

# Rising Sun

Women  
Proutists of  
North  
America

January 2015

INSIDE:

Feminism is Not  
a Dirty Word

Cooperative Leadership



## The Silent Success of Cooperatives in Venezuela

By Dada Maheshvarananda

Solidarity, cooperation, and community empowerment are positive values promoted in Venezuela in contrast to the individualism and selfishness promoted by the corporate-owned mass media. Cooperatives are quietly transforming people's values in Venezuela, and the rest of the world, though they have been mostly ignored by the mass media and by many political leaders, too.

The International Cooperative Alliance defines a cooperative as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise." Worker cooperatives develop trust, solidarity, and teamwork.

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## Women of Color: Turning the Economic Corner

By Meizhu Lui  
Co-author of  
*The Color of Wealth:  
The Story of the U.S.  
Racial Wealth Divide*



Women of color in the U.S. live at the intersection of "already broke" and "could go broke." When we worry about being broke or becoming broke, we think about getting more income. But income is only part of the equation; in fact, a larger factor is wealth, that is, what you own minus what you owe. You can "go broke" easily if you lose a job, get sick, or need to care for young children or old parents. Money in the bank, owning your own home or business, having retirement and investment accounts enable you to ride out a crisis, to have financial security, and to give your children a head start.

Mariko Chang (<http://www.mariko-chang.com/>) an ex

*Continued on page 12*

# Editor's Reflections: 'Feminist' is not a Dirty Word: Beyonce and Malala

By Mirra Price

Recently, TIME magazine decided to include the word "feminist" in its annual "worst words" poll, alongside words like "bae," "basic," "turnt," and "yaaasssss." Although TIME did, eventually, apologize and has removed "feminist" from its banned words list, it was due to pressure from petitions circulated by The Feminist Majority Foundation and other women's advocacy groups.

Actually, in mid-November, right before Time withdrew "feminist" from their 2014 banned list, 'feminist' was leading the poll, according to Penny Nance, chief executive and president of Concerned Women for America. She said that while the word-ban exercise was "silly," it was also "indicative of the fact that feminism has a PR problem".

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/nov/17/time-mag-slapped-over-proposed-ban-feminist/>

More than 30,000 Care 2 members signed a petition telling TIME to apologize and write an article on modern feminism. In just a few days, Nancy Gibbs, TIME's managing editor, issued an apology and TIME published an essay entitled "Feminism is a 21st Century Word" by Robin Morgan, one of the founders of the Women's Media Center.

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/14a1c600c75e4c59>

Feminist Majority Foundation president Eleanor Smeal said, "[F]eminist' is a worldwide movement for equality of women that...must not be trivialized. It's very important that leaders help to empower women and to end the violence against and exploitation of women."

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/feminist+majority+foundaton/149be9fc180a22eb>

Renewed interest in what it means to be 'feminist' has been stirred up by the recent public identification as 'feminists' by pop idols, Beyonce and Taylor Swift.

In Beyonce's song, "Flawless" in which she included words of Nigerian writer, Chimanda Ngozi Adichie's TEDx talk, she proclaims, "We should all be feminists." The pop diva quotes Adichie's definition of a feminist as "a person who believes in the social, economic and political equality of the sexes" (.Watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TEDxEuston talk here).

Maria Shriver interviewed Beyonce and other prominent women in an extensive report on the status of women (<http://shriverreport.org>). Although some, including pop icon, Annie Lenox, have challenged Beyonce's identifying as 'feminist', others defend Beyonce. Although it might seem hypocritical that a pop star, on the one hand, projects a highly sexualized, stereotypical image of women, while, on the other hand, is singing about a strong, independent 'feminist' image. Some argue that this is not the best role model for young girls. Yet Beyonce seems to have depths we did not imagine underneath her highly sculpted, commercialized photo-shopped image. The question some have is, "Can you buy into being promoted as a sexual object for commercial gain while, at the same time, renouncing that same sexual objectivity, proclaiming oneself free of it, and instead promoting gender empowerment and equality?" Is it hypocritical to sell one type of image while giving lip service to another? I must admit that it is a bit confusing.

However, if we really want to change the image of 'feminist', it seems important to try to be as inclusive as possible in our definition of what it means to be a 'feminist'. Perhaps, it is a situation in which we cannot judge a book by its cover, or a pop star by a hyper-sexualized Barbie doll persona. It is true that Beyonce does not fit into the mold of what many consider to be a 'feminist'—a woman who rejects societal conditioning of passivity, sexual objectification and imposed weakness. However, if someone, woman or man, identifies as being 'feminist', then I think we need to give them the benefit of the doubt. The days of feminists being lopped into a certain mold like the hairy--under armed, bra burning, demonstrating radicals are over. If we hope to include Generation X and Millennials in the ranks of 'feminists', some of us who are part of the old guard, must begin to embrace the younger generation, with all its different values, lifestyles and dreams. I am not talking about compromising the ideals upon which the feminist movement was founded. Rather, we simply need to make adjustments, according to time, place and person, realizing that there is no cookie cutter we can use to determine who is and who is not 'feminist'.

The key issue is that of choice. Many women may

choose to be in a traditional housewife role in a family, for example. Yet, many others want the choice of having more education and careers. Indeed, it is necessary in today's economy for most women to work outside the home. Women need the opportunity to explore our own potentials. Even today there are many women who still do not have these choices. For example, in some developing countries, girls are not allowed an education. Take the story of this year's co-Nobel prize winner, Pakistani Malala Yousafzai.

Malala has become the youngest person to receive the Nobel Prize. She was shot by the Taliban for advocating for the rights of girls to go to school. See her Nobel Prize acceptance speech here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmqF9Y2Yq1U>

In her speech, she states that she is grateful that her father "did not clip her wings" as a girl, that he encouraged her to be independent and to get a proper education. Malala still wears a burka, yet I believe she is a role model for feminists. Feminists come from diverse backgrounds, and we do not all look and think alike. Yet I feel the common thread among us all is the commitment to and the advocacy for equality, humanity and opportunity to become our best selves.

For many decades, the word 'feminist' has not always been viewed in a favorable light. Many young women as well as many in the general public have viewed being a feminist as being someone who hates men, burns bras and wants to be completely separate from men. Part of the public relations dilemma associated with the word, 'feminist' originated from the backlash to the gains that feminists made, starting from winning the vote in 1920, then getting legislation passed in the 1960s and 70s like Title IX, which gives equal funding for girls' sports and to the recent Ledbetter Act which outlaws lower salaries for women in the same positions as men.

Gains toward gender equality have been significant in the 20th century and to a lesser extent, this century. However, the reactionary right is trying to roll back some of these gains, like access to health care and abortion. It is threatening to some in power that women are advocating for wage equality, paid maternity leave and increased day care opportunities for working families. When women and children have equal opportunities and access to education, health care and are free from abuse, rape, and trafficking, it benefits not only women, but all members of families and society in general.

Capitalism and sexism are nefarious partners. The exploitation of women and children economically, physically and by the objectifying stereotypes portrayed in the mass media will only end when the corrupt capitalist system, based on the profit of a wealthy, powerful elite is replaced by a new system.

We advocate for Prout, in which people are more important than profit, and which is based on cooperatives in local economies. We eagerly work for the end of capitalist domination and the establishment of Prout in which all are valued and all have the opportunity to reach our true potentials in the new world we want to see.

*Mirra Price, a retired English teacher, currently is a writer, editor and copyeditor. An activist and Proutist, she has worked in cooperatives, for many social justice causes, and has advocated for women's rights and gender equality since the 1960s.*



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## Rising Sun January 2015

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# Cooperative Leadership

*A regular column by Satya Tanner*

## The Problem with Being Promoted on Merit

"Homo WHAT-reproduction?" asks a friend of mine, wondering why I would think that sexual orientation and children lead to inequality regimes and discrimination.

"No, homo-SOCIAL reproduction" I reply.

It's a common mistake because so few people have even heard of homo-social reproduction, or the tendency for people to promote others who are like themselves. But given that issues of inequity are still rife as evidenced by a lack of diversity in many organizations, and given that sometimes the biggest opponents of measures to improve equality are people from the group subject to inequality (e.g., the Women's Anti-Suffrage Movement claiming that giving women the right to vote was a dangerous experiment), I feel the need to shout this from the roof tops:

PEOPLE HAVE AN UNCONSCIOUS TENDENCY TO PROMOTE OTHERS WHO ARE LIKE THEMSELVES AND/OR THE DOMINANT CULTURE.

According to Rosabeth Moss Kanter, there are three main reasons why this can occur:

- Uncertainty and the need for trust
- Ease of communication
- Difficulties in measuring managerial performance.

Managers have to deal with a lot of ambiguity in their roles, and so we like to promote people who will make good decisions. This means that we need to trust them on some level and perhaps see eye to eye (noting that diversity of thought usually leads to better performance outcomes). Thus, the further you rise up the managerial chain, the more subjective 'merit' can become. Instead our mental template of what constitutes a 'great' leader takes over and 'objective' outcomes are often hindered by the unconscious biases that are lying deep within our psyche. This means that unless we are specifically looking for it, we might end up promoting someone who is like ourselves and/or the dominant culture, rather than someone who might bring diversity of thought to the team and lead using a different, but effective, style.

Noting that I have often worked in male dominated environments, some of the best leaders I knew did not meet the requirements of the 'boys club' because they stood by their ethics and authenticity. Despite being excellent leaders with great communication, empathy and team performance results, they found themselves

trapped by a glass ceiling because they perhaps did not 'tick the social box', be that a beer drinking 'lad', a 'heroic' leader who is going to swoop in and save the day (as opposed to a facilitative leader who inspires the team to save the day), or some other shallow template of trustworthiness.

So what can we do to help overcome the inequity that results from homo-social reproduction?

- First of all, be AWARE that it exists.
- Secondly, recognize that 'merit' is highly subjective when it comes to managerial team performance, and like a good sports team, you don't just choose the top players, rather you choose a diverse and talented group that through synergy become a top TEAM.
- Thirdly, support quotas, diversity metrics and human resource policies that seek to dismantle the inherent inequality that exists within organizational systems.
- Finally, come to understand yourself. Test your unconscious bias using the Harvard Implicit association Test at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit>

*Satya Tanner had a 16-year career as a pilot and aerospace engineer in the Royal Australian Air Force, leading people and managing projects. She has studied Prout at a post graduate level and has a passion for helping organizations and communities that are in search of innovation, leadership, healthy cultures and conscious business principles.*



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## Building the New World Conference

In 2008, Proutist Garda Ghista organized a dynamic Prout Conference at Radford University. The next **Building the New World Conference** will be hosted at Radford University in Radford VA on May 28-31, 2015. Dada Maheshvarananda, from the Prout Institute in Venezuela, and Mirra Price, Rising Sun Editor, will both be presenting.

The Building the New World conference will focus on the reality that planet Earth is endangered in multiple, interconnected ways. We also need to recognize that it is no longer feasible to reform the current corrupt institutions. Therefore, in order to "Build the New World," humanity must quickly shift from imperialism to social democracy, from materialism to altruism, from a global war-system to a worldwide peace-system, from unsustainable environmental destruction to resilient organic networks, and from religious separation to the redeeming state of spiritual unity. We must move from fragmentation to holism ... and fast! Find out more at: [www.btnw.org](http://www.btnw.org) See you there!

# Women Proutists' Vision Story

Women Proutists envision a future, twenty-five years from now, in which women and men are working together in coordinated cooperation on projects to eliminate inequality regimes. Women Proutists are taking a leadership role in advancing social justice, economic equality and education for women. Women are the vanguard of society, promoting women as leaders so the whole society will be more just for all.

We are catalysts, smoothing the way for the change that needed to happen. By pointing out disparities between men and women and racial makeup of various organizations, a movement for social justice has gained its own momentum. Women Proutists are playing a key role in bringing together networks that are working for greater social and economic equality. Women Proutists have transformed from being baby birds to mature birds, flying in conjunction with men in bringing about a new economy based on PROUT principles.

Around the world, women are taking on more leadership roles. The multi-culturalism movement has given rise to a larger network of interconnected samajas, e.g., socio-economic units based on common regional, cultural and economic interests. Mahila samaja (women's samaja) plays a key role in this national and global network of samajas. Cooperatives are widely established within the samajas as the base of the new Prout economy, which has replaced capitalism.

Women Proutists have helped change the way women are viewed in society, and women are no longer viewed as second-class citizens. Women are respected as equals and as partners in creating an egalitarian society based on neo-humanism in which all people have the opportunity to achieve their true potentials and in working for the common good of all.

## What is Prout?

**PROUT** is an acronym for the Progressive Utilization Theory which was propounded in 1959 by Indian philosopher Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. PROUT presents a viable alternative to the outmoded capitalist and communist socio-economic models. Neither of these theories has adequately met the needs of humanity.

Proutists are seeking to convey the comprehensive and visionary goals of PROUT theory, which combines the wisdom of spirituality, the struggle for self reliance and the spirit of economic democracy. As women who are Proutists, in this magazine, we are attempting to focus on the particular struggles that women face in attaining self reliance in society. However, we also wish to present the complete vision of Prout as a new ideology for a new world.

Toward the goal of being inclusive, we invite Proutists and others who are interested in providing a platform for social change to submit articles, letters to the editor, poetry, blogs, and other writings to Rising Sun. We want to take the pulse of the 99 percent and to try to reflect in some small way the voice of the people.

### **Key Principles of PROUT and Neo-Humanism:**

**Neo-humanism** expands the humanistic love for all human beings to include love and respect for all creation - plants, animals and even inanimate objects. Neo-humanism provides a theoretical base for creating a new era of ecological balance and planetary kinship.

**Basic necessities guaranteed to all:** In order to be able to actualize their highest aspirations, people need to have their basic needs met. Access to food, shelter, clothing, education and medical are fundamental human rights which must be guaranteed to all.

**Balanced economy:** Prout advocates regional self-reliance, cooperatively owned and managed businesses, local control of large scale key industries, and limits on the individual accumulation of wealth.

**Women's Rights:** Prout encourages the struggle against all forms of violence and exploitation used to suppress women. Prout's goal is coordinated cooperation, with equal rights between men and women.

**Cultural Diversity:** In the spirit of universal fellowship, Prout encourages the protection and cultivation of local culture, language, history and tradition.

**World Government:** Prout supports the creation of world government with a global constitution and common penal code.



# Recipe Corner

*A regular column by Liina Laufer*

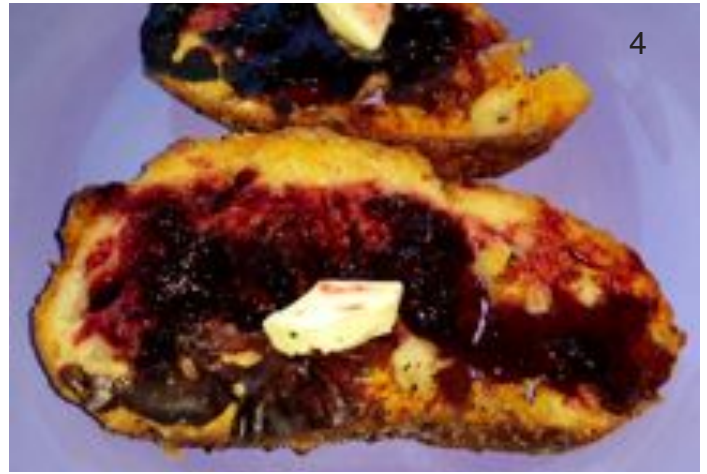
French toast is a genius solution for stale bread. In France it is called “pain perdu” – lost bread, since the bread would otherwise go to waste. I rarely finish a loaf of bread before it loses freshness, so I often slice up the remainder and use it for French toast. I’ll

freeze the slices if I’m not using them immediately, and then toast them before dipping them in the batter.

My mother makes a delicious eggless French toast with cashews and milk (soy or cow). I’m not a big fan of cashews so I use almonds instead. I also have expanded upon the recipe by adding various fun things in my cupboards. This is a recipe you can really play around with, so feel free to experiment! You can add tofu to make a creamier batter, and use any kind of nuts.

I used to grind all the ingredients, including whole nuts, in a blender. However, I discovered almond flour and it has saved me a lot of hassle! Now I can just mix all the ingredients in a bowl.

You can make multiple batches, mix the dry ingredients and store it in a jar, and then just add milk and vanilla to make the batter.



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## Liina’s French Toast

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup almond flour or almonds
- 1 T shredded coconut
- 1 t flaxseed meal
- 1 t nutritional yeast
- pinch cinnamon
- 1/2 t vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup milk (soy, rice, coconut, or cow)
- 5-6 large pieces of sliced bread
- oil for frying

### Instructions:

If using whole nuts, blend all ingredients (except bread) in a blender or food processor. If using flour, just mix in a bowl. Add extra milk, if necessary, to make a thin batter. Dip slices of bread in the batter and then wipe off any excess batter. Fry the slices in a pan with oil (coconut oil is excellent!) until browned. Top with anything delicious, such as pureed or stewed fruit, maple syrup, or yogurt.

Please see Liina’s blog at [recipessdeliina.wordpress.com](http://recipessdeliina.wordpress.com)



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# Moral Mondays Protest Movement

*Rev. William Barber, president of the North Carolina NAACP, has been organizing Moral Monday grassroots protests weekly in Raleigh, North Carolina's capital, since 2013. These protests began after Republican Pat McCrory became North Carolina governor and Republicans gained control of the legislature. Moral Mondays are organized to protest taking away of voting rights, cutting of social programs, repeal of the racial justice act and restrictions in health care choices for women. In 2014 these protests spread to Georgia, South Carolina and other states. Rev. Barber was invited to Ferguson, Missouri during the recent racial riots there as this movement goes national.*

*On August 4, 2014, the Reverend William Barber, traveled to Asheville for the yearly Mountain Moral Monday in this city. Barber urged people to vote out politicians he called extremists during the rally at Pack Square Park to a crowd of about 3,500.*

<http://www.citizenimes.com/story/news/politics/2014/08/04/moral-monday-asheville-rev-william-barber/13577733/>

*Since P. R. Sarkar, Prout founder, does not advocate voting for the lesser of two evils, but rather voting for true moralists, this message of getting out the vote is not really Proutist. Yet I am moved by the awareness of marginalization of the poor, people of color and women and the positive call to action. Networking with Moral Mondays and other social justice movements will forge alliances that will give momentum and unity to the global movement for social change. Itiyopiya Ewart (Atimaya) spoke at this event. Her speech follows.*

**August, 2014**

## **Asheville Mountain Moral Monday Speech**

By Itiyopiya Ewart

Hey, y'all! My name is Itiyopiya Ewart and I'm a single mother experiencing poverty. I live in Hillcrest Apartments, a public housing neighborhood here in Asheville. I'm extremely concerned about the imprudent decisions made by the North Carolina General Assembly last year.

These decisions have led to laws that attack people who are experiencing poverty, especially women, children and people of color. These laws also attack:

- Local government authority,
- Public education,
- Environmental protection,
- Voter's rights and tenant's rights.

These attacks affect me and my community greatly. Many of my neighbors are single women of color who are struggling to find employment or are working low-wage jobs while struggling to support their families. Yet we find our unemployment benefits cut, our access to health care dis-



*Itiyopiya Ewart presents at Mountain Moral Monday.*

mantled through the rejection of the Medicaid expansion and our Earned Income Tax Credit exterminated.

There is also a great need for support systems such as self-sufficiency programs and affordable, quality childcare to be in place to assist us in our climb out of poverty. Yet, these programs have been cut, leaving many families in North Carolina even more marginalized economically. And as we mothers endeavor to make ends meet, we are met with public disdain and contempt for being poor. This leaves us not only increasingly disenfranchised but also increasingly disenchanting.

But we are far from hopeless. We have hope that the people of this beautiful state will stand for justice for all people by voting wisely this upcoming election. We raise our voice today to say that our elected officials have a responsibility to us. Let us not forget, let us never forget that our government is a democracy "of the people, by the people" and for the people. So as we head to the polls this November, we must not be comforted or pacified by the promise of better education or tax cuts that will supposedly grow our economy.

We, the people, must be active in making sure that the promise of a better America is evidenced through policy... policy from which we will see positive results. It's not enough to vote for a candidate because they share the same political party. For women and people of color, the right to vote was won through great sacrifice that included the loss of lives, and that right is still being threatened today. We cannot be capricious with our vote. Let us be prudent and elect those who truly support all North Carolinians in their pursuit of happiness.

Let's show our strength by using our vote to create the positive change we seek. Thank you.

*Itiyopiya Fikir Ewart is currently earning her master's degree in Teaching. As an educator, she intends to teach English as a tool to enable English language learners in transforming themselves and their communities. Itiyopiya is the mother of a beautiful two-year-old child named Tatek.*

Part Three in our serialization of this significant new Prout book, *Principles for a Balanced Economy*, which is based on Prout's founder, P. R. Sarkar's 1961 *Ananda Sutrum*. We pick it up where we left off, starting on page 25, continuing with the First Principle of Prout, "There should be no accumulation of wealth without the permission of society."

# Principles for a Balanced Economy

By Roar Bjonnes

## How Over Accumulation Impacts Other Aspects of Society

Over accumulation creates a materialistic culture that stimulates an economy based on consumerism, greed and selfishness. Since 1950, human society has consumed more goods than all previous generations put together. But, according to Earth Watch Institute researcher, Alan Durning, author of the book, *How Much Is Enough?*, this increased accumulation of material goods in the materially rich countries of the world has not increased people's happiness or fulfillment. Rather, our consumer culture, with its inherent longing for more, has, in many ways, made us spiritually impoverished. As America's first environmentalist, Henry David Thoreau, once said, "A man is rich in proportion to that which he can afford to let alone." In other words, a progressive economy will also seek to create more cultural and spiritual wealth and thus find an optimal balance between material and spiritual wealth. To achieve this goal, Durning suggests establishing an economic culture guided by the following dictum: "sufficiency rather than excess" (Durning, 1992).

Economic inequality causes social pressures that affect people's health and well-being. Sir Michael Marmot, a professor of epidemiology and public health at University College London, studied health in the United States and in Britain. According to the *New York Times*, "There was more illness in the United States than in Britain. Sir Michael theorizes that a reason for the disparity was the greater inequalities in the United States and heavier stresses resulting from them" (Burnasek, June, 2006).

In a recent study, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett show how inequality within a society, even if the soci-

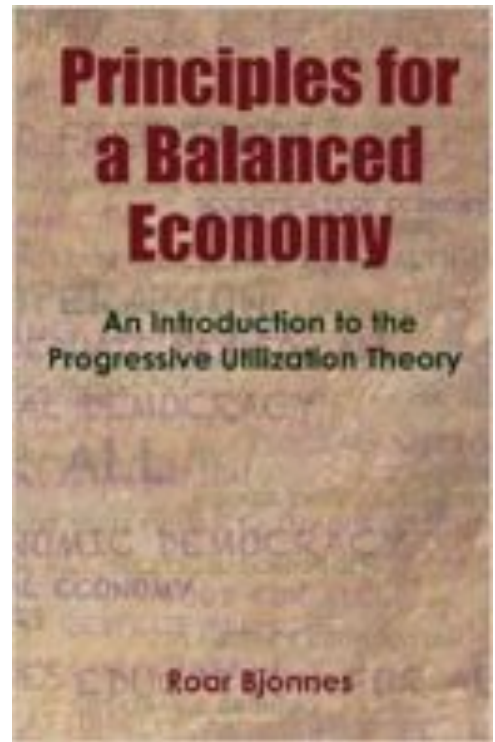
ety is fairly wealthy, creates an array of problems, such as mental illness, drug use, health problems, crime, violence and gambling, teenage pregnancies, etc. An interesting aspect of their study showed that income disparity within a given society mattered more than the disparities between societies. Even a fairly poor society, where income disparities were low, did much better than a rich society with high income disparities (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010).

It has been known for some years that poor health and violence are more common in more unequal societies. However, in the course of my research I became aware that almost all problems which are common at the bottom of the social ladder are more common in more unequal societies. It is not only ill health and violence, but also [...] a host of other social problems. Almost all of them contribute to the widespread concern that modern societies are, despite their affluence, social failures (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010, p. 390).

## Who Sets the Limits?

In discussing the question of restricting the accumulation of wealth, the question naturally arises as to who sets the limit of accumulation, and decides who can accumulate what. The first principle simply states that "society" or the "collective body" should give approval for any accumulation, but it does not define these concepts.

This, in fact, is not a weakness; it is strength. As a principle, it must have universal application, and as time and place changes, the way society organizes itself will definitely also change. Suggestions for how this control could be implemented in present-day society will be addressed in future publications. Suffice





it to say that it can be accomplished by society-at-large through a process of political legislation. The specific limits will vary from nation to nation and will depend upon the current standard of living.

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*Roar Bjonnes is co-founder of the Prama Institute, a holistic retreat center in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. He is a certified yoga health educator, a popular yoga columnist and a lecturer on yoga philosophy and history. He has been a Proutist for several decades, giving Prout presentations in the U.S. and Europe.*



# 2014 Global Prout Convention



By Dada Maheshvarananda

In the beautiful Danish countryside, 170 people attended Prout Convention 2014 in Ananda Gaorii Master Unit, Vig, Denmark, from 18 - 23 July 2014.

Jaya Brekke opened the conference, as she has for several years, with a report on the impact of austerity measures in Greece, Spain and the Ukraine and resistance movements to them, and she showed the documentary she made, "Future Suspended". Dr. Ed McKenna, Professor of Economics at Connecticut College in USA gave three inspiring classes about "Spirituality and Finance", "Causes of the Economic Crisis", and "The Way Forward". A video about the movement "Future Tasmania" ended with an interview with Liila Hass answering questions by videoconference from Australia. Dada Madhuvidyananda gave a talk about Sadvipras and a class about the Prout political party he has started in Germany. Ramesh Bjonnes and Govinda gave classes about four interconnected crises: finance, inequality, resources and the environment. Satya Tanner organized duty co-ops

and gave a presentation, "Organizing Effective Teams". Hiranmaya from USA gave a workshop on "Integrating Prout with Local Food Movements". Divyajyoti explained "The History and Potential of a Nordic Union". Frands Frydendal and Martin Wozniak gave workshops on "Sociocratic Decision Making" and "The Dragon Dreaming Method". Candela Vargas gave a workshop on non-violent communication.

The most inspiring part of the conference was amazing news reports about Prout work around the world. Dada Vandananada gave the news about 14 active Samaja movements in India. Didi Ananda Devapriya and Diipanii told about the inspiring work they are doing with the European Roma Movement and the NGO community in Romania. The Prout Research Institute of Portugal and the PROUTugal Movement are doing great work. Other great news came from Prout work in Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Italy, the U.K., Ireland and Germany. Dada Maheshvarananda gave a workshop, "Strategy Ideas for Implementing Prout" and news about the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela.

# Women Proutist Profile

## Nada Khader

I spent many restless years as a teenager. I was idealistic and knew that I did not want to spend my life in the corporate world. I had experimented with various types of yoga classes and found my first spiritual yoga teacher during my first year of college. He encouraged me to get involved with Ananda Marga as a devotional path that he believed was well suited for me. I did not encounter Ananda Marga until I went off abroad during my Junior Year Abroad to Cairo, Egypt.

There, I discovered that the spiritual practices and the ideology as propounded by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar resonated deeply within me.

It was in this context in Cairo that I was also exposed to PROUT.

I loved the fact that a cooperative-based economic system was part of Ananda Marga. The other yoga groups that I had been involved with did not mention or address the socio-economic ills of our planet and society and did not seem to be focused on social justice. I grew up in several poor countries including Yemen and Uganda and saw very poor people that deeply disturbed me as a child. A child can recognize poverty in the appearance of people, in the harrowing look in the eyes of those who are deprived, and in the environment in which poor people are forced to live, not out of their own free will but because they do not have access to the resources that they need to take care of their families. These resources include the right to a living wage job, adequate housing, free education and healthcare—all the essentials that are guaranteed in a society governed by PROUT principles.

Poverty diminishes the sense of dignity of people, and I absolutely hated it when I encountered it.

PROUT is a theory that, if we can all collectively figure out how to implement it according to the intent of Sarkar, will eradicate poverty on our planet. We will always have varying income levels and social classes but the poverty that degrades entire communities will be eradicated. This removal of poverty will elevate the status of plants and animals and our whole environment. Poor people are so focused on



*Nada Khader, director of the WESTPAC Foundation.*

survival that issues of the environment, the welfare of plants and animals is not on the top of the agenda. As people's purchasing capacity increases, they are able to make consumer decisions that benefit the whole collective.

I remember in Cairo the discussion and concern about the very high rates of illiteracy in Egypt as well as girls and women having large numbers of children.

We learned that research shows when girls and women have access to education through the university level, they choose to marry later and have fewer children which has an impact on the whole society.

Our professor insisted on the notion that access to university education, especially for women, will have many beneficial effects that ripple throughout society. Twenty-five years after my Junior Year Abroad in Egypt, there has been some progress made in terms of improving female access to higher education, but there still remains a persistent gender gap in terms of educational opportunity, especially in the rural parts of the country. This gender gap remains true for many countries in the developing world.

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

# She Rises

By Jyoti Wind

She rises.

She speaks through each of us,  
known and unknown to each other.

She rises.

She loves us in her memory,  
in the present pressing  
of our feet into Her.

She rises.

She kisses our hearts  
as we lay them on Her.

She rises.

Brings us her wisdom  
and grace back to life.

She rises.



*Dolman Gate, Irish Grange Stone Circle.*

*Jyoti Wind is a poet and author. Her poetry has recently been published at Elephant Journal online and Crone Magazine; she has self-published several books of poetry and prose, a childhood memoir, and three anthologies. She is also an astrologer and can be reached at [jyotiwind@gmail.com](mailto:jyotiwind@gmail.com).*

## 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.

Come see our website:

[www.proutwomen.org](http://www.proutwomen.org)

Or Facebook us at:

Women Proutists of North America

# Turning the Economic Corner

*Continued from front cover*

pert on women in the U.S. economy, found that wealth inequality between women of color and everyone else is so huge that it is at first unbelievable. In 2007, single black and Latino women had only a penny for the dollar owned by a man of their same race, and only a fraction of a penny for the dollar owned by a single white woman: race was a much larger factor than gender. The median wealth of black women was \$100, Latinas \$120, white women, \$41,500; single black men had \$7,900, Latino men \$9,730, and white men \$43,800. “Median wealth” means that half the people fall below that figure; so nearly half of all single black and Latino women have debt and no assets at all.

<http://www.insightccd.org/uploads/CRWG/LiftingAsWeClimb-WomenWealth-Report-InsightCenter-Spring2010.pdf>

The American myth is that working hard makes a person rich. But the work of enslaved people didn't make African-Americans rich. Women's work never made women rich. Neither group got a paycheck for their labor. Instead, their work made others—mostly white men—gain wealth.

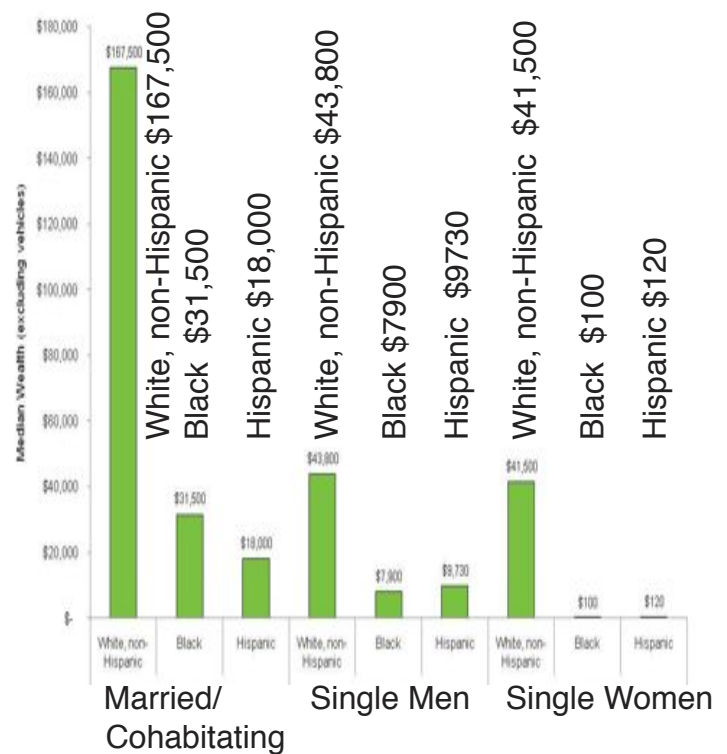
## Government policies solidified the race and gender wealth hierarchies.

The Homestead Act was open only to white men, who were given land, which is the basis of all wealth, at no cost; that same land had been taken by force from American Indians who used the land collectively and did not understand what is meant by “private property”. Low-interest mortgage, farm, and business loans were given only to white men, while communities of color were “red-lined,” excluded from receiving subsidies to jump-start asset building. When the Southwest was taken from Mexico in a trumped up war, Anglos grabbed their land too. The Alien Land Act prohibited Asians from owning land or starting corporations. The rules of the game were rigged from the start in favor of white men.

<http://thenewpress.com/books/color-of-wealth>

All women were excluded from wealth building through government policies as well. They were not allowed to own property, to have their own insurance, or to work in higher paid jobs with benefits until the mid-20th century. However, white women are better off because they are the mothers, wives, and daughters of white men. Inheritance is the main way of acquiring a nest egg, and the financial advantages of white people get passed along generation after generation. The wealthiest women in the U.S. today did not work to earn their money; the richest woman in the world is Christy Walton and her sister Alice is number two; they got there by being the

Racial Differences in Median Wealth 2007



daughters of Sam Walton, the founder of Walmart.

<http://www.forbes.com/pictures/lmj45kjjl/americas-richest-women/>

Disadvantage also rolls down the generations; men of color did not have anything to pass on to their sons or daughters. And those daughters today are still the ones who look after the family, not only still doing unpaid “women's work,” but also having to go out to earn a living. Some work one, two, or even three jobs, cobbling together the money to survive. More women of color than before are in professional careers, but without wealth, even high income women of color “could go broke.”

Since its founding, the U.S. has not only allowed, but assisted white men in accumulating massive amounts of wealth without limit. Land is owned in perpetuity. Tax policy protects financial assets; you get a larger tax deduction for owning a mansion than for raising a child. Redistribution of land and resources is sorely needed to have a democratic society, but that's not happening.

What steps can be taken toward that end? New policies can help spread the wealth, such as giving every newborn baby a savings account already stocked with a minimum of \$5000 which can grow until the child reaches the age when they can use it for education or ownership (a program already tried in the U.K.), universal early childhood education (mentioned by President Obama), free or affordable college education (as there used to be until the 1980s), a universal jobs policy with the government as the employer of last resort (several economists

have challenged the supposed necessity of unemployment), access to low-interest loans and credit for micro-business development (already available to white men), universal retirement accounts and improved Social Security benefits (policy proposals have already been put forward). Programs can be targeted toward women and people of color who have worked the hardest and remained the poorest; after all, white men received such targeted assistance for most of U.S. history. While these policies may not pass in today's political climate, changes don't happen without a vision, an agenda—and organizing!

Asset building is a woman's issue. The intersection of “broke” and “could go broke” is a bad neighborhood. It's time for us to move around the corner.

*Starting out as a hospital food service worker and rank and file union activist, Meizhu Lui saw how women of color are kept at the bottom of the workforce. Righting racial and gender injustice has been her life-long passion, and she sees closing the wealth gap as key. She co-authored the book, *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide* and is a member of Freedom Road Socialist Organization.*

## Naomi Klein: This Changes Everything!

By Nina Shapiro

On October first at Powell's Books at the Cedar Hills store in Beaverton, Oregon, I attended a lecture and book-signing event by author Naomi Klein in promotion of her new book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, 2014, Simon and Schuster. Her prior works include *The Shock Doctrine* and *No Logo*.

Even though the lecture was held in a suburban bookstore on a weekday evening, there were over 500 people in attendance. In her talk, as in her book, she tied together the concepts of climate change with the destructive effects of capitalism on society and on the planet. She shared with us her own process of waking up from denial about climate change while reading a bedtime story to her young child and wondering what kind of world her child would inherit.

Naomi Klein urgently entreated us to open our eyes to the reality we face at this critical juncture in human history, and indeed in the life of the planet. She clearly sees the issues of the day as interconnected concerns that must be solved by creating a society that is morally based and demands social justice for all. In her book she states:

“... any attempts to rise to the climate challenge will be fruitless unless it is understood as part of a much broader battle of worldviews, a process of rebuilding and reinventing the very idea of the collective, the communal, the commons, the civil, and the civic after so many decades of attack and neglect.” (p. 460)

I felt very moved by her talk, her eloquence and intelligence coupled with her urgent plea that we each get involved in creating a better world for present and future generations. After she spoke I got in the line for her book-signing event and presented her with a copy of a PROUT publication called *After Capitalism: Economic Democracy in Action* by Dada Maheshvarananda.



*Author Naomi Klein preparing for a presentation on her new book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*.*

# The Silent Success of Cooperatives in Venezuela

*Continued from front cover*

Because cooperatives promote socialist values, it is natural that the Bolivarian government once promoted cooperatives in Venezuela; what is surprising is that now it does not.

Before President Hugo Chávez took office in February 1999, there were 813 registered cooperatives in the country with 230,000 total members. Most of these

original cooperatives are still active, tough, and resilient because they were created independent of government support or funding. The strongest of these is CECOSOLA (Cooperatives of Social Services of Lara State). Founded in 1967, the food co-op consists of 538

worker members who sell to 60,000 shoppers each week from three locations in the city of Barquisimeto. Though their prices

average 30 percent less than those of commercial supermarkets, their annual sales top US\$20 million. This incredibly sophisticated business operation has no bosses or managers; the workers rotate jobs; and all workers receive the same pay. The network also has many different types of small producer cooperatives, credit unions, a health clinic with both conventional medicine and alternative therapies, and a network of cooperative funeral homes.

The Cooperative Law of 2001 is an excellent piece of legislation that was written by cooperative experts; it sets the minimum number of members at five and requires the government to give preference to cooperatives when awarding contracts. After the failed coup in April 2002, President Chávez began to emphasize cooperatives in a big way. He set up a national job-training program, Mission Vuelvan Caras (“About Face”) that paid the minimum wage to the unemployed while they learned basic occupational skills; the trainers taught about cooperatives in every

course, and they encouraged the graduates to form one. Co-op registration was made free of charge; co-ops were exempted from income tax, and micro-credit was made available to them.

CATURVEN is a very successful cooperative today that was formed during that campaign in 2002. It services the heavy machinery produced by Caterpillar Inc., the world's leading manufacturer of earth moving and mining equipment. There are now 38 members; 40 percent of them women, who express they are very happy belonging to a cooperative that pays good salaries to everyone, with less than two times the difference between the highest paid and

lowest paid members. They work in greater Caracas, and are part of the Strategic Solidarity Alliance, a network of 17 cooperatives with a total of 986 members that service the Caterpillar heavy equipment throughout the country. In an interview with a team from the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela, Lisset Reyes admitted, and her colleagues agreed, that the only real challenge they



*A happy moment of celebration at a CECOSOLA gathering.*

face as a cooperative is that it takes a bit longer to come to a decision. But none of them would trade their weekly meetings for an autocratic workplace.

For six years, from 2002 to 2008, the government invested heavily in their campaign to form cooperatives. The national cooperative supervision institute, SUNACOOB, which headed the government's campaign, focused on basic education and the legal registration of new cooperatives. This resulted in the phenomenal creation of over 280,000 registered cooperatives; however, the vast majority of those never became active or collapsed. To understand why this big investment failed to make strong co-ops, we need to look at the key factors of their success.

As would be expected, the basic factors for success in any business also apply to co-ops: there has to be a real demand for the product or service; planning has to be thorough and realistic; and the enterprise has to make money. However, because they are local enterprises that are owned and managed collectively, they



*CATURVEN cooperative members, from left: Jhonny Volcan, Lisset Reyes and Franklein Rodriguez.  
Photo: Tsutomu Yoshihara*

also require good communication among the members, transparent accounting and community support.

Honesty is also critical to success. I asked some of the CECOSOLA workers if they had problems with stealing. They laughed and explained that the nature of their huge operation included situations where money had to be counted unsupervised; in a poor society, temptation was always there. Each year, about five or six of the over five hundred members were caught stealing money; the general assembly then collectively decided they had to leave the cooperative. The annual budget also adds a one percent loss due to theft—if it ever crosses that, the amount is deducted from the end of the year bonus that each member receives. However, the workers pointed out that all the commercial supermarkets in the area factor in a five percent loss due to theft, so in comparison they are doing quite well.

In 2006 SUNACOOOP did a “census” to count how many co-ops were active—they were very disappointed to find that due to insufficient training, poor supervision, and lack of follow-up support, only around 50,000 cooperatives were actually functioning. Though it still represented the highest total for any country after China, the upcoming presidential elections prompted attacks from opposition media, who headlined “Venezuela is a Graveyard of Cooperatives!”

This stinging critique about the high rate of failure among registered cooperatives prompted President Chávez to shift the government’s approach from cooperatives to “socialist enterprises” and worker takeovers of factories. In this way, the government pays the salaries, but keeps the ownership, and can guarantee that the enterprise does not close.

Luis Delgado of Cooperativa Gestión Participativa

was the former Venezuelan National Superintendent of Cooperatives from 1975-1979. He said to us, “I think the campaign by the government had an echo, because after the government completely stopped promoting co-ops in 2008, another 40,000 new ones have been registered. Why are people forming new cooperatives now? First, because more than 50 percent of our economy is the informal sector. If people aren’t employed by a private company or the government, they need to do something to survive. Many Venezuelans feel more security when they work together than when they go it alone.”

A second reason that new cooperatives are being registered is that the vast majority of poor and middle class Venezuelans have, at one time or another, participated in a SAN, a BOLSA or a SUSU. These are three names for the same thing, a system of trust whereby ten friends agree to each contribute a certain amount weekly for ten weeks, and the total is given to one of the members in rotation. This collective savings system helps poor families to be strict and self-disciplined to “save” the money and not spend it, until they eventually receive a large sum that they can then use to buy an expensive item they normally could not afford. No contract is ever signed, and the organizer of the SAN is always the last member to receive it. Millions of Venezuelans have participated in this simple community cooperative venture, so they have a positive idea that cooperatives can work even without financial support.

Delgado said, “A research study in 2005 by Centro Gumilla, a Jesuit Center, found that 80 percent of the cooperatives that function in Venezuela did not receive any financial support from the government. This is a situation where receiving money from the government seems to have a detrimental effect on the strength and determination of the cooperative workers.”

SUNACOOOP has done no follow-up census and has no figures since 2008 for how many cooperatives are running in Venezuela. Delgado, comparing all the estimates from different sources, believes the number today to be approximately 90,000, with over a million members. The Venezuelan solidarity economy of cooperatives is a strong force of community empowerment that is transforming people’s values from being self-centered to actively working for the common good.



*Dada Maheshvarananda is director of the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela and author of After Capitalism: Economic Democracy in Action.*

# Highlights of a Progressive Congressional Campaign

By Mirra Price



*Alanna Hartzok on the campaign trail.*

Alanna Hartzok, co-director of Earth Rights Institute ([www.earthrights.net](http://www.earthrights.net)) and a Proutist, recently ran for Congress as a progressive Democrat in Pennsylvania's 9th district. Although she did not win the race against incumbent Republican Bill Shuster, she paved new ground as a candidate whose platform had several Proutist planks. She called for fair wealth distribution, the formation of cooperatives, land tenure, tax and monetary policy reform and other economic democracy policies.

Alanna states on her campaign website: "Extreme wealth inequality endangers our democracy. We must get to the roots of this urgent problem. Let us move beyond the political divide, affirming values of both freedom and fairness, to establish the ethics, rules and policies for economic democracy". For her 14 points on economic democracy along with other policies go to her campaign website under "Issues" here: [www.hartzokforcongress.com](http://www.hartzokforcongress.com)

Shuster outspent Hartzok significantly and yet she managed to get one-third of the votes (36% with \$22,000; the incumbent had more than three million dollars). One high point of her campaign was when two widows of pilots whose planes crashed on 9/11 (South Tower and the Shanksville field in her district of Pennsylvania) contacted her to request support for the Saracini Aviation Safety Bill that Shuster was keeping buried in a subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee that he chairs. The aviation industry contributes a substantial amount of money to Shuster's campaign chest and they oppose the bill. The result was that Hartzok organized a "Paul Revere Ride" through the district with press conferences in four locations so that the widows could tell their stories of Shuster's lack of response to their appeals and how this makes the US vulnerable to another 9/11 type of attack.

Hartzok says: "One important thing that I learned from the campaign is that people need to know the difference between "populist" and "corporatist" candidates and elected officials. An electorate enlightened to this distinction may be the only way to win elections given

current problem of the big money plutocrats."

She was also on the short list of "Elizabeth Warren Democrats" in a recent In These Times story titled "Seven Politicians Who Are Talking About Inequality". In the article, it is stated that Hartzok argues for a 'new economy' of worker ownership, decentralization and environmentalism.

[http://inthesetimes.com/article/17206/seven\\_politicians\\_who\\_are\\_talking\\_about\\_inequality](http://inthesetimes.com/article/17206/seven_politicians_who_are_talking_about_inequality)

Alanna encourages PROUTists to run for office as it is an excellent way to get attention to important issues and policies along with intense media exposure. She is keeping her campaign promise to build a movement for positive change throughout the Pennsylvania Congressional District 9 and is putting together a new website with this purpose.

Alanna is to be congratulated on her groundbreaking congressional run, which has helped put forward Prout principles before the public. She is a woman of courage, conviction and integrity. Hopefully, many other Proutists will come forward to run for political office in the future.

*You can view Alanna's website at [www.hartzokforcongress.com](http://www.hartzokforcongress.com) .*

## Contact Us!

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