuckers.

"We're going to do away with the situation where society is divided into classes. We're going to do away with a situation where a handful of people make everybody else work for them in order to make them rich. We're going to do away with that situation and they won't be able to come around and say anymore, 'It's look out for number one. If you don't make somebody else work for you, you're going to have to end up working for them.'

"We're tired of that. We're going to do away with the situation where anybody has to work for anybody else and everybody's going to work together for the common good. And everybody's going to do the different kinds of jobs that need to be done and we're going to plan it all out so society belongs to us.

"Now I'm going to tell you—what I'm describing is supposed to be a scary word. It's when the working class comes to power, keeps them down and moves to eliminate classes and achieves communism—and that's supposed to be a scary word...

"Communism. They try to make it scary. Communism doesn't mean anything but *in common*. And we're the working class, we work in common—why the hell shouldn't we run society in common for the common good of the common people. Ain't nothing scary about that. [applause] What the hell is scary about that?

"But it's scary to them. Because it means doing away with their whole system where the masses of people got to work to make them rich and we got to slave and suffer and have nothing to hand down to our kids but the same struggle that we went through no matter how much we try to strive to make it better—until we rise up and get rid of them...

"So we're talking about something big. We're talking about the need for revolution and that's no small task. But I got a question to ask. If we can begin to get ourselves organized like we have here. If we can march and rally in a disciplined way. If we can learn to battle toe-to-toe with them. If we can build up our own forces and begin to take care of each other and begin to reach out and build our movement broader. If we can do that, why can't we go on and do it? Not just a few thousand that are here today, but the millions that we represent. Why can't we carry it through? Why can't we get united? Why can't we run society?

"If we make society run—which we do and let me see anybody stand up and deny it—we make all of society run. Now if we make all of society run, why in the hell can't we run all of society [applause] ...

"Why the hell can't we reshape society so that it conforms to the needs and interests of the great majority of people? What's the answer? Can we do it? [shouts of "Yeah!"] Can they stop us? ["No!"]

"All right, but let's talk about where things are at right now, because that's what we're aiming for. We know that we're a few thousand here...a small demonstration compared to the millions out there...

"But I'll tell you something else—this country and the rulers of this country and the working people of this country, more importantly, have not seen a demonstration like this in a long, long time if they've ever seen anything like it. So it's an important step. We're drawing the lines real clear. And we're saying we ain't got nothing in common with them.

"But on the other hand, we got to recognize where this real strength lies, where this real power lies, and where our potential lies to achieve this revolutionary goal...Where does that strength and that ability lie? Just with us here? No...

"And we've got a lot of work to do. We've got to be just the white cap on the top of that wave, that rising wave of working class struggle, we've got to go back, and not think only in terms of us who are here but think in terms of the millions who couldn't come, think of where the real strength and power lies in the great majority of working people.

"We can't get discouraged if the movement takes a long time. We can't get discouraged if it doesn't go on a straight line forward, if there are ups and downs in it because the future does belong to us and that's not just rhetoric. The future truly belongs to us but we've got to forge it. Just like work everyday is a struggle to forge these products, so forging the movement in which we can take matters, and we can take society, in our own hands and become masters of society—this too is going to be a long struggle.

"But they're going to make us struggle one way or the other. The question isn't are we going to struggle or aren't we going to struggle. The question is whether we're going to struggle and dig a hole in the ground, spinning our wheels in the same place, or whether we're going to go forward, shed our blood and sacrifice so that we can move forward, so we can sweep away this society that we live under now, this bloodsucking capitalist society and put it in a dustbin. Put it into a museum...

"We've got a long struggle. It's going to have ups and downs and there's going to be setbacks. The first country that the working class created with its own hands, the Soviet Union, was stolen back by a new class of capitalists who rose right from within the workers own ranks, and that's why I say we can't be content just with getting revenge with the present rulers. We have to do away with the conditions where we have slave-masters and slaves and we have exploiters and exploited. We have to do away with the conditions where anyone can force anybody else to work for them and make them rich in order for those other people to live.

"Despite that setback that the first workers' state was stolen from the working class, it can't last long, because when you restore capitalism, which has happened in the Soviet Union, you restore everything that we're fighting against. And you can bet that the workers in Russia are fighting back. We've seen it already in Poland where workers have risen up recently against rising prices and exploitation.

"The capitalists in this country point to Russia and say, 'You see, if you rise up against us it won't do any good. You'll just end up like the workers in Russia, you'll have new slavedrivers on your back and they're even worse than we are.'

"But we ain't going for that anymore because we see that while there's been a setback there, in China and in other countries throughout the world the working class meanwhile has taken power into its own hands. Think about this—about a billion people, one fourth of humanity, is already living in the conditions where the working class rules and is reshaping society. It's advancing towards a stage where we won't have any more classes, won't have any more exploiters, won't have any more oppressors, won't have a situation where the masses of people have to work to make a few people rich. And this is what we're advancing towards...

"If I stood up and told you that this was going to be easy, you'd know I was a liar, because nothing in this life is easy. Everything in life is a struggle. But, like I said, they don't give us a choice of whether we're going to struggle or not, and we're not going to give them any choice...

"So let me close by saying: Let's leave here, let's have a clear sense and a good head about the problems, the difficulties, the twists and turns that are going to lie ahead, that it's going to be a struggle. But more than that, let's build on what we've done here, that we've stood up on our own two feet, that we've begun to straighten our backs.

"Let's build on that and let's go forward from here with the confidence that the future belongs to us, and that nothing can stop us from creating that future and from emancipating all of mankind once and for all." ■