

Rising Sun

Women
Proutists of
North
America

July 2017

Forming an Alliance for Economic Democracy

By Shri Verrill and Alex Jackimovicz

In Madison, Wisconsin a range of grassroots activists, intellectuals, and leaders in various movements for political, social and economic change came together to convene at the 2012 Economic Democracy Conference. The conference organizers desired to connect various groups working in different fields of activity with one another and support their work to shed light on and popularize the values and goals of their work as necessary ingredients for changing the world of corporate capitalism to an economics of the people. Examples of economic democracy in action centered on new visions that humanize and democratize the economy.

A few members of the loose coalition of activists and organizers who made the conference possible wanted to continue the momentum and move forward with other projects. Thus, the Alliance for Economic Democracy (AED) was briefly formed as a new organization to carry this work forward. However, the energy to continue quickly faded. We are pleased to announce that in January, 2017 the AED has resurfaced in Maine with a new energy and voice.

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Union Organizing

By Anna Girresch

After being at the PROUT Institute in Venezuela in the summer and fall of 2013, I moved to Atlanta, Georgia. I was in love with the power of workers coming together to organize unions and cooperatives. My own co-workers and I had successfully organized a union in my time as a student at Marian University in Indianapolis. This experience had me convinced that a union job was the way to go, so I figured I'd find one. I took a job at a union food service company at the Atlanta airport.

If you've ever had a layover there, you know that Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is one of the busiest airports in the world. With over 55,000 employees, it's the biggest employer in the state of Georgia. Many of

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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.

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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.

Submissions: We invite you to submit articles of 500-1000 words, poetry, photos, graphics and news of your projects. Deadlines are six weeks before publication—May 15th for the July 1st issue and November 15th for the January 1st issue. Send to mirraprice@gmail.com. Content from this newsletter may be used in any Prout publication with credit given to Rising Sun. We suggest you contact the authors of articles for specific permission to use individual articles. Thank you.

Neohumanist Leadership

Why Leaders Need to Have a Basic Understanding of Systems and Social Science

A regular column by Satya Tanner

In the wake of the London Bridge attack, I have been disturbed by the number of 'leaders' within my network who have been quick to jump to short term solutions, such as suggesting carrying of concealed weapons (CCW) as being the immediate solution to terrorist attacks. Now I understand that people need to feel like they can protect themselves, but often short term policies have long term consequences that you don't see until it's too late. In Systems Theory this is called 'Fixes that Fail'. The basic premise of Systems Theory is that everything is connected, and that if you make changes in one part of the system, there will be a flow on effect of changes whose outcome is determined by a series of complex interrelationships and interdependencies. In order to be a leader who helps to make the world a better place, it's very important to understand the impact of various social policies on the 'social organism' (i.e., society) you are applying it to.

For example, if the problem is what to do about the rise in terrorist attacks in the UK, and a rebalancing is required to reduce terrorist attacks, then to introduce CCW policies might initially make people feel safe because they can fight back an attack with something other than their bare hands. But there are unintended consequences to such a 'rebalancing' action. Basic social science tells us that allowing citizens to be judge, jury and executioner on a day-to-day level, takes the responsibility away from police and puts it in the hands of citizens without the same level of training. This has further impacts if those citizens have unconscious bias (most people do), and society could see an increase in vigilante action, racially motivated deaths or manslaughter cases such as the Trayvon Martin case in the US where an armed citizen (George Zimmermann) shot and killed an unarmed Trayvon Martin after following him because he "looks like he is up to no good." This would result in large portions of the community being more worried about racists with guns than terrorists, and lead to less overall social cohesion., e.g., the problem just gets worse.

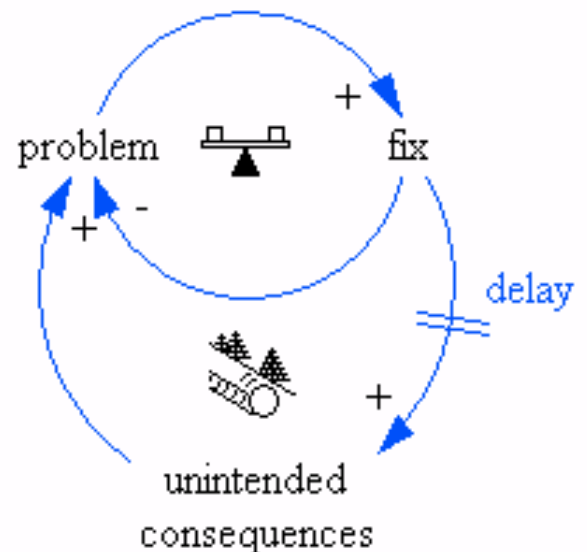
Although the causes of home grown terrorism are still being discovered, there have been some successful models around the world that use proactive, longer term policies. For example the Aarhus Model from Denmark*, anti gang strategies and community en-

agement** These may take longer to see results and so while it won't in itself provide a quick fix (unlike increased police presence on the streets), it must be a part of the long term solution. Good leaders do their best to understand social science and the consequences of the policies they establish. Without this basic knowledge, leadership is reduced to a series of band aid solutions with unintended consequences. Thus the onus is on you, as a leader, to get educated and introduce policies that make the future bright again.

*<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/23/home-jihadi-denmark-radical-islamic-extremism-aarhus-model-scandinavia>

**https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/may/26/jihadis-muslims-radicalisation-manchester?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Fixes that Fail Archetype:



By B Jana - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6893321>

For further reading:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/System_archetype



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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these workers belong to the “working poor”—low wages and no benefits. From a strategic standpoint, organizing any significant portion of workers at the airport would mean improving conditions for a serious block of people in the state. The vast majority of airport workers in Atlanta are Black—both African-American and African immigrants. So the airport struggle is also the racial justice struggle in Georgia.

In my two years at Hartsfield-Jackson, I worked as a prep cook, busser, food runner, and server. I immediately joined the union, but I struggled to convince my co-workers to do the same. My idealism from the previous experience of organizing a new union wore off. Many workers saw the \$16.40 in bi-weekly union dues as money they just couldn't spare, and others feared that joining the union meant they'd be targeted for harassment. The union was weak; only 30% of workers who were covered under our contracts at the airport were actual dues-paying members. Right-to-Work laws in states like Georgia make it so that workers can enjoy the benefits of a contract without paying. This drains the unions of funds and morale. The turnover rate at airports is ridiculously high, which means that there is a constant race just to sign up new employees for the union. With such a high turnover rate, and such low participation, the contracts weren't being enforced. This just added to the frustration – why should workers join a union that's seemingly powerless to address their issues on the job?

It became clear that if we wanted to improve conditions, we had to strengthen the existing membership. A rag-tag group of organizers and shop stewards met weekly to make plans to get more of our co-workers to join, to learn their contract, and to strengthen its enforcement. At first we struggled a lot, but once we really started to dig into how contract violations were affecting our co-workers' lives, we began to see things start to turn around. We focused on finding issues that met certain conditions: widely and deeply felt by workers, and winnable within the confines of the contracts. Membership grew and the overall belief in the union got stronger. At my particular restaurant, we went from below 30% membership to over 70%.

This story may seem small or insignificant, given the big picture of low wages and the ever-increasing power of corporations in this country. The labor movement is in serious danger. Union membership has declined steadily in the last 30 years—in 2016, only 10.7% of all U.S. workers belonged to unions. In the private sector alone, only 6.4% were union members. Things are bad, and given the regime of 45,

they are only going to get worse. Unions are already slashing their budgets in anticipation of how hostile this administration is going to get. But being a person of faith, I look to my organizing stories to remind myself that even as corporate greed consolidates its power, Spirit is coming alive in the people to resist. My co-workers in Indiana won union recognition just a few months after the state passed Right-to-Work legislation. In Georgia, we were able to inspire hope in a workplace that felt very hopeless. I have very serious fears about what is going to happen to many targeted groups of people under this administration, especially poor people, people of color, and immigrants. But my faith compels me to believe that we have to organize, anyway. I believe that we have to actualize our faith by forming coalitions that will protect one another—be they unions, cooperatives, mutual aid networks, or sanctuary networks. We have to build communities of resistance and love that are stronger than the political powers that oppress us.

Annie worked to build the labor movement as a rank-and-file union member in Indiana and Georgia from 2012-2015. She has also supported racial justice work. She will be starting this fall at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis and loves living at the intersection of faith and social justice.





Recipe Corner

A regular column by Liina Laufer

Veggie Tofu Pancit

Ingredients:

- 1 8 oz. pack rice or bean noodles
- 1 14 oz. package of tofu, cubed
- 1 tsp chili pepper
- 1 Tbs. ginger
- ¼ cabbage, sliced into strips
- 1 large carrot, sliced into strips
- ¾ cup diced celery, bell pepper, or green beans
- 2 Tbs. of toasted sesame oil
- ½ cup vegetable broth (make your own!)
- ½ tsp sugar
- black pepper
- spices – cumin, cayenne, turmeric
- 3 Tbs. soy sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 lemon, sliced

Instructions:

- Soak the noodles in hot water to soften for 10 minutes.
- Grease a large pan or wok with oil. Sauté half the chili and ginger.
- Fry tofu until golden brown. Season with soy sauce and spices such as cumin, cayenne, turmeric.
- Remove tofu and add more oil. Sauté remaining chili and ginger.
- Add the broth and all the vegetables and stir fry until cooked.
- Mix in the noodles and cooked tofu and add the soy sauce, sugar, and pepper.
- Cook for about 5 minutes or until the noodles are soft.
- Salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve hot, squeeze lemon on top.



Please see Liina's blog at recipessdeliina.wordpress.com for more of her tantalizing recipes. She writes:

I am a lifelong vegetarian, and 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.

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Gun Control

By Debra Wirth

I know that everyone is familiar with the Second Amendment, which gives us the right to bear arms for hunting, sport and defense. However, the weapons of today are greatly more powerful and easier to use than the heavy, difficult to load muskets of the 1700s.

Over the years we have written a range of laws to maintain safety. Currently we have federal laws that require licensed gun dealers to submit data for a federal background check on the buyer. However, multiple studies have reached a conclusion that about 40% of our sales go through without a check. This has been called the gun show loophole. Below a certain number of sales—Internet, individual, and so called “parking lot sales”, gun sellers are not required to do background checks.

This has given us what the American Medical Association has called a public health crisis of gun violence. Urban areas are especially hard hit. Chicago gets the most national attention, but per capita in losses to firearms, Chicago was only eighth among large cities, losing 693 people to firearms last year.

Many states have passed their own laws on requiring background checks for all sales, registration of firearms, and a range of other regulations. However, former Boston Mayor Menino for one, has complained that he can't keep his city safe from gun violence with guns so easily obtained in Vermont and New Hampshire. There is what has been called an iron pipe line of gun trafficking stretching up North from southern states with looser laws.

Research on solutions has pointed to universal background checks as a very moderate, key requirement. Studies consistently report that approximately 90% of the public want universal background checks, also. And this includes many National Rifleman's Association (NRA) members.

We came close to passing strong background checks in the Senate in 2013 in the Manchin-Toomey bill, sponsored by a team of socially conservative Democ-

rats from West Virginia and a socially conservative Republican from Pennsylvania, after the elementary school tragedy at Newtown, Connecticut. It was just four votes short of passing, with four Republicans crossing party lines.

And last June after the Orlando tragedy, we saw a large sit-in in Congress, joined by 170 members led by John Lewis, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s protégé.

A common pattern here is a lot of nationwide horror and pain after the large tragedies, a push for change, and moving closer to change. Missing here is that

the horror at the daily losses across our country, is not shared as widely, but felt painfully locally. And in Amherst in the autumn we had a loss of a young father, by a man with a gun reported by the Gazette to be illegally carried.

In 2016 the thought was that after the election—we would pass universal background checks. Do we really want to wait for possible change in four years? There is a new spirit of activism and dissatisfaction nationally with the status quo.

In 1994 Congress passed the 10 Year Assault Weapon Ban, as part of a large anti-crime bill, but, unfortunately, it was allowed to expire in 2004. There is some controversy among hunters about that ban, but there is an overall consensus that

the AR-15 automatic rifle, in particular, is appropriate for military use, but not in the civilian market, with its rapid fire, multiple high velocity rounds, short muzzle and pistol grip. The designer of that weapon intended it for military use only, and the New York Times reported that he was shocked to see it being used outside the military.

I hope that here in our town and in the larger areas of the state and country that we can remind our federal representatives that we're still concerned about these issues. And despite all the issues right now, that gun control must be addressed as well, to end the daily tragedies and the inevitable larger ones brought on by gun violence in this country.

Debbie Wirth was an elementary school nurse at the time of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, in which twenty first graders and six staff members were fatally shot. She began researching how we could change our gun laws to prevent such tragedies in the future.



Developments Methods and Technologies

Devices today are no longer passive terminals
Linked to a central system - Mother
They are computers in their own right
Equipped with diverse hi-tech systems
With countless apps and can even
Show us the way around the earth.

These devices take photos too
And also create video footage
Storing, modifying and transmitting
Digital images then and there
Steering human societies away
From the written word towards imagery.

This forms new semantics new languages
And new frameworks of understanding
Bringing in a rapidly rising social network
The biggest change in social behavior
Enabling the people to socialize freely
And privately with others at low cost.

That too with varying degrees
Of commitments as long as they want
Completely restructuring social relationships
Creating clash and cohesion where
Legitimate is considered more important than legal
A social revolution pointing towards the future!

From paper and pencil to computers
And two dimension to three dimension
From analogue to digital technology
And databases to knowledge bases
Public and private boundaries
Are fast merging over the horizon.

From such technological springboards
And rapidly changing social settings
Would rise the fountain head of spirituality
A creator connect and man realizes his true origins
In waves and waves of dreams real time
A universal family might still have a chance.

- Arun Prakash Brattacharya of New Delhi, India



Continued from page 1.

Central to the effort is inspiration from the work and writings of P.R. Sarkar. He recognized the urgent need for a new vision to democratize the national and international economy.

Sarkar’s vision is inclusive of disparate elements, such as community collaboration, self-sufficiency, and environmental sustainability.

Special emphasis is given to economic decentralization, which entails shortening the food, energy, and production supply chains. This moves us away from profit-centered production and toward production based on collective necessity, which meets the desire for an economy that minimizes opportunities for economic exploitation, and maximizes the all-around welfare and development of all people, and which is in harmony with the Earth.

Sarkar’s vision of society embraces four key pillars of Economic Democracy:

- 1) Fundamental requirements for life must be guaranteed to all (such as housing, access to nutritious food and clean water, health care, and education);
- 2) An increased access to purchasing capacity as the means through which people acquire their needs, guaranteed to every individual;
- 3) The power to make all economic decisions must be placed in the hands of the local people;
- 4) Outsiders must be strictly prevented from interfering in the local economy, and the outflow of local capital must be stopped.

These four requirements for economic democracy embrace the prosperity of all beings, including animals, and plants. This expanded view differs significantly and is contrasted with conventional ideas of economic democracy because it develops concepts embedded in ethical and social responsibilities of how the economy should perform and how it should and can be designed.

In Maine, we recognize there is a distinct group that suffers perhaps more than any other from the lack of economic democracy, Indigenous People. In order for economic democracy to have value and be meaningful, the movement toward it must assist the economic liberation, self-determination, and independence of Indigenous People. Our first project highlights the issues surrounding the struggle for sovereignty in an effort to raise awareness of the conditions facing Indigenous People in Maine and to help actualize their economic sovereignty and a localized economic democracy.

Maine has four federally recognized tribes: The Aroostook Band of Micmacs, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Passamaquoddy Tribe, and the Penobscot Indian Nation. Together with the Abenaki, they comprise the Wabanaki Confederacy. Wabanaki translated means “People of the First Light” or “People of the Dawnland”.

To build solidarity with the Wabanaki and educate the community, the AED hosted an event called “Healing in the Dawnland: An Introduction to Struggles for Indigenous Sovereignty in Maine”.

Three short films were screened. The first highlighted the continuing effects that the disproportionate removal of Wabanaki children from indigenous communities and

into the state foster care system has on Wabanaki people today (at a rate over five times greater than “non-Native” children). The second film described the Penobscot’s struggle to maintain their centuries’ old stewardship of the Penobscot River in terms of water quality standards that ensure a healthy ecosystem that supports sustenance fishing, hunting and gathering. Finally, a short clip was screened to let Maine citizens know about the role the Maine Attorney General’s office is playing in the attempted territory theft, a literal ‘land grab’ of the Penobscot River from the Penobscot People in an ongoing law suit, *Penobscot v. Mills*.

The AED is also developing a document to expand the discussion around divestment from the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) toward divesting from the speculative economy altogether and reinvesting locally in the people’s economy. In short, activists can and must take the next step and put our collective financial energy into forming the world we want to see, and decouple from corporate capitalism to the extent we are able. We must move our money (MOM) from Wall Street to Main Street. How do we do that?

The major obstacle is that 99% of the 30+ trillion dollars that U.S. Americans have invested is in long-term savings, i.e., stocks, bonds, and pension funds etc., and less than one percent is invested in our local communities. This isn’t by chance.

Securities laws were designed for the benefit of large publicly traded firms, and until very recently, regulations made it nearly prohibitively expensive for small businesses to provide financial disclosure in order to ‘go public’ and acquire capital.

Until 2016, it was nearly impossible to invest even a nickel in local ‘mom and pop’ businesses without special legislation for ‘carve-outs’. In 2012, President Obama signed the Jumpstart Our Business Startups (JOBS) Act, which allows companies to acquire funding through online portals from non-accredited investors (~97% of the U.S.). This was finally enacted in 2016 and opened the doors for crowd-sourced funding, making it possible to invest in the neighborhood bakery, farmers’ market, or food co-op, the people’s economy, more directly.

New opportunities to invest locally in Maine reflect national opportunities to strengthen local economies and smaller businesses. In Maine, prospects include crowd-source funding, and local investment clubs that are connected to the Slow Money Maine movement, which connects local agriculture to investors in Maine. The Slow Money movement aims to redirect capital in the stock market into the sustainable, local food economy,

thereby strengthening the local food supply chain of farmers, fisherman, and the food industry through low interest micro and small loans. The Slow Money movement and other innovations to localize and decentralize the economy are incremental steps moving in the direction of a stronger, more balanced agricultural system.

Nationally, conversations that bring activism such as DAPL divestment together with funding the new economy have yet to make a strong connection. The AED intends to spread the word about these opportunities to put our money where our values are and shed light on the steps towards economic democracy and sovereignty, not only for the well-being of the tribes, but for all sentient beings. For more information, visit aedmaine.org.

Shri A. Verrill co-founded AED-Maine with her partner Alex, and works as an environmental conservation activist and organizer within the Society for Ecological Restoration and the Maine Association of Wetland Scientists. She holds a Master of Science degree in Biology and owns a small business, offering ecological landscaping and environmental consulting.



Alex Jackimovicz is an activist, spiritualist, and small businessman living in Boothbay, Maine. A licensed master electrician, he is also a co-founder of the Alliance for Economic Democracy and a volunteer organizer with a variety of social and economic justice campaigns and organizations, including the Maine People’s Alliance, the Maine Small Business Coalition, and the Maine Fair Trade Campaign.



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The Divine Dance (God Dance).

Cooperative Games: A New Book by Dada Maheshvarananda

By Mirra Price

I first encountered cooperative games when I was a theatre student at Indiana University in the 60s. Some of my drama instructors used exercises from *Improvisations for the Theatre* by Viola Spolin, who is often called the “Grandmother of Theatre Games”. I remember playing *The Machine*, in which students built a machine with our bodies, vocalizing machine noises and miming moving machine parts, as we piled on to one another to make one living, moving machine. We also played *The Mirror Game* in which two players faced each other, and one person led movements which the other followed. These games served to warm us up and created a sense of community among our class members.

Later, in the 70s and 80s, I taught these games to my drama students on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. Students, who refused to go onstage and recite their parts in plays, had no trouble playing these cooperative games together. Often we played a follow the leader type game, modeled on the childhood game many had played as small children. My formerly reticent Navajo (Dineh) students became more comfortable performing for others. We performed original, traditional Navajo plays, which students and their families appreciated as an affirmation of their culture and language.

Continuing in this tradition of encouraging people to learn to work together through group games, Dada Maheshvarananda has published a new book, *Cooperative Games*

for a Cooperative World: Facilitating Trust, Communication, and Spiritual Connection. In the book’s Foreword, renowned author and activist, Bill Ayers, says:

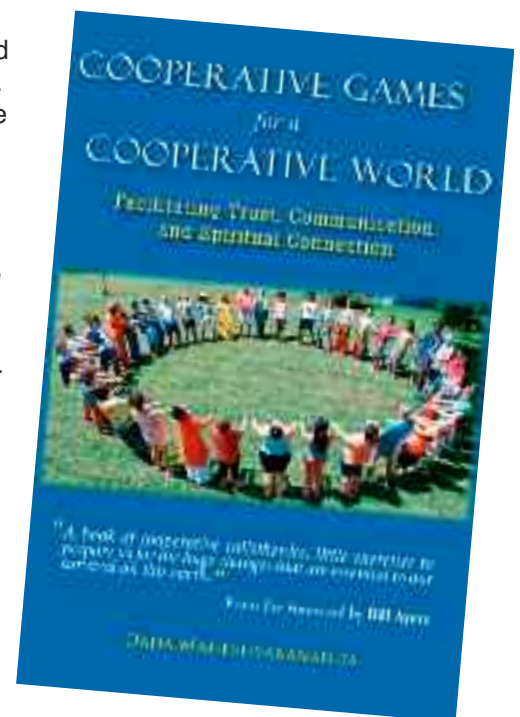
Dada Maheshvarananda invites readers to play games, but these games unlock the magnitude: we begin to imagine the future we would like for the generations to come; we unleash our spiritual and social imaginations. We are playing games, and so we turn to the children and grandchildren, and we think of the grandchildren’s grandchildren.

Anyone can play these games; anyone can learn to teach them to others, as well. In that way, a chain of love, trust, and solidarity will grow from person to person, group to group, and community to community. Playing these games is a start in building that better world we all want to see. The book may be purchased at: www.cooperativegamesworld.com.

In May, 2016 at the PROUT Strategic Planning Seminar at Prama Institute near Asheville, NC., Nina Shapiro, a master’s level counselor with a bachelor’s degree in art, music and dance therapy, co-facilitated a workshop with Prakash Laufer, a master’s level dance therapist. They have led workshops together and independently for the past 40 years.

Using pre-recorded new age music they led a group of about sixteen participants in a creative process using music, dance, poetry, chanting and song. In Nina’s words: We allowed each participant to express their spiritual and creative selves, while simultaneously experiencing a collective group flow. There was a warm and loving energy in the room throughout the hour-long event and the feedback we received was very positive. Exercises included *The Divine Dance**, in which each person took a turn leading the group as *The Divine* while the others mirrored the leader’s movements. We then chanted while dancing improvised movements to an ancient chant, meaning ‘Let Us Move Together’. We ended with a song which we all sang together called “Light Is Returning”. Once more we were reminded of the importance of using both left and right brain capacities for full learning and the energizing capacity of group movement for experiential integration.

In today’s world of uncertainty and rapid pace in our everyday lives, sometimes it is essential to take a breather, to get out from behind our screens and



interact with others in a way that enhances our mutual support. These games are face-to-face encounters with our friends, neighbors, and sometimes strangers, who all learn to cooperate and grow together through active involvement in these innovative, educational games.

Mirra Price, M .Ed., (Northern Arizona University) Ed. M. (Harvard) a retired English teacher is currently a writer, editor, copyeditor and activist. She has worked in several cooperatives, promoted many social justice causes, and has advocated for women's rights and gender equality since the 1960s. www.mirraedits.com, womenproutists@gmail.com.



Collage by Doris Olivers.

Reaching Out Behind the Bars: My New Friend, Mary

By Mirra Price

For several months I have been writing to an inmate in a Dade County, Florida prison. Lawrence Huff, asked for copies of Rising Sun a year ago to pass out to the prisoners in his yoga classes which he teaches at several Dade County prisons. One of the inmates, after reading the newsletter, reached out, asking that someone write to her. That began our correspondence. I am not listing Mary's last name as I am unsure if it is appropriate. She has given permission to use some of her poetry here. I hope we can expand and start a letter writing project with other inmates. The exchange has been instructive and fun for me to learn about prison life and one inmate's hope and courage in transforming her life in a positive direction.

One P.M., Florida State Prison

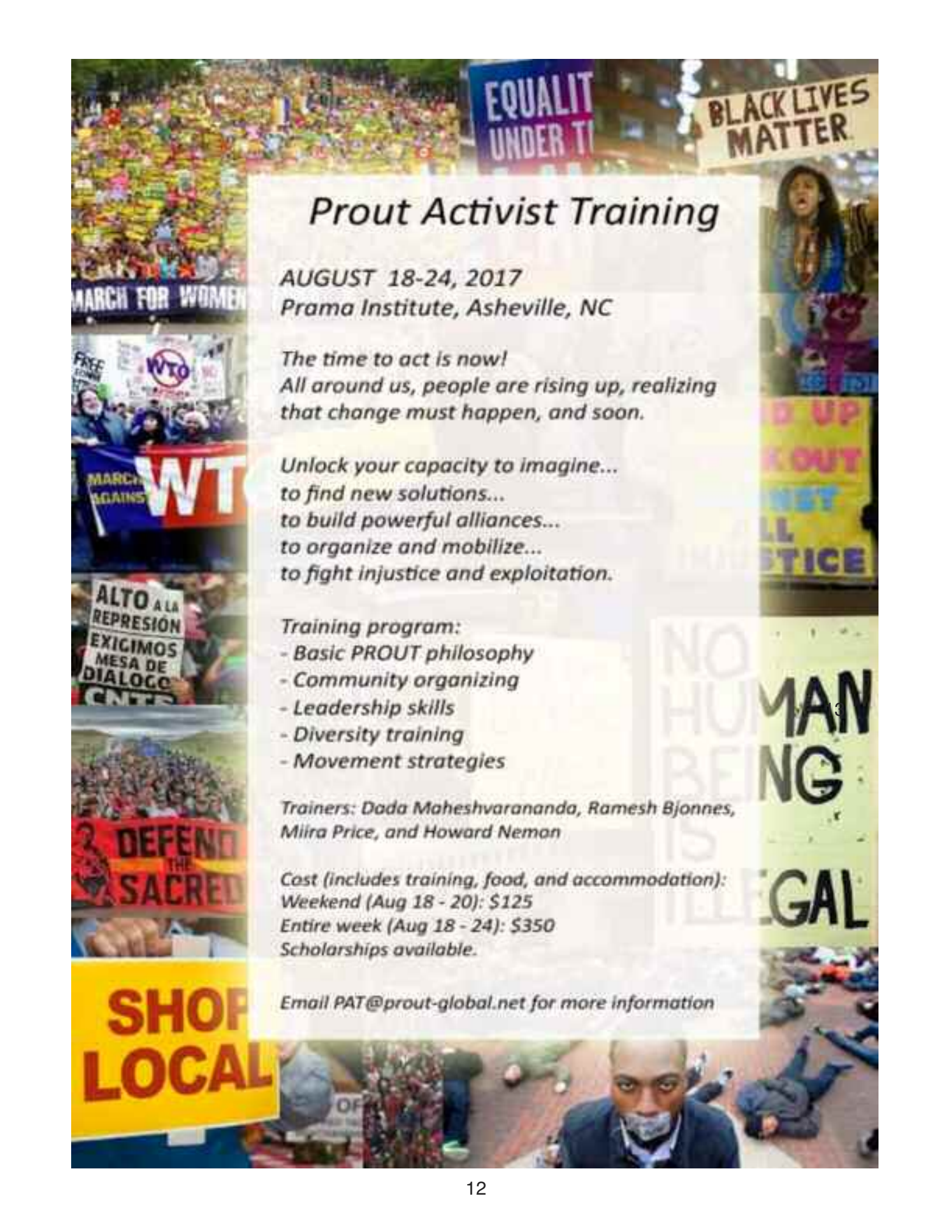
By Mary P.

Concrete energy inside of a jail;
All the useless information in the world;
My cup runneth over.
Children going to sleep hungry at night,
And we sit and argue who's a little more
right.
And I'm powerless behind concrete.
And black men are still gunned down by
Police in the street.
They sign all their petitions with X's and
O's.
And women still call each other bitches
and Ho's.
And all this shit weighs heavy on my soul
But here I sit
Behind concrete,
Feel nothing but disdain for every chick
that I meet.
Guess I'm not as smart as I think I am
'Cuz I've come full circle
Right back to where I began.

Society Rejects

By Mary P.

The forgotten lepers,
Underclass dregs,
The lowest of the low,
We rub elbows and opinions
But seldom unite
Hedonism and narcissism doing a tango
The temperature ever rising
Wallowing in flesh
Existing for sustenance only
We dream of violence and talk in circles
Never knowing righteousness
Ever seeking greed



Prout Activist Training

AUGUST 18-24, 2017

Prama Institute, Asheville, NC

*The time to act is now!
All around us, people are rising up, realizing
that change must happen, and soon.*

*Unlock your capacity to imagine...
to find new solutions...
to build powerful alliances...
to organize and mobilize...
to fight injustice and exploitation.*

Training program:

- Basic PROUT philosophy
- Community organizing
- Leadership skills
- Diversity training
- Movement strategies

Trainers: Dada Maheshvarananda, Ramesh Bjonnes,
Miira Price, and Howard Neman

Cost (includes training, food, and accommodation):

Weekend (Aug 18 - 20): \$125

Entire week (Aug 18 - 24): \$350

Scholarships available.

Email PAT@prout-global.net for more information

First Annual EDA Conference

May 26-29, 2017

by Jacelyn Eckman

Our world is entering a period of resource scarcity, which promises to add pressure to an already widening income/purchasing gap. Economic Democracy Advocates (EDA) held its first annual conference at the Prama Institute outside Asheville, NC the last weekend in May, to address how we can begin to identify, measure and responsibly manage and advocate for our common resources, to satisfy today's growing needs, while assuring there will be enough for the generations that come after ours.



EDA is a new group, coalescing around its members' mutual interest in developing a commons-based economic system that can answer to the needs of all people -- an alternative to our current corporatist, consumer-based structure. This new system will take into account the whole human being, as does PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory). In fact, we look to PROUT as a natural and inspirational partner in these efforts.



The first morning of the conference was devoted to Proutist teachings. Our first speakers were Howard Nemon (Hiranmaya) and Roar Bjonnes (Ramesh), of the Prama Institute, who spoke on "Meeting Essential Human Requirements" and "The Three-Tiered Economy of PROUT" (respectively). Their talks provided a base for discussion and a solid foundation for the next three days' presentations and break-out sessions.

Prior to the conference, a dozen members of the group had spent several months on a research project developed by economist James Quilligan on Carrying Capacity. With a simple formula using data derived from the U.S. Census Bureau, anyone can begin to understand whether the county where they live (or any county within the U.S.) is capable of serving the food needs for its citizens. Ultimately, EDA plans to develop increasingly sophisticated measures and proposals that can be taken to our elected representatives and others to advocate for wiser land use planning. This approach to sustainability will also be extended to water and energy needs. The point is to make sure basic commodities and essential resources are sufficient for current and future needs, based on the world's increasing population, demand for resources and declining resource yields.

EDA is taking a commons-based approach to its own structure and development as an advocacy group, at the same time it's encouraging a restructuring of our broader-based economy. Many readers are probably aware that the cooperative structure advocated by P. R. Sarkar is very similar to that of the commons movement. They are mutually supportive, both leading in the same direction. The conference explored some of the impediments standing in the way of this more equitable and efficient system of economic governance, as well as some of the success stories found around the world and some steps we can take toward building a broader acceptance for and application of the principles shared by PROUT and EDA. EDA is deeply grateful to Prama Institute for opening its doors to our first conference.

You can find us at www.EconomicDemocracyAdvocates.org and on Facebook.

Jacelyn Eckman is a board member with Economic Democracy Advocates, and a relatively new but avid student of PROUT. After a career with the U. S. Department of State, she currently lives in Asheville, NC.





Prout Strategic Planning Seminar – Phase Two
September 29 - October 1, 2017
Prama Institute, Asheville, NC

“When the whole property of this universe has been inherited by all creatures, how then can there be any justification for a system in which someone receives a flow of huge excess, while others die for lack of a handful of grain?” (P. R. Sarkar, Problem of the Day).

Growing populist movements around the world are a product of the unsustainable status quo and its fundamental failure to serve even the basic needs of the majority of people. That trend was reflected in the United States with the election of Donald Trump by disenfranchised people who were hoping for a change that would better their lot in life. The inevitable failure of the Trump administration to deliver on campaign promises will leave many even more desperate and looking for real solutions. Theory will appeal to some people, but practical working models will catch many more people’s attention and provide examples that they can copy.

The P2 Seminar will focus on the following areas:

1. Review the successes and challenges of efforts initiated during the May, 2016 Prout Strategic Planning Seminar to ensure the best possible outcomes with P2 initiated projects.
2. Optimize the various tools for communications, planning and decision making to provide a fully integrated network that supports, tracks, and helps build P2 projects.
3. Develop educational/promotional materials, e.g., film experts’ presentation of Prout topics that can provide a library of such materials for future use.
4. Identify “shovel ready” or near-ready projects and set timelines leading to full implementation of P2 projects in the near term.
5. Talks and discussions on relevant topics which integrate Prout concepts with current issues and movements.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

Many experienced U. S. Proutists will be in attendance; however, anyone interested in getting involved in P2 project roll-outs is encouraged to attend. This will be the ground floor of making a real-world, practical difference in the lives of people.

TRANSPORTATION

The seminar will begin Friday, September 22nd at 4 p.m. and will end Sunday, September 24th at 2 p.m. Please make your reservations for either the Asheville or Greenville/Spartanburg Airports. There are shuttles from the Greenville/Spartanburg Airport, and pickups and drop-offs from these airports are more easily arranged, as well.

REGISTRATION

Early bird discount (before August 1st): \$120 Regular cost (after August 1st) \$140

To register, please go to prama.org/proutusa-seminar (PayPal or debit/credit card) or send checks to the Prama Institute, P.O. Box 232, Alexander, NC 28701, earmarked “Prout Seminar”.

ored building. Was anyone home behind its windows, all closed behind tightly drawn curtains? The beautifully groomed building seemed deserted, almost haunted.

Aha! It had a sign of its own, in golden letters: TRUMP INTERNATIONAL HOTEL. People started booing loudly. Outside on the sidewalk stood a low fence of what could have been bike racks in a more environmentally conscious neighborhood, but was probably just a moveable security barrier. Someone in the crowd got an idea: Deposit Your Sign Here. One by one, those who passed by the entrance to the Hotel lobby dropped off their messages, many hand-drawn, and others with bold press-on letters. I was the best. After all, I was printed professionally in North Carolina by a sweet young clerk who wished he could have gone to Washington with me. As the girls dropped me off at the fence, I gave my last full measure of devotion in service to God and country.

Ellen Landau received degrees in Anthropology from the Pennsylvania State University (1969) and the University of North Carolina (1972) and studied in the creative writing programs of the University of New Hampshire and UNC-Chapel Hill. She was active in the 1960s in both the Women's Liberation and Civil Rights Movements. A teacher and school administrator, she has helped develop Ananda Marga schools since 1975, including the New Day School in Portland Oregon, and most recently, the Mountain Breeze Preschool in Marshall, North Carolina. She currently lives in Greensboro, North Carolina, and serves as treasurer of Ananda Marga Gurukul.



Ellen and her daughter and freinds.

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move. Finally they hoisted me up and I took my place with the others. Taking slow, closely spaced steps, we marched, tightly bound together along Constitution Avenue, headed for the Washington Monument. For over an hour as the girls walked, they passed me around, and I held myself up high.

This is what I said:

KELLYANNE,
SHAME ON YOU!

Every few steps I was stopped! "What a great sign! Can I take your picture?" I posed for selfies, one after another, group portraits, thumbs up, broad smiles. I felt vindicated.

The March took a turn, then another. More cell phone photos of me! They didn't stop. The crowd kept marching. Columns of people from different avenues merged with one another at the intersections. The crowd found new routes to take.

By four o'clock, the girls were exhausted; they couldn't keep me in the air, their arms too tired to carry me. Up ahead we saw a large swath of the marchers stop and turn toward the façade of an out-sized sand-col-



Journey of the Sign

By Ellen Laundau's Sign

This is a brief account of my trip north to Washington, DC, and how I ended up a day later, part of a memorial heap in front of the Trump International Hotel in Washington's old Post Office Building.

My journey began with my creation at an Office Depot store in Greensboro, North Carolina, on Friday, January 20.

The next morning, after an early morning drive up Interstate 95, I arrived at a Metro station just outside of the capitol city. I was carried by a group of four women: a silver-haired grandma, her daughter, and her daughter's two young friends. A large gathering of women, some with husbands and children, had converged at the entryway to the station. The crowd formed a line, branching out along both sides of the "Kiss and Ride" lane. Every 12 minutes, the doors to the station would open and a loud cheer would erupt from the crowd, and the station's security force would move hundreds of people inside the station to purchase their Metro tickets. They descended down onto the subway platform to wait for the next train bound for city center, as hundreds more swelled the lines outside the station.

Each time the subway platform reached its capacity, the authorities would close the station's outer doors. The crowd standing outside would settle in to wait for the doors to open again. Strangers passed the time by sharing with others what was needed: hand warmers and snacks, introductions, and the port-a-potties. Most carried signs like me, raised above the heads of the crowd. Someone had even created an assortment of signs and left them on display at the head of the line for anyone to pick up and convey to the March.

Looking at all the signs in our path, I suffered the ter-

rible fear of inferiority. Most of the messages around me were smart and amusing – "#Free Melania," "Leave it to the Beavers," "Sorry World, We'll Fix This," "We Shall Overcomb," and "I Can't Believe I Have to Protest the Same Old S**t," the last sign carried by a delegate of the "over '60s" crowd.



My message, sadly, was a serious one. Had I miscalculated? I worried, Will anyone understand me? Who would care? No mention of Donald Trump at all. Or, Mike Pence for that matter. No clever artwork.

One of the girls finally carried me under her arm into the station, where we were put on a crowded train and taken away into the city. After an hour-and-a-half ride which on any other day would have taken thirty minutes (lots of extra trains ran that day and clogged the tracks), we emerged from the Metro station at the Smithsonian Institute into a shifting sea of bodies. We were lost.

Where was the stage? The speeches, the main event?

We were trapped in a crowd of people wearing pink "pussy hats" and chanting, "This is the way Democracy looks!" "We want a leader! Not a creepy tweeter!" At 1:15 the crowd in front of us began to

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Contact Us!

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