

WHAT HUMANITY NEEDS

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of reality will assert itself and confront you, whether you talk about it or not.

So you can't avoid that. A lot of things are necessarily complex, even while it should be our objective, and I do the best I can, to try to make those things as accessible and understandable as possible for people—including people who are newer to things. Even when a lot of complexity does have to be engaged, I try to break it down, and come at it from different angles—sometimes going over it in one or two different ways, or three or four different ways—to try to enable people to get inside of the complexity and examine it and learn from it. Still, there's no getting around the fact that there is complexity that has to be engaged.

But at the same time, in order to deal with that complexity, you have to get a grounding in some of the fundamentals. And that's the point of *BAasics*. Its objective, ultimately, is to serve the training of new generations of revolutionaries—as well as a further grounding for people who may be veteran revolutionaries, who've been at this for some time—in the fundamentals, in the basic analyses, principles, methods, and objectives of communism. And it needs to play that role. It already has gotten out in some significant ways and had an impact, and has been something that people who are new to all this can take up and get into. You can go to different places in the book—you don't necessarily have to read it in the order in which it is—you can go to different places, get something out of it, then go to another part.

So, I think it has shown—let me put it this way—the potential to play the role that it has to play. But there's still much more that needs to be done—it needs to be catapulted, if you will, onto a whole other level and reach a lot more broadly among many more people, in order to introduce them to and begin to give them a grounding in this....

In conceiving of and in planning the book, I will say that we did deliberately organize it so it could be a counterpoint to and in opposition to the Bible. So that's why, like you have Leviticus 20:13 in the Bible, horrific things in there; and then you have *BAasics*. Or John 3:16: for God so loved the world, blah, blah, blah; and then you have *BAasics* 3:16, calling on the masses of people—those who have been cast off by the system—to rise up. And so on. So that—we did consciously do that. But not so that it would be conceived of and treated and wielded as some kind of religious catechism or dogma. The point was, we had a vision, which I think is a good vision, taking into account how the religious fundamentalist forces are given a very wide rein in the

prisons to go in and indoctrinate people in religion—either Christianity or Islam, or whatever—and they're given a lot of assistance and support from the state, with the notion that steeping people in the reactionary ideology that's embodied in those scriptures will somehow cause them to be better people. But then, on the other hand, revolutionary literature has a very hard time getting into the prisons. But we had a conscious vision that we wanted to have contests going on in the prisons, where some of these religious-indoctrinated prisoners would be saying, "Oh, we gotta learn from John 3:16"—and one of the other prisoners, who is revolutionary-minded, says: "fuck that—*BAasics* 3:16."

On the other hand, the concept was not and is not that somehow this is supposed to contend on the level of religious dogma. First of all, it has a revolutionary and not an outmoded reactionary content—a liberating, not an enslaving content—which the Bible and the other scriptures, such as the Qur'an, do have. But, second of all, it is a distillation of a scientific approach and method; if you read it and grapple with it, you can see that. It is not encouraging people to blindly follow this or that, or to worship this or that. Quite the contrary: it's calling on people to rise up consciously and think critically. That is both explicitly stated, and the whole character and approach of it, and the whole orientation of it, is that.

Radically Changing the World, and Changing Yourself in That Context

Brooks: *Another one of these common ways of thinking, pervasive ways of thinking, is the sentiment that gets expressed, in one form or another, that the revolution has to start within—change has to start within, I have to change myself, or people have to change themselves individually, before they can really change the world.*

BA: Well, first of all, that takes too long. [BA and Brooks laugh.] There are something like seven billion people in the world, and if they each have to change themselves first, there are too many horrors that will go on, in the meantime. But, more fundamentally than that, as we've referred to before: Yes, people changing—transforming the people, transforming their outlook, their values, their morals—is an important part of building the movement for revolution, and then succeeding with that revolution, bringing a new society, and ultimately a whole new world, into being. Yes, that is an important part of it. But the question is: how is that gonna come about? First of all, you have to know—and this, once again, gets back to the question of proceeding from science, or not—you have to know what are the changes that are necessary: what are the changes that are necessary in yourself, what are the changes that are necessary among people more broadly, what are the changes that are necessary in this society and in the world? If you don't correctly identify that, then even if you were to set out to change yourself, you wouldn't get very far—or you'd go in the wrong direction trying to change yourself.

So that's part of the picture. But it's also an important part of the picture that people do not and cannot change themselves in that kind of way, in a vacuum, turning inward into themselves. And we've seen the opposite, the positive side of this, with some of the resistance that we've been talking about,

for example the prisoners' hunger strike, where a lot of prisoners united that people said could never unite, and they rose up and gave expression to values and morals that people said they could never give expression to—these prisoners are declared "the lowest of the low, the worst of the worst," and here they were sacrificing for a larger good than themselves. And you see that in the "Occupy" movement and in other forms of protest, rebellion, resistance. People begin to change themselves as they begin to fight back against the system and raise their heads and think about bigger things. **It is only in the context of struggling to change the world that people can even fully recognize the need to transform themselves; further, they can only wrestle fully with the question of how they should transform themselves as part of, and together with, the larger process of changing the world.**

And then, once again, there's the question of the science—the method and approach of communism, and the goal of communism, has to be brought into the picture, so that people can actually understand what is the problem here. Is it that everybody's just thinking about themselves in some abstract sense—everybody's selfish, out of some sort of innate and unchangeable, or at least personal, failing and bad quality of their own? **Or**, is there a system and a set of economic, social and political relations, and institutions, and a whole set of ideas and values corresponding to those relations, that's being promoted out here in the world, which results in people acting the way they act?

New Initiators of a New Stage of Communism

BA: And there is a dialectical, or back and forth, relation involved. On the one hand, there is the need to be influencing millions of people now—through the wielding of our Party's newspaper, through the popularizing of the new synthesis of communism, and through this campaign that you mentioned to go out and raise massive funds, what we've called the "BA Everywhere" campaign, to actually get the new synthesis and my leadership and body of work out there in a truly major way, with societal impact. That campaign is a key element of influencing millions of people now: getting the concept of this revolution and the scientific grounding underneath it, in a basic sense, out to millions, so millions of people are encountering it, so that people are debating it very broadly in society—so it's a point of reference. We have used the formulation "making BA a household name." What that means is not that people are gossiping about BA everywhere, but that the new synthesis of communism and what that represents is being engaged and debated broadly in society—some people agree, some people disagree, some people say, I like some of this and some not—but they're actually engaging what it is, the substance of it, at least in its very basic contours. There is a dialectical relation between all that and bringing forward a new wave of people fighting to bring about a new stage of the communist revolution—to take these ideas, this theory, and actually make it a living reality. We need to influence millions of people now. And we need to be bringing forward wave after wave of what we call these new initiators, these initiators of a new stage of the communist revolution.

Our orientation is exactly the opposite of "this is our thing"—some little temple of secret knowledge that just a few of us are initiated into, something that we want to keep to ourselves, and we don't want anybody

Words by
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