

*Save Revolution Books ☆ \$100,000 Fund Drive*

September 23, 2009

Dear Friends,

Revolution Books is needed now more than ever, yet its future is in peril. Hunger faces over a billion people daily. War continues to rage in the Middle East, with little opposition. Black and Latino youth in the U.S. are incarcerated by the hundreds of thousands. The ecological future of the planet is in dire jeopardy.

Yet there isn't an atmosphere and culture of defiance, resistance, and revolution. Critical thinking and radical discourse are suffocated.

Revolution Books has been stepping up to puncture and change this—emerging over the past year as a growing center of radical and revolutionary ferment. People from all over the world come to the store and find the books and the deep engagement with each other about the possibility of a radically different way the world could be. When controversial issues arise, when no one else will speak out and provide a forum, Revolution Books does—in the store and at venues way beyond its four walls.

This is a moment in history when Revolution Books is needed to soar—expanding its unique collection of progressive and revolutionary books; producing even more cutting edge programs, and developing the capacity to broadcast these events on the internet and cable TV. But without a major infusion of funds, the store could be lost. That is why we are launching a major campaign to raise \$100,000 by the end of the year. These funds are absolutely essential for Revolution Books to not only survive, but thrive—reaching out broadly, providing ideological oxygen for a new radical, revolutionary culture and movement.

You are needed. Your support and involvement right now can make all the difference in launching this drive to save and expand Revolution Books. Donate generously. Get involved—contribute your creativity and energy. Find out about and become a member of "Friends of Revolution Books," a broad network of people who sustain, support, utilize, and volunteer with Revolution Books. This \$100,000 campaign is about more than saving a bookstore, as crucial as that is in these times; it's about what kind of world there will be.



Every day, people are told that radical and revolutionary alternatives are unworkable and undesirable and are ruled out of the dominant discourse. The political imagination is stunted, sights lowered, people taught to think that capitalism/imperialism is the only and best way the world could be. Revolution Books is critical to lifting the lid on this.

No place else can people find and wrestle with the books, theory and engagement that reveals how the world could be—coming to understand that today there is the technology and productive capacity to meet the basic needs of all the world's people—with the potential for a whole different cooperative world.

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accepting the status quo and holding on for dear life, a relic of a bygone age.*

*Revolution Books is part of contributing to a new spirit and atmosphere of critical engagement,  
putting revolution back into the larger societal conversation.*

**Revolution Books breaks through the distortions and suppression, and gives the *true*—overwhelmingly positive—history of the socialist revolutions.** Recent generations can't imagine a different social system because the history of previous socialist revolutions has been buried under an avalanche of distortion. Last year, Revolution Books organized a unique symposium at New York University entitled "Rediscovering China's Cultural Revolution." Young people sat rapt, listening to speakers who grew up in China during the Cultural Revolution movingly describe that revolutionary society—now destroyed as China has been turned into the sweatshop of the world. They heard radical and revolutionary communist intellectuals discuss and debate the meaning of the Cultural Revolution.

**Revolution Books spotlights the work of Bob Avakian.** This is what fuels our passion, sense of urgency and commitment. If you don't know Avakian, you don't know the cutting edge of revolutionary theory today. Having deeply studied the previous socialist revolutions—appreciating and building on their achievements while digging into their shortcomings—Bob Avakian has developed a new synthesis of communism, a re-envisioning of a radically new society that would go further and do better than those previous attempts, monumental as they were.

**Revolution Books is becoming a place where progressive authors launch their new work.** Over the past few months, RB has premiered *Subway Art 25*, a beautiful re-release of the classic book on graffiti art by photographers Henry Chalfant and Martha Cooper; *Confessions of a Ex-Doofus ItchyFooted Mutha*, Melvin Van Peebles' new graphic novel; *Unrepentant Radical Educator*, Professor John Gerassi's new collection of writings and interviews; and *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle* by Chris Hedges (filmed by Book TV for national broadcast). Each of these events packed the store, providing evenings of provocative and spirited discussion, digging into the books and the world.

**Revolution Books is becoming the place to call, the place to be, when there is a sharp turn of events in the world.** When Gaza was under brutal bombardment in January 2009, Revolution Books stepped into the breach and organized "Gaza: A Call to Act", drawing nearly 600 people. Speakers included Abdeen Jabara, Chris Hedges, Adam Shapiro, Peter Weiss, Vanessa Redgrave, Alan Goodman and more. In early June, Revolution Books organized a crucial Town Hall Meeting, "Torture and the Need for Justice," with speakers, including Michael Ratner, Jeremy Scahill, Chris Hedges, attorney Gitanjali Gutierrez, Laura Flaunders, torture victim Sister Diana Ortiz, and Andy Zee, that delivered the first unequivocal public exposure of the Obama administration for continuing the use of torture and other Bush war crimes.

In July, Revolution Books presented a dialogue between Cornel West and Carl Dix on "The Ascendancy of Obama . . . and the Continued Need for Resistance and Liberation" that sold out Harlem Stage and was broadcast live on Pacifica—again, the first major forum with such a critique. In August, after the murder of Dr. Tiller, Dr. Susan Wicklund, one of the very few abortion providers in Montana, bravely spoke with Sunsara Taylor on abortion and women's liberation—a rare public program upholding the centrality of access to abortion for women's lives.

The forum that Revolution Books provides must not be lost. **Indeed, we have just begun.**

**Revolution Books plans to greatly expand its Spanish language section, Libros Revolución, which is a tremendous resource for what has always been a large and growing, diverse Spanish-speaking population of NYC.** People from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Central and South America have deep experience under the boot of US imperialism and face relentless demonization and attacks. They need Revolution Books, and their insights and experience enrich the revolutionary conversation. Funds are urgently needed to expand RB/LR's Spanish-language stock and its reach into these communities.

**Revolution Books is out on the campuses.** Scores of professors order their course books through Revolution Books. The store staff speaks in classes, and professors are invited to teach a class in the store. The resulting exchange is opening up fresh engagement with revolutionary thought and critical thinking for many hundreds of students. The generation of the 1960's often ask: what about the students of today? This store is one vital resource to awaken, inform, and inspire a new generation.

We've taken a hard look at Revolution Books in the context of the current situation and the great need for real change. What is called for is actually a stepping up and reaching out, *expanding our scope*—an audacious approach to a crucial mission. This is why we are asking you to join in the \$100,000 fund drive. **Revolution Books is not about**

learning to survive on increasingly shrinking ground, accepting the status quo and holding on for dear life, a relic of a bygone age. Revolution Books is part of contributing to a new spirit and atmosphere of critical engagement, putting revolution back into the larger societal conversation.

Writers, filmmakers, students, people from all walks of life comment that the programs that Revolution Books sponsors are like no others. There is a different ethos, seriousness, and great fun. This is true because we are striving to have a store, and helping to create a movement, that reflects the kind of future society we'd like to see, as reflected in the work of Bob Avakian—a new society with much greater scope for intellectual work, art, ferment, curiosity, debate and dissent, a society where there is the challenging of the status quo as part of the process to achieve the full emancipation of humanity.

With your support, we are working to make Revolution Books even more of a place where revolutionary communism mixes it up with, engages, and contends with other viewpoints in art, politics, science, and philosophy.



To rise to this moment, Revolution Books needs to raise \$100,000 over the next three months—to continue and accelerate its positive political momentum over the past year. **And, to be sober and truthful, these funds are essential to save Revolution Books.** The capitalist economic crisis, intersecting with changes in the book world have created negative dynamics for independent bookstores and new challenges for Revolution Books. But there is a unique and urgent need for Revolution Books in these times, and there is every basis to raise the funds from all those who find the world today intolerable.

Counterintuitive as it may seem, Revolution Books can only meet this crisis through a bold plan to move beyond its current fiscal crisis and *expand*. If you reflect on all that Revolution Books has done in the last year under its current constraints, consider what would be possible if someone would donate enough money so that the majority of sales money doesn't have to go into rent for the next three months. Imagine the impact Revolution Books could have.

Most people who would find this store invaluable do not yet know of its existence. Revolution Books/Libros Revolución needs funds to become much more widely known through advertising, major media stories and other broad promotional efforts ... on the web and on the streets. Revolution Books needs a new website, an inviting site that offers these essential resources to people everywhere, from the hinterlands to the cities of the world— so that all who hunger for a different world can get in on the books, the programming, the dialogue.

The heart of the \$100,000 fund drive is people like you—people who want a different, far better future. People who want to make available the literature that debates that future and that lays bare the present. We need a movement of people who want to see engagement with that literature, people determined that this store play the role it must.

**The plan is to raise \$100,000 through a combination of three main efforts:**

**First, and most important of all—individual contributions**, including from those who can give large donations. These donations and monthly sustainers, **your generosity**, is key to the success of this drive.

**Second**, Revolution Books is planning an **incredible Fall schedule** of readings, programs, forums, fund raising salons and theatrical events, all culminating in a major cultural event in early December.

**Third, greatly increasing book sales**—through author readings, campus course book sales, Revolution Books tables on campuses, in the parks and at events, along with an ambitious book promotion and holiday sales plan.

**Your support is vital.** None of this can happen without the increasing involvement of all those who see the need for this bookstore to soar. Your single donation. Your sustainer. Your fund raising parties and other activities. Your participation in the Fall events, including helping organize and publicize them. Your efforts to sell and promote books.

**Become a Friend of Revolution Books.** Call, write, stop by the store to find out more. Join in this great endeavor. Give because the future depends on it.

Regards,

Andy Zee