

Humanity Needs Revolution. First Katrina— Now Sandy. Enough!

On Hurricane Sandy— What Is the Problem? What Is the Solution? And What We Need to Do Now!

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The crisis set off by Hurricane Sandy has laid bare the real ways society operates. It has shown why those ways must be radically and fundamentally changed. And it has shown some of the outlines of *how* that change could come about.

Ask yourself some questions about how this society—what we are told is the “greatest country that ever existed”—handled this disaster. What was done when it became clear, days ahead of time, that Sandy was very likely going to hit, and hit very hard? Did those with real power in this society—the capitalist-imperialists—make sure that everybody would be adequately provided with necessities in the face of this disaster? Did they use their vast systems of transportation and communication—all built by masses of people, here and around the world—to make sure that everyone would have access to what they needed? Did they even make sure that people—including the desperately poor in this society whose food typically runs out by the end of the month—would be able to eat when Sandy hit? Did they take steps so that those most in need and most vulnerable—including the elderly and the sick, often living alone, as well as small children—would be taken care of? Did they make preparations to turn over their often lavish office buildings for people in need of shelter? Did they allow use of their massive network of airplanes and trains and buses, including their vast array of military airplanes which rain down death and destruction all over the world, to enable people to travel for free, either to get out of harm’s way or to volunteer to help? Did they open up public facilities so that people would be able to meet and organize themselves, and develop the networks to meet the unpredictable needs that would be set off by Sandy? Did they inform people in a living way of the devastation the storm was wreaking in more impoverished areas of the world, like Haiti, and organize volunteers for that, and spread feelings of human solidarity in the face of disaster? Did they try to foster an attitude of “look out for each other”? Did they organize the many skilled people who would want to help into volunteer brigades, ready to spring into action before, during and after the disaster? Did they organize squads of younger, more physically fit people as “runners” to make sure that everybody would know all the latest information?

What would have been so hard about any of the above? In fact, all those steps would seem to be eminently reasonable—good ways to put into play the greatest resource of all: people. And you could probably easily think of two or three or more similar things that could have been done. Indeed, people themselves tried to do many of those sorts of things, and there are many stories of selfless behavior and bravery despite the official discouragement—including from those on the bottom, who are often reviled by the media and politicians.

Yet the capitalist-imperialists who rule America did just the opposite. They either peremptorily ordered people to leave, with no provision

for what next, or else demanded that people stay put where they were. Then they put their police on the streets to *force* people to follow those orders. They cultivated and promoted an attitude of “every man for himself,” and that it’s your own damn fault if something happens to you. They gave people no way of finding out what was going on. They left whole areas where the basic people at the bottom of society live without water, heat, electricity or food—and then they clamped curfews on them. And they also meted out outrageous, uncaring and downright dangerous treatment to people in more middle-class areas that were hit as well. Not only did these outrages and horrors go on for days, long after the weather cleared—they are *STILL* going on, and many have not yet even come to light.

Meanwhile, the capitalist-imperialist rulers made sure that the stock exchange—a major medium through which capitalism carries out its compulsion to accumulate ever more profit—opened as soon as possible. And this was not only in order to keep going their continual insane rush for more and more profit—but to make a major symbolic point: **THIS IS WHAT MATTERS MOST IN AMERICA.**

The governors and Obama toured the stricken areas, and got their photo-ops—but while the media began speculating which politician was gaining advantage from the hurricane, the facts on the ground of how people have been treated and what they are still going through belie all the political posturing and grandstanding.

What does all this tell you? To begin with, it tells you that the class which actually makes decisions in this society puts the highest priority on their ability to keep accumulating capital. It tells you that this class could care less about the needs of the people they rule, and expect them to suffer in silence and ignorance. It tells you that this class will only and can only use the organs of the state not to organize people to meet their needs *but to violently repress people*—and that they have absolutely no hesitation at all about calling these organs of violence and repression into play pre-emptively.

It has shown, in the words of Bob Avakian, “The essence of what exists in the U.S. is not democracy but capitalism-imperialism and political structures to enforce that capitalism-imperialism.” (*Basics 1:3*) And it has shown that this system is utterly worthless and cannot meet the needs of the people.

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All this must be radically changed. Imagine a society where everything we described above about what they *didn't* do—and didn't *allow to be done*—actually was done. Where the values and vision behind those ideas of what people *could* have done were what actually guided the major decisions of society and people's daily lives. Where the initiative that people have tried to show in this disaster was given full expression and leadership.

Such a society is possible—and we'll get to why and how shortly. But first, we need to understand WHY these capitalists and their functionaries do everything they can to prevent people from helping each other out in these disasters. In the first place, if people were to take advantage of these times of crisis to overcome the barriers that normally keep them apart, they may “get ideas” about things being different. The people might begin to think that they do not need capitalists warping and perverting society to satisfy capitalism's never-ending need to accumulate more capital—and that society could figure out much better guideposts and measures for allocating resources and labor than just making profit. People might come to believe that what keeps things all messed up and puts people at each other's throats is not “human nature” after all, but instead is the workings of this system and the values that those workings encourage and require in people. That's why these capitalists can't and won't do what almost any humane and sane person would think was the best way to handle such a situation. But even more basically: They cannot do it because the laws of their system—their very survival—demands that capitalist property relations come first.

One sharp example: Think about how this capitalist, profit-über-alles system has not only promoted and driven the environmental plunder that has been contributing to the greater frequency of devastating storms like Sandy; but how those same “rules of the capitalist game” have prevented humanity from taking any steps to deal with this. It is not because they don't care about the environment; it is because they *can't* care about the environment—if they are to survive in the dog-eat-dog, expand-or-die death match that is capitalism. [See the article “Superstorm Sandy and Climate Change,” and the special *Revolution* issue on the environment, online at revcom.us.]

What is the take-home message in all this? That we need, in fact, *a fundamentally different social, political and economic system*: one set up to enable the masses of people to set about emancipating themselves; one in which the vast majority of humanity could truly begin to flourish. This will require revolution. This revolution must break the grip of these capitalists on their instruments of force and violence. On that basis, and only on that basis, the new revolutionary power will bring in a whole different economic and political system, socialism, with the aim of bringing into being a whole world without exploitation and oppression, communism.

This revolution is POSSIBLE. **Because of Bob Avakian and the work he has done over several decades, summing up the positive and negative experience of the communist revolution so far, and drawing from a broad range of human experience, there is a new synthesis of communism that has been brought forward—there really is a viable vision and strategy for a radically new, and much better, society and world, and there is the crucial leadership that is needed to carry forward the struggle toward that goal.**

The “blueprint” for such a future society has been drawn up and can be studied in the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America (Draft Proposal)*, which was published by the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, the party which is led by BA. Read this—and see that there really is a whole different, far better and far more emancipating, way that society could be organized.

The RCP, USA has also published a statement laying out the strategy for this revolution. This statement lays out what we can do today to hasten the time, in the future, when conditions could emerge which would make this revolution possible. As part of that, the statement on strategy goes into how the workings of the system itself give rise to “sudden jolts and breakdowns in the ‘normal functioning’ of society, which compel many people to question and to resist what they usually accept.” It talks about how such jolts—like the one we are experiencing now with Sandy—are important times to mobilize people to fight back, and as they do so to learn that the fundamental problem causing all this horror and needless suffering is capitalism, and how “the solution is getting rid of this system and bringing into being a new system, socialism, aiming for the final goal of a communist world.” It shows how through such jolts, and the struggle waged in them, the movement for revolution can “accumulate forces” and grow in strength.

Right now, this means mobilizing people to fight for the basic needs of the people in the face of this catastrophe *and* to raise their heads to the solution that *can* be made real, and to get with the only leadership that can carry it through: the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. It means pulling together a critical mass of people to influence millions more about the whole different way that really is possible. It means carrying out all three parts of the Party's slogan: Fight the Power, and Transform the People, for Revolution, to do all that.

In short, what does the needless suffering and misery and human isolation in the wake of Hurricane Sandy show? It shows that this world is a horror. That the causes of this horror are not human nature (or nature itself), but the system we live under. That because of the work of Bob Avakian, there IS a way out. So—let's get to it!

—The editors, *Revolution* newspaper

For unique ongoing coverage of the hidden stories and grievous effects of Hurricane Sandy and how people are standing up – and the emerging revolutionary movement at the core of this – go to:

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- Experience at a Shelter for Hurricane Sandy
- Coney Island, Brooklyn
- More Voices from Rikers Island
- From the Riis and Campos Housing Projects, Lower East Side
- Superstorm Sandy and Climate Change

- We are human beings, we demand to be treated with respect and compassion! *The NY Revolution Club* developed and is circulating these demands and organizing people around them.
- Surviving Sandy in the South Shore of Staten Island
- And much more ongoing coverage!