

Rising Sun

**Women Proutists
of North
America**

January 2012 **INSIDE:**
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Women at Occupy: “Outing” Assault

By Mirra Price

The chant, “The Whole World is Watching!” swelled above the crowd of protesters as police began pelting us with tear gas. I hightailed it to the Capitol building a mile away, where I witnessed an eerie scene. Circling the Capitol building’s block, like beads on a necklace, were police cars, engines running, shotguns sticking out of the passenger windows. Was this a recent Occupy DC protest? No.

It was Nov.15, 1969, the Second Moratorium to End the War in Viet Nam, the largest anti-war demonstration ever in the U.S. The Yippies, big on guerrilla theatre, burned huge effigies of Chicago Seven Judge Hoffman, President Nixon, Spiro Agnew, and other pro-war icons. Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Peter Paul & Mary, Bob Dylan and Arlo Guthrie sang. We were creating a new culture—the Counter Culture—as we called it.

However, daily on-the-ground anti-war organizing, though

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A Challenge to Institutional Racism

By Nada Khader

From the newsletter: Anti-War Organizing

When someone mentions the phrase “the peace movement in the United States,” I think of older white folk holding up anti-war signs, asking for troops to come home from Iraq or Afghanistan. I think of a movement that is more focused on what happens outside our borders than on what is happening right now inside our own communities.

The image I have is changing. For that, I and my colleagues at WESPAC, a peace and justice organization in Westchester County, New York must thank the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond for sharing their powerful analysis of racism with us and for helping us transform the way we approach our work and our mission. We started our two-and-a-half day “Undoing Racism” training with a discussion of why people are poor, including an analysis of power in our society. The training offers a crucial historical context of how race has been constructed in America and of how it is used to maintain and perpetuate a system that benefits people of European descent at the expense of other communities.

Shared definitions

Two terms that now make sense to me as a result of this training are “internalized racial superiority” and “internalized racial oppression.” Across generations, one group of

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PROUT: An Introduction

By Ravi Logan

PROUT is the Progressive Utilization Theory propounded in 1959 by Indian philosopher, humanitarian and composer P. R. Sarkar. PROUT offers a constructive response — based on economic decentralism, ecological and cultural sustainability, and spiritual values — to the growing global demand for a workable alternative to economic globalism, unsustainable development, economic disparity, and ecological destruction.

Prout starts from two spiritual-humanist premises: First, that there is a wholeness of being, an interdependency of existence, and, second, that all living beings seek to develop and express their potentials.

From these premises comes the core objective of all social development: To nurture a society in which all people, individually and collectively, have equitable opportunity and optimal conditions to develop and express fully their potentialities — physical mental and spiritual — while maintaining a sustainable balance with the natural world.

To attain this objective, Prout then puts forward several design principles to guide socio-economic development. These principles are listed below.

1. Diversity, not sameness, is the law of nature.
2. The minimum requirements of a time and place should be guaranteed to all, and maximum amenities should be guaranteed to all as per social conditions and the assurance of sustainable consumption.
3. Incentives should be distributed to meritorious people according to the degree of their effort and the merit of their work.
4. in the quality of living is the indication of the vitality of a society.
5. There should be no accumulation of physical wealth by individuals that is in excess of their needs without special permission from the society.
6. There should be humanistic and rational distribution,



and maximum utilization, of resources in all areas of manifestation.

7. The physical, mental, and spiritual capabilities of every person, and of the society as a whole, should be developed fully.
8. There should be a well-balanced approach to the distribution and utilization of physical, mental, and spiritual resources to assure balanced development in all spheres.
9. The utilization of potentialities and resources should be progressively adjusted according to the time, location, and people involved.
10. The excellence of the social structure and culture of a community depends on the degree of balance that community attains in its individual and collective life.

Ravi Logan is the director of the PROUT Institute in Eugene, Oregon.

Rising Sun January 2012

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In this Issue:

T. S. Eliot, 20th century Nobel Prize-winning American author whose poetry and plays have had great influence on the American psyche, once said, "The past is prologue". Those of us who believe in PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) may view the current economic system in this country, as being part of the nation's past, and, therefore, not relevant in coping with today's massive economic woes. Especially, with the advent of the Occupy Movement, the Arab Spring Movement, and the rising up of the 99 Per Cent against the capitalist system, it is important to take stock of the inequities of the present and past, lest we not repeat our mistakes in the future.

The cry of 'equality, fraternity, and liberty', borrowed from the French Revolution, helped unite the colonists against England. However, there was, in actuality, little equality in the early United States, since slavery was still part of the American fabric. I am referring here, both to the slavery of African-Americans and to the subjugation of women. Women could not vote, own property, or ask for divorce. It wasn't until 144 years later that women won the right to vote. Winning control over our bodies, some might say, is a battle still to be fought. As Nada Kader notes in her column in this issue, employment, economic and social equality of women is still a long way off.

In this issue, we are adding columns to our newsletter. Liina Laufer is writing a Recipe Corner, in which she will provide us with an easy and delicious recipe from her food blog, recipessdeliina.wordpress.com. Nada Kader has begun a column on gender oppression, to remind us of the work we still need to do in order to facilitate the progress of women in society.

Another new feature beginning with this issue is a profile of one member of Women PROUTists. In this issue we are featuring Susan Deckhart, who serves as our webmaster and is always there to give her support to anyone who needs it.

"Women at Occupy" surveys the condition of women who are part of the Occupy movement in North America., urging that the safety and respect of women become a priority in this movement. Jody Wright reports on her exciting, rewarding experience as a presenter at a Global PROUT Conference in Venezuela in "A Different View of the World".

"A Challenge to Institutional Racism" by Nada Kader is an insightful look at our unconscious attitudes about race, instilled by our educational system, churches and society. She tells how we can begin to unpack these attitudes, to free ourselves from either feelings of racial superiority or racial oppression. Either mindset has the potential to mar our outlook on ourselves and other people.

Ravi Logan elucidates the basic tenets of PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) in "PROUT: An Introduction". Indian philosopher, composer and spiritual teacher, P. R.Sarkar, propounded this theory in the 1950s for the purpose of transforming society for the betterment of humanity.

In "Yoga and Activism", Ramesh Bjonnes encourages practicing yoga in all spheres of life, to achieve a dynamic balance between the inner work of yoga and the outer work of social change.

Please send us comments and submissions for our next newsletter. Best wishes for the New Year!

— *The Women PROUTists Collective of North America*

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Mission Statement

Women PROUTists are working together to create a world in which all people have the opportunity to develop their full potential. We educate and organize our communities to resist oppression, exploitation and discrimination. Women PROUTists support the all-round physical, economic, intellectual and spiritual development of women.

Gender Oppression

A regular column by Nada Kader

Some Startling Statistics

Did you know that the Equal Rights Amendment that affirms the full equality of men and women under the law is still not part of the United States Constitution? We need at least three more states to ratify the amendment to restart the process in both the House and the Senate.

Did you know that in 2010, women's earnings were 77.4 percent of men's, compared to 77.0 percent in 2009, according to Census statistics released September 13, 2011 based on the median earnings of all full-time, year-round workers? [In 1969, women's earnings were 59 percent of men's earnings. It is reported that this gain in the past 40 years is more due to a decline in men's wages as opposed to any marked increase in women's wages (Ed)] (Schepp, 2011).

According to the Gender Wage Gap: 2010 report, in 2010, the earnings of African-American women were \$32,290, 67.7 percent of all men's earnings (from 67.5 percent in 2009), and Latinas' earnings were \$27,992, 58.7 percent of all men's earnings (up from 57.7 percent in 2009). Asian-American women's earnings at \$41,309 dropped from 90 percent of all men's earnings in 2009 to 86.6 percent in 2010. The National Committee on Pay Equity's "The Wage Gap Over Time" shows how little the wage gap has changed in this century.

Did you know that according to the Center for Disease Control, the U.S. maternal mortality rate was 13 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2004? The rate was 12 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2003 -- the first year the maternal death rate was more than 10 since 1977 (Stobbe, AP/Washington Post, 8/24). Race and quality of care are also important factors regarding the maternal mortality rate. The maternal mortality rate among black women is at least three times higher than among white women. Black women also are more susceptible to hypertension and other complications, and they tend to have less access to adequate prenatal care. Three studies have shown that at least 40% of maternal deaths could have been prevented with improved quality of care.

Schepp, D. (10, 10, 11). The gender gap: A historical perspective. Retrieved from <http://jobs.aol.com/2011/10/10>



1940s Women
Parachute
Factory Workers

Recipe Corner

A regular column by Liina Laufer

I am a lifelong vegetarian, and I love to cook from scratch. I prefer simple, all natural ingredients, the fewer the better. I go for local, seasonal, and organic. I was raised on a yogic diet, avoiding not only meat and fish, but also eggs, mushrooms, onions, garlic, and all other alliums, so my recipes reflect this preference.



Cornbread

This is my mom's recipe for cornbread I grew up on. Wholewheat and egg-free. Wholesome and yummy.

Ingredients:

¾ cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 ¼ cup cornmeal
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. lemon/orange/apple juice
1 cup milk or unsweetened plain soy milk
2 tbs. oil
2 tbs. honey

Optional: chopped jalapeños and cilantro, or honey or maple syrup for drizzling on top

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix dry ingredients, then add wet ingredients and mix until smooth, but don't stir excessively.

Add more milk or water as necessary for a pourable batter.

Add chopped jalapeños and cilantro for a savory cornbread, or drizzle honey or maple syrup on top for a sweeter cornbread. You can also mix white and whole wheat flour for a less wholesome, lighter version.

Oil pan well and pour in batter.

Bake until a knife comes out clean and the edges are golden brown (approximately 40 minutes or more).

Delicious with butter and honey or jam. Enjoy!

Please see Liina's blog at recipesdeliina.wordpress.com.

Viks'ubdha Shudra (Intellectual Laborer)

By Paul Bergner

I

Whence have come these misplaced knights?
What magical force has transformed sword to shovel?
Broadax to pick? Dragon to dull-weighted mound of dirt?

Strange gladiators digging for foes amid curses and sweat, and, finally, no lions,
But only the shadow foes of whiskey, belly, dull, grinding anger, and politicians' lies
To baffle their brave nobility.

Wherefrom this centurion foreman whose soul
Is haunted with vague memories of the thrill of a change,
And whose keen martial instinct now inspires pressmen
To stamp out parts for substandard, expensive automobiles?

What awesome alchemical formula has left this once pharaoh's astrologer
Reciting mantras over nails
As he takes time out from his cosmology to earn next month's rent
With a sunburn, hammer, and blisters?

II

Two hours before the earthquake the birds stopped singing in L.A.
Listening closely to reality, the ants fled their holes.
Squirrels were seen leaving a two-block-wide strip in the path of an oncoming tornado,
Convinced by the argument of their instinct.

A tidal wave in Osaka found no small animals in the city zoo,
All having died the month before in a plague of precognition.

III

I have to tell you, Mr. Capitalist, Mr. Flabby Legs and Indigestion,
You need to know, Mr. Cool Dynamic Charm and Morning Jog.
You may as well have it straight, Mr. Country Club, Backyard Pool.
It's too late now. There's nothing to do but watch.

The sheep's in the meadow and the cow's in the corn.

I have a degree in biochemistry and dug weeds in your totally unnecessary garden
to feed my family
While a proud warrior sealed your doom in a ditch with his Samurai shovel.

1ª CONFERENCIA GLOBAL DE PROUT EN VENEZUELA

Construyendo una Economía Solidaria basada en la Ética y la Ecología



A New View on the World

By Jody Wright

Economy, ecology, community health, indigenous rights, cooperatives, women's rights, and spiritual wisdom were presented by nationally and internationally recognized authorities at the "Building a Solidarity Economy based on Ethics and Ecology" conference in downtown Caracas. Approximately 400 people attended the three-day conference on July 7-9, 2011 organized by the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela. Twenty-nine speakers presented, representing 15 progressive non-government organizations, a government-owned bank, two large cooperatives, and four different universities.

I was delighted to be able to attend and present at the conference. I flew in from the U.S. on the first day of the gathering. I had never been in Venezuela before and I was impressed by the amazing diversity I experienced just on the ride into the city. Starting from the beaches I saw as we flew in, I saw high cloud-enshrouded mountains surrounding the city, which filled every nook and cranny of the valley. I passed by distinct neighborhoods with vastly differing economic standards, flora, and people. There were even political differences as some areas followed Hugo Chávez and other areas were run separately, in opposition to the main political structure of the country.

But what impressed me most as that first day unfolded was that Caracas lived on multiple levels. The mountains were lush and green. The hills going up in all directions were covered with large, richly appointed houses and then suddenly a gorge filled with tiny homebuilt houses shoe-horned one on top of the other. The valleys were packed with apartment buildings, shopping, and tall buildings. The conference itself was located several levels below ground in an underground mall, beneath a commercial and residential community topped by multi-story buildings and multi-lane highways.

Entering our hotel on the street level, we climbed the stairs to our rooms, which themselves were multi-level. After leaving off our bags, we descended down below street level to find restaurants, shops and finally our conference halls.

I walked into a hall full of people from many different countries, speaking various languages. Thanks to volunteers from a local university interpretation program, we were able to listen to the talks with either earphones or a personal interpreter. Talks were in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and speakers were from many different countries, including Cuba, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and the USA.

As the three days unfolded, I met many people who impressed me with their sincerity and commitment to the development of humankind and the freedom of individuals. There were artists who danced beautiful dances about their concerns about the environment. There was a young man I met that was carrying on his father's commitment to developing an economy that really worked; he was so impressed by the conference he went back and brought his father the next day. There was a young woman from Cuba who had watched the revolution there from childhood, and cared deeply about the future of her country.

I had a chance to speak on Leadership from a Prout perspective. If you would like to read or see that talk, or find out more about the conference, please go to: <http://priven.org/>

The third and last day of the conference was filled with small workshops, bringing people together who had similar interests, and helped them make the connections that would carry this work on. There were many who were not ready to leave, and the last afternoon and evening included spontaneous songs and sharing.

I spent another week in Venezuela, doing long-range planning with committed staff and volunteers for the Prout Research Institute there in Caracas. I was awed by the magnificent view of the city from the porch of the Institute, the sounds of the parrots in the mango trees, the gentle roar of the city below us. I visited farms in the countryside, and schools in the city. I explored many levels of Caracas and Venezuela; I found it a wonderful place to reflect on a new view of the world, and how we can establish the values of Prout throughout it.

Jody Wright has worked with PROUT for over 30 years. She travels extensively as a parent educator and infant massage trainer for Infant Massage USA, and as an acharya and mediation teacher for Ananda Marga.

Women PROUTists are participating in organizing this conference on Economic Democracy planned for 2012. Since women and children are often the groups who are most affected by the economic disparities inherent in the capitalist system, we support a conference which will bring together many groups dedicated to helping bring about a paradigm shift in the distribution of wealth and which, will guarantee basic necessities of life to all.

Proposal for a Conference on Economic Democracy in August 2012

Conference Vision:

The viral growth of the Occupy Movement, and the public support of it, is testament to the tremendous dissatisfaction with the inequities and abuses of global capitalism. Meta-corporations and large financial institutions have corrupted democracy in the United States and many other countries. In response, a wide spectrum of progressive forces is struggling to rescue our political democracy; however, reform is not enough. Instead the demand for economic democracy that economically empowers people and communities has the potential to unite Americans around a common cause that replaces the tyranny of corporate power.

Humanity needs a clear, compelling vision of an equitable, sustainable economy that brings a high quality of life for everyone – an economy by, for and of the people.

We invite concerned individuals and organizations to come together to envision the democratic and equitable economic system needed to replace capitalism, and plan the necessary steps to materialize it. If you can help or have questions, please email nirainjana@yahoo.com.

Preliminary Conference Objectives:

- Formulate the guiding values and principles for economic democracy.
- Envision how various economic democracy initiatives such as local economies, cooperatives, a wealth cap, guaranteed basic necessities, sustainable development and grassroots planning can be integrated and interconnected in a national initiative.
- Inspire the Occupy Movement to adopt an economic democracy vision.
- Create a solidarity network to project our common vision of the equitable economy we seek.
- Decide action agenda to put economic democracy into practice locally and regionally.
- Affirm a universal ecological and spiritual perspective that connects us with one another and with the rest of creation.

Proposed Conference Theme:

"Economic Democracy in Vision and Action."

We invite concerned individuals and organizations to come together to envision the democratic and equitable economic system needed to replace capitalism, and plan the necessary steps to materialize it.

Projected Conference Duration: 3 or 4 days

Proposed Conference Dates: Aug 31-Sept 3 (Labor Day weekend) or Aug 24-27, 2012

Proposed Conference Location: Madison WI, site not yet chosen.

Expected Attendance: 100-250 people.

Proposed Conference Programs:

A mix of panel discussions, workshops, open- source meetings, and plenary sessions; with evening keynote talks and cultural programs; also social mixing activities.

Conference Audience: A mix of social activists, progressive thinkers, and representatives from progressive organizations. Special efforts will be made to achieve gender, race, ethnic, and income-level and age diversity.

Conference Funding:

(1) registration fees, (2) sale of products, (3) patron donations, (4) sponsoring organizations/businesses.

The History of this Process:

Inspired by the Democracy Convention held August 24-28, 2011 in Madison, Wisconsin, a group of Proutists (advocates of the Progressive Utilization Theory or Prout, see www.proutglobe.org) began discussing the possibility of holding a conference on Economic Democracy in the same city in August 2012. We believe that a compelling vision of Economic Democracy has the potential to unite progressives and strengthen the Occupy Movement. With feedback, we hope to start a website and mailing list for everyone interested in this initiative.

As an example of a similar process, the World Social Forum was started and organized by a group of progressives with the goal of creating an open, democratic space for advancing the vision of "Another World is Possible." Each organizing group within the World Social Forum coalition also has its own internal organizing committee that works hard to promote its policies and objectives through its stand, publications, workshops and special events.

Our goal is to make this conference so relevant and exciting that thousands of people will start connecting with the process via web, social media and local forums, and the demand for economic democracy will become the cry of the 99 percent.

Suggested Corporations to Boycott

By Mirra Price

How We Can Make a Difference in the Economy

The exploitative multinational corporations cannot survive if we do not support them. I request everyone to boycott these corporations personally, and collectively. When we go to Walmart, for example to ask them to give us donations for fundraising projects, we become part of the problem by helping Walmart advertise their corporation in a positive light, as a public benefactor, while with their other hand, this corporation exploits the public. I urge that we reconsider this practice.

1. General Electric. I have boycotted GE for several decades. This corporation has controlled and continues to control much of the mainstream media, holding 49% of NBC. Previously, for decades, GE has controlled nearly all of NBC stock. GE made the Mark One Reactor in which there are many design flaws, some of which have helped exacerbate the continuing nuclear crisis at Fukushima. There are dozens of these GE reactors in the US.



2. Walmart/Sam's Club. I have boycotted Walmart for six years. This corporation specializes in putting small, local companies out of business by offering low prices and extensive inventory. Below are a few of their corporate abuses:

- Paying women managers and employees lower wages and promoting a much higher percentage of men to management positions. This year the Supreme Court refused to consider a class action suit against Walmart brought by hundreds of women employees and former employees. (Dukes v. Walmart).
- Refusing to allow unions. Walmart employees who try to start unions are harassed and fired. In Bangladesh, several months ago, a Walmart union organizer, was put in jail for advocating for higher wages. The organizer was finally released after anti-Walmart organizations in the US put pressure on Walmart to tell Bangladesh to release the Walmart employee, whom they had jailed, due to Walmart's influence.
- Using child labor. Even though many organizations have lobbied to get Walmart to stop using children in their garment and rug factories in China and third world countries, the practice of employing children and making them work 12-hour days still continues in some plants.
- Causing the pet food poisoning scare a couple of years ago. Because Walmart cut the prices it paid to suppliers of

pet food in China, they began using harmful preservatives to cut costs. This resulted in hundreds of pets in this country falling sick and dying.

- Lobbying against inspection of their shipments in third world countries. Materials used in making bombs and radioactive materials have been found in inspections of cargo in some ports in the Far East. Walmart actively lobbies against inspection of their shipments. Since this company has such a significant influence in the countries in which they do business, some of these governments stop

inspecting many international shipments to avoid angering Walmart.

- Selling of Endangered Fish. Both Walmart and Super Value refuse to stop selling fish which are listed as endangered species.
- Controlling economies of third world countries. There is one town in China, whose economy is mostly controlled by Walmart since they have many sweatshops in that town, being one of the only employers.

3. British Petroleum. Even though it has been over a year since the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, sea animals and plants are still being found drowned in oil. They have barely begun to clean up the mess they made when their oil rig blew up. The cleanup is rife with kickbacks to officials and unfair, unequal payments to those who have lost their livelihoods in the Gulf. Unconscionably, BP has been granted new leases to drill in the Gulf.

4. Exxon. Victims of the Exxon Valdeze oil spill have yet to be fully compensated. The area affected by the spill is still mostly contaminated by the oil that was spilled.

This list could be much longer. I hope folks will send in information on other corporations to boycott, and we can pool our knowledge and resources. I invite anyone to submit more corporations to boycott, and to support. Please see the attendant article with a list of suggested corporations to support. Some may say that it is reformist and not productive to boycott corporations. I hear the opinion that we just need to work on transforming society completely rather than focusing on our own consumer habits. I believe it is important to do both. Just as water trickling over rock will erode the rock over time, so, too, can our small efforts help erode away capitalism over time. We can join the 99 percent who protest at Occupy, and we can vote with our billfolds.

Suggested Corporations to Support

By Mirra Price

It might be unfair only to present one side of the corporations' picture. There are many boards of businesses which have defined goals of sustainability for their corporations. Some companies use green building practices. Others use recycled materials in their products. Some are cooperatives in which employees have a voice in managing their workplace. I have started a list that I hope others will add to by sending in choices for this list. These are corporations that are more concerned with people than profit. I hope we can use this list to become more conscious consumers.

Shoes:

1. Inov-8: All of their shoes are extensively tested. Their whole design development process centers on optimizing the end user's performance. <http://www.inov-8.com/> (Local dealer in Asheville, NC is Jus' Running) (This referral was given by Danaviira Ochoa.)

2. Birkenstock: These shoes have been made in Germany since 1774. They are made of cork, leather or leather substitutes such as pleather and naugahyde. Birks mold to the feet and are durable and comfortable.

Apparel:

1. American Apparel-LA This company pays higher wages than the industry standard and is liberal with giving insurance benefits to workers. They make t-shirts with multicultural themes.

2. Touched by a Rainbow- The company makes tie-dyed clothes, and gives classes in schools and camps.

Food:

Amy's Kitchen—This company has a good reputation for using organic ingredients and for really delicious products.

Dairy:

Seven Stars Farm—Pennsylvania. It is a biodynamic certified organic dairy. Biodynamics is based on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. Seven Stars uses herbal preparations with their cows. Seven Stars recycles compost and is a self-sustaining farm. They do not dock cows' tails nor do they de-horn their herd. They use humane methods for separating mothers from their calves.

Gasoline:

CITGO—It is the only oil company that has an elected President with a platform to give oil revenues to help the poor. CITGO is a subsidiary of the Venezuela Oil Company. If you buy CITGO, you are not giving money to the Middle East oil-rich countries nor are you supporting American and British companies that exploit the environment and engage in price-gouging.

Personal Care Items:

1. Tom's of Maine-Tom's has vegan personal hygiene products that are environmentally friendly. Tom's also uses recycled packaging for their toothpaste, soaps, and similar products.

2. Seventh Generation-This Company uses recycled paper for their paper products and as packaging for their dish and laundry soaps. Their philosophy is that every purchase choice should include the welfare of seven generations.

Mirra Price works as a part time editor for Educational Testing Service and is a retired English teacher, mostly on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona.

References

The American Prospect has released "The Wal-Mart Economy," a new special report. Filled with articles by some of the premiere Wal-Mart analysts of our time, this is a must-read for anyone keeping a watchful eye on Wal-Mart.

Greenwald, R. (Director) (2005). The high cost of low price [VHS].

In "How Wal-Mart Shapes the World", David Moberg, a senior editor at In These Times, turns a critical eye on Wal-Mart's impact on local economies worldwide. Moberg dissects the company's influence on global suppliers, America's main street businesses, and the associates who work in retail stores from coast to coast.

"Wal-Mart Tries to Go to Town": UC, Santa Barbara professor Nelson Lichtenstein, author of The Retail Revolution: How Wal-Mart Created a Brave New World of Business, clearly lays out the reasons why Wal-Mart is desperate to gain entry into the U.S.'s largest cities. In one word: profit. The late Jonathan Rowe's piece, "The Greening of Wal-Mart," tells how Wal-Mart's recent environmentalist bent is as much a public relations ploy as anything else.

And in "It's Alive" the renowned author of Nickel and Dime, Barbara Ehrenreich, calls out a Supreme Court that, on the one hand, has ruled that corporations are persons, entitled to such rights as freedom of speech, but could, on the other hand, potentially rule that Wal-Mart is "too big, too multifaceted and diverse, to be sued" by the women of the Dukes v. Wal-Mart sex discrimination case. Ehrenreich points out that the company controls the smallest minutiae of its stores, from personnel policies to floor layout, from headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas.



Women at Occupy: “Outing” Assault

Continued from front cover.

rewarding, had its down side. The women were expected to cook the meals and do all the cleaning –what was termed “woman’s work”. Rarely, did women take part in the decision-making process.

Many women became disenchanted with a movement which was patriarchal and sometimes dangerous. In fact,

though it wasn’t discussed much, sexual assault was prevalent. The male leadership convinced us not to report incidents of rape or assault, as it would harm the movement’s image. So, like good girls, we kept the silence.

Now I wonder about the safety of women who occupy. Syndicated columnist Tiny Dupuy interviewed women in twelve Occupy camps—eight in the US, four in Canada. In “The Occupy Movement’s Woman Problem”, Dupuy reports several cases of violence against women (Dupuy, 2011).

At LA Occupy, a man tried to set a woman’s hair on fire. Other assaults at Occupy in its two-month existence, include an incident at Occupy DC in which a pregnant woman was clipped by a car, the same car that sent three others to the hospital that day. Rapes have been reported at Occupy Baltimore and Occupy Philadelphia. At New York’s Zucotti Park, a male protester was arrested for raping a female protester (Dupuy, 2011).

If there are any hopeful signs, one may be that in Occupy LA, there is zero tolerance for assault. At Occupy DC, a women’s tent was created as a safe space for women. Men help patrol the park to protect the women in their safe tent. There have been no reports of assaults on men at Occupy (Dupuy, 2011).

Many female Occupiers were enraged by the video, “Hot Chicks at Occupy Wall Street”, which they felt objectified female activists. Sarah Seltzer of The Nation magazine spoke to twelve women at Occupy Wall Street, many of whom cited unwanted touching and misogynist language. Some said it was exhausting to keep explaining why they didn’t want to be called “chicks” or bitches” (Seltzer, 2011, p.2).

Some spoke of the Occupy patriarchy. Ariel Federow states there is a decided reaction against a small group of white men making defacto choices for the whole group. Jackie di Salvo, CUNY Professor and OWS member, says that Occupy is leaderless and non-hierarchical, which is better than the 60s anti-war movement in which a few ego-

tripping male superstars ran the show (Seltzer, 2011). Though some may not report assaults, so as not to give Occupy a black eye just like many of us did not report rape to protect the anti-war movement in the 60s, it is this very “outing” of sexual assault that is crucial if women are to feel safe. If the goal of Occupy is to expose wealth disparity between rich and poor, it must also address gender and racial inequities. Ketchup of Occupy Chicago, said, “Bankers’ corruption is important, but. If we are starting a new way of thinking, it has to include finding true equality and really respecting each other” (Seltzer, 2011 p.1)

Occupy mirrors society in its reflection of the gender disparity woven into society’s fabric. Solving the economic and political woes of our nation is just one aspect of the larger struggle to give voice, hope and power to society’s disenfranchised. Until we all, every one of us, in our rich tapestries of diversity, are sailing in the same boat, rather than some of us clinging on to its sides barely treading water, we will not be able to create any true societal change.

Women must be encouraged to report sexual assault. Only then will the perpetrators be held accountable. If men help protect women from sexual violence, they will help usher in a shift in prevailing societal mores in which the seriousness of sexual assault is discounted. Men may become co-creators of a new model of cooperation and empowerment between the sexes.

P.R. Sarkar noted Indian philosopher, humanitarian and founder of PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) said, “A woman of any country who becomes a minister or an ambassador is no index to the real status of the women of that country. To elevate women’s dignity in society is neither so easy nor so cheap (The Human Society, Part 1, p. 50.) What is needed is a paradigm shift in all spheres of life, making the worth of a human being not measured in dollars and cents, but rather in the measure of her true humanity.

Occupy your relationships. “The whole world in watching!”

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A Challenge to Institutional Racism

Continued from front cover

people has been able to accumulate wealth and savings to pass on to their children, while other groups have had obstacles placed in their way to prevent and inhibit wealth and savings accumulation. The dominant group understands that society was meant to benefit them, receiving messages from birth that their group is entitled to the best that society has to offer, while other groups understand that they do not have the same access to power and resources necessary to meet their needs. In any social justice movement, it is crucial to understand the disorganizing impact that internalized racial oppression and superiority have on both our interpersonal relationships as well as on our institutional relationships in coalition-building.

Here, we are speaking about very well-intentioned white people who want the world to be a better, more peaceful place for everyone, but who have been socialized to accept that their community is "more efficient, more effective, better educated, more capable" of remaining in top leadership positions; often these same people include the top donors of the organization as well. As a result, this same group of people develops the agenda of an organization in a way that is safe for the white members of the group, but in a way that may not relate to the deepest aspirations of others.

The global is local

How does this play out in a peace group? Peace groups chant for troops to come home and an end to the war in Iraq, but their movements are largely white and speak to a white agenda. People of color - Indigenous, African, Latino, Arab, Asian - are looking for justice, right here at home in our local communities. When we offer anti-oppression trainings in our offices, the majority of people who show up are people of color and women. Who decides the agenda of an organization? Is it the white members serving on a board of directors? Or is it communities who have to deal with systemic oppression on a daily basis?

Who holds the real power of an institution or a non-profit? Is the board of directors accountable to the communities they serve or to their major donors? Do staff members figure out what solidarity looks like with oppressed communi-

ties by obtaining board permission or by checking in with those who deal with the brutality of our system on a daily basis? Is it easy for white folk to preach non-violence because their communities are not the ones being targeted by capitalism, militarism and war?

These are questions that we must grapple with if we decide that we would like to embark upon a truly multi-ethnic and anti-racist people's movement that is accountable to the communities that receive the brunt of the ongoing legacy of white supremacy in the United States.

How does this transform a peace group? With a deeper analysis, we can now see poverty as a form of economic violence that has been disproportionately devastating to communities of color in a society that was created to benefit people of European descent. Fighting poverty through an anti-racist lens becomes part of the agenda of an anti-racist institution.

WESPAC has been struggling with issues of power, race, internalized oppression and identity politics for the past decade. Our agenda has

shifted from a white liberal anti-war agenda to one that painfully explores the power dynamic involved with community organizing. We have not figured out how to keep everyone on board and happy while this process is occurring. Our institutional interest in racial disparities and profiling has attracted communities of color in a deeper and more meaningful way than our previous organizing. We continue to grapple with the ramifications of a shifting agenda and consciousness in our attempt to maintain our meeting space as a safe haven for all who wish to organize against injustice and oppression. In the end we feel it is the communities undergoing, experiencing and living the oppression who should guide the scope and content of our solidarity with them.

The challenge we have now is to develop a broad multi-ethnic, anti-racist people's movement that is clear in opposing all forms of oppression and that creates an honest space for difficult conversations about power, both within our organizations and in our society, while keeping our eyes on the goal of creating an equitable society that works for all.

Nada Khader is the director of WESPAC Foundation, a peace and justice action network based in Westchester County, New York.





Women PROUTist Profile: Susan Deckhart

I really enjoy developing websites. Years ago, my church at the time needed a website, so I volunteered to try to make one. I was fortunate to get a licensed copy of Dreamweaver from a teacher and figured it out enough to put the website up. Since then I've developed over 30 websites, including the website for our group, proutwomen.org.

I would get so enthralled by the design process it would be like diving down into it and coming up, after about 48 hours of intense concentration and a little sleep, with a new website. Then I'd tweak the site for another five days or so; for that moment it would be "done."

Designing a static site in Dreamweaver used to take me just about a week; I would get so enthralled by the design process it would be like diving down into it and coming up, after about 48 hours of intense concentration and a little

sleep, with a new website. Then I'd tweak the site for another five days or so; for that moment it would be "done." Now websites are using content management systems like Wordpress and Drupal, and the process has changed quite a bit. For one thing, rather than designing a static page in Dreamweaver, saving it, then using an FTP program to upload that file to its proper place on the server, with the CMS the page is written right onto the server as you create it. A click of the "publish" button and the page is up and running. It's a more efficient process. The mechanics of arranging content on a page are different with the CMS systems and each one works differently.

I play piano and guitar and especially like folk music. I was Program Director of Mom & Pop's Coffeehouse, a folk music concert series in a church nearby, for 16 seasons. I work for Philadelphia Folk Festival as co-chair of Production Committee.

I don't design websites for a living, though. Most of the sites are for friends and family and nonprofits. My job for the last 22 years has been typing medical reports. I'm a Certified Medical Transcriptionist. I play piano and guitar and especially like folk music. I was Program Director of Mom & Pop's Coffeehouse, a folk music concert series in a church nearby, for 16 seasons. I work for Philadelphia Folk Festival as co-chair of Production Committee. I have a garden every summer. Most of all, I'm the mother of five wonderful grownup kids. These days my family and I have been taking care of four feral kittens who are sweet and getting tamer every day. They see me as a big roast chicken...



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Serving Whose Interests?

By Susan Andrews

An important aspect of psychic exploitation is cultural exploitation, which forcibly imposes its own language, arts, dress, ideas, and other cultural expressions on the dominated community to paralyze them psychologically. This is occurring throughout the world today, especially through vulgar films and literature which are widely disseminated to degrade the minds of the masses and divert them from the revolutionary struggle.

Alienated from their own culture by this “pseudo-culture” and thus from themselves, convinced of their own intrinsic inferiority, the oppressed absorb the values of the oppressors. They lose their own originality and enslave themselves to their rulers.

Alienated from their own culture by this “pseudo-culture” and thus from themselves, convinced of their own intrinsic inferiority, the oppressed absorb the values of the oppressors. They lose their own originality and enslave themselves to their rulers. “It is proper for human beings to struggle for political freedom, for social emancipation; but if their cultural backbone is broken, then all their struggles will end in nothing—like offering ghee into a fire that has died out.” (Sarkar, p. 55)

The Philippines is a classic example of pseudo-cultural exploitation. After the Americans ‘liberated’ the Filipinos from Spanish colonization in 1898, and, themselves, quickly took over, they embarked on an intensive ten-year pacification campaign of pseudo-cultural propagation. They strictly suppressed all expressions of Filipino nationalism and national culture—books, articles, play, and even the raising of the Filipino flag. The nation-wide school system organized by the Americans established English as the language of instruction, distorted the history of the American occupation, taught American rather than Filipino history, and altogether glorified the American way of life.

Americans were presented as benevolent altruists who had accepted the ‘burden’ of educating their ‘little brown brothers’ who were ‘not ready’ for self-government. As their cultural life was increasingly dominated by imported American movies and TV programs, Filipinos became more and more imitative. The myth was spread that American investments were indispensable for economic progress, and free enterprise as the only framework for democracy.

Under the mask of pseudo-culture, the real enemy—neo-colonialist, socio-economic exploitation—was invisible. The Filipinos thought the Americans to be their friends with identical interests. Thus, even the fiery Filipino revolutionaries, demoralized by this psychic oppression and ex-



Author Susan Andrews is the founder of Future Visions Institute and Ecological Park in Brazil.

hausted by the unequal struggle, settled down to the old passivity they had been taught by the Spanish friars, and followed their ‘superiors’.

If you analyze the history of the world, you will find that whenever one group exploited another in the economic sphere, they first perpetrated psychic exploitation by continuously infusing inferiority complex in the minds of the exploited mass. Most of the countries of the world today are victims of socio-economic or socio-political exploitation.

If you analyze the history of the world, you will find that whenever one group exploited another in the economic sphere, they first perpetrated psychic exploitation by continuously infusing inferiority complex in the minds of the exploited mass. Most of the countries of the world today are victims of socio-economic or socio-political exploitation.

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Yoga & Activism: Are You Ready to Occupy the World from Within?

Continued from back cover

and local? If not, is it better to buy this local yogurt even though it is not organic, like that popular brand over there, which is produced 2000 miles away? These are questions on the yogi/activist's mind; these are questions every earth-yogi must make and answer. And, yes, these are questions without clear cut and easy answers.



Because, if all is one, the way my food is made and where it comes from, it matters. Because, if all is one, the less suffering I cause animals and the environment, it matters.

If all is one, as yoga says, it all matters. Not just my personal body and soul, but also the body and soul of others, the body and soul of animals, of plants. The body and soul of those people living over there. But let's not climb too high up on the ecological or activist pedestal. I have Appalachian Hillbilly neighbors who eat bears and have never heard the word asanas. They grow most of their own food and generally live lives much greener than I do, even though I try to shop local and organic and grow some veggies and live in a so-called green community.

To be a yogi activist, then, is to look the world straight in its face and answer all the uneasy questions in life and come up with workable, conscious compromises. Because, here on this dusty earth, perfection, like the sexy perfection in that sleek, sensual body of the Lululemon yogi, that kind of perfection is not the perfection the yogi activist will always find or even want.

Yogi perfection is, first of all, a state of mind, a state of heart, a state of consciousness; then that state of mind urges us into imperfect action. Imperfect action in the world of Shakti, the world of Samsara.

Still, we act by thinking, by feeling, that this world is also Brahma, also consciousness, also sacred. In Tantra that is acting from the state of madhuvidya, from the heart of honey knowledge. We act as if the world is a sweet and sacred place to live. Always.

If all is potentially sweet, if all is potentially one, how our economy runs, how our resources are shared, it matters. It can be part of our yoga, our enlightenment enterprise to Occupy Wall Street. We can do yoga by occupying space on the sidewalk to protest the firing of workers. It can be

yoga to say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH to the CEO and the board of directors, who, like heroin addicts, stole the wages of these workers to increase their quarterly profit fix. Not to demonstrate because it is hip, but simply because it matters.

It can be yoga to say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH without hating those you say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH to.

In some of my retreats, I teach a medi-

tation and visualization exercise developed by spiritual activist Andrew Harvey in which the aim is to break our hearts open to the world, to passionately find that heart-broken space within which resonates with that which is broken outside us.

Because that which is broken can heal, and that act of healing is yoga, that act of healing is spiritual activism. That act is part of the idea that Samsara and Nirvana are One, the idea that Shiva and Shakti are one in Brahma. The idea that what is Above is also Below.

That is Tantra, that is yoga. That is what the yogic transformation enterprise is all about: to blend that which is within us with that which is outside us. That is the sacred and often complex and neglected enterprise of yoga.

Yoga can mend ligaments, backs, hearts—and yoga can, in small and big ways, mend the world.

My guru, Anandamurti, had a saying: yoga is self-realization and service to the world. Living according to that say-

ing landed him in jail, and he became the Nelson Mandela of yoga.

Because, if yoga is all about navel watching and retreating from this world, then what kind of yoga is it? The yoga of a selfish, lonely, separated soul in the body of a sexy Lululemon ad? The yoga of a body-denying ascetic whose nails are too long to feed himself?

It is no accident that religious enterprises which are about going-to-heaven-only and yogic enterprises which are for-myself-only have a one-dimensional resemblance to economists who define human behavior and aspirations in purely economic terms.

The economic human sees greed as good; that selfish aspirations are solely what an economy is built upon. And that fictionalized version of reality has created a fictionalized, phantom economy based on greed and speculation.

Likewise, the ego-driven yogi mistakes the beautiful body in the mirror for the beautiful self within.

And the ascetic thinks that by denying the body it will eventually evaporate into the transparent purity of soul.

Body-obsession and profit-obsession and ascetic-escaping-the-world-obsession thus share similar traits: they have great difficulty embracing reality in its wholeness, in its imperfect, complex yet sacred earthiness.

If yoga is holistic, which I believe it is, then part of its holism lies in its ability to embrace opposites and see the oneness in diversity and complexity. Yoga thus is not only about occupying the mat, the cushion and Wall Street, but about occupying the whole of reality, the whole of life in all its divine, imperfect and vast sacredness—in each and every moment of our lives.



That, and nothing less, is the yoga of imperfect perfection, the yoga of enlightenment with both a small and capital E. That is the yoga of sacred activism.

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Yoga & Activism: Are You Ready to Occupy the World from Within?

By Ramesh Bjonnes

"A mysticism that is only private and self-absorbed leaves the evils of the world intact and does little to halt the suicidal juggernaut of history; an activism that is not purified by profound spiritual and psychological self-awareness and rooted in divine truth, wisdom, and compassion will only perpetuate the problem it is trying to solve, whatever it's righteous intentions." —Andrew Harvey

Enlightenment, in other words, is not an escape from the world but a true return to the world.

In the words of sages and pundits from various wisdom traditions and backgrounds, we see a common, golden thread: enlightenment is being in this world but not of it.

Enlightenment is having your head and heart in the wide open sky of spirit and your feet firmly planted in the garden of life.

In other words, Enlightenment means transformation, transforming us and the world at the same time. Enlightenment means to be an integral person working towards creating an integral world. Enlightenment means being a spiritual activist.

So what do the great wisdom traditions say that urges us to be active in this world? From Buddhist and Hindu Tantra, we learn:

"Brahma (Cosmic Consciousness) is the world."

"Nirvana and Samsara are not two."

"Shiva (Cosmic Consciousness) and Shakti (Cosmic Energy) are one."

"Brahma is the composite of Shiva and Shakti."

In other words, the non-dual philosophies of Tantric Yoga, for example, teaches us about inner and outer ecology; that the world of spirit (Shiva) and the world of matter (Shakti) are essentially an integrated whole; are One in Brahma.

In the words of Ken Wilber: "The point, we might say, is that the circle of Ascending and Descending energies must always be unbroken: "this world" and the "other world" united in one ongoing, everlasting, exuberant embrace."

In the words of my tantric guru, Anandamurti: "Yoga means unification...We must have yoga in all the three levels of life. If there is yoga only in the spiritual level and there is no yoga in the psychic and physical level, what will happen? The very existence of human beings will become unbalanced, human equipoise will be lost. So we must have yoga, or rather yoga-oriented movement, in each and every sphere of life."

But not all yoga philosophies have urged the same balance; not all yogis have lived firmly rooted in this world. In Vedanta we are taught that this world is an illusion. Consequently some yogis have fled this world to seek salvation in spirit only.

There are always exceptions. Even though Vivekananda was a follower of Vedanta and did not think posture yoga (asanas) was very important, he was a political activist in his native India.

Still, I favor those who clearly favor balance in their world view. "Yoga in each and every sphere of life."

That is, when we buy yogurt a yogi is to consider not only how deliciously it melts on the tongue and how good it is for health but also how good it is for the planet's health—how and where it was grown by farmers, animals and dirt. That is yogic ecology.

Yoga is then to ask ourselves: Is this yogurt both organic

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