

A look at

PROGRESS,  
UTILIZATION  
AND THEORY

by Prabhakar



Prout Research Institute  
Copenhagen

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"The entire humanity of this universe constitutes one singular people. The whole humanity is bound in fraternity; those who are apt to remain oblivious to this very simple truth, those who are prone to distort it, are the deadliest enemies of humanity.

Today's humanity should identify these foes fully well and build a healthy human society totally neglecting all obstacles and difficulties.

It must be borne in mind that as long as a magnificent, healthy and universalistic human society is not well established, humanity's entire culture and civilization, its sacrifice, service and spiritual endeavour will not be of any worth whatsoever."

P. R. Sarkar



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## INTRODUCTION

So-called ordinary and on the average educated people may feel that a thing like socio-economy is surely beyond their understanding - perhaps even a somewhat dry subject. Quite spontaneously one may decide that there are matters of a more immediate importance to pay attention to. However, higher education or great scholarship is not required to judge clearcut ideas. It takes only a little time and effort, and the right literature without too much academic language and complicated formulas, to determine the real value of a socio-economic theory.

Take for example marxism. It is not a very developed socio-economic theory; it evolved solely as a reaction to capitalist exploitation. With this viewpoint marxism came to see human beings mainly as economic, material beings, thereby sealing its fate versus the more receptive capitalism. Today we know that the combination of communes and economic centralization is self-contradictory and detrimental to individual and collective growth. Furthermore, we understand that we cannot follow Marx and do away with the surplus value. Which marxist country did not enhance their empire with the help of surplus value created by the profit-oriented world market? From where will future momentum come, if not from genuine surplus

value created through proper utilization of available resources?

Marxist countries did try to apply some socio-economic measures, claiming that these were humane and progressive. Today we know that they were grossly inhumane and regressive, so much so that marxism is viewed as a destructive and very dogmatic "ism". This is common wisdom, not because we all have come to read the complete volumes of *Das Kapital*, but because marxist theory in a short time greatly damaged large areas of the world. Still, this deficient theory could manage to attract worldwide attention on the strength of its analysis of capitalist profit accumulation and its vision of an egalitarian society. The ideological vacuum left after the collapse of marxism is indeed menacing and demands positive replacement at the earliest opportunity.

Then there is capitalism, a far more deeply rooted socio-economic movement, well into its old age. The development of capitalist philosophy reflected the growth of the money-motivated class. Historically, business society did not evolve as a reaction to exploitation, but rather due to a desire to seize and enhance society's capital. Capitalism's present world dominance indicates its shrewd ability to accommodate various human sentiments. It subdues and streamlines religious, martial, ethnic and various other social forces and trends, converting them into profitable tools. Marxism, being utterly materialistic, could never properly understand the awesome implications of this special adaptive force of capitalism. We will discuss this in some detail later on. With its liberal ideas and unparalleled buying power capitalism builds and

controls the world we live in. Consequently, we know a good deal about its positive and negative sides. Whether or not free trade, the unrestricted hoarding of wealth and other liberalistic principles may be of further positive use for humanity is another point that will be discussed in this booklet.

Most people do, then, have an opinion on socio-economic matters, such as politics, food, clothing, housing, education and medicine, as these matters are of great importance to all. Still, only a very few are formally trained in these fields. The rest of us just apply our common sense, basing our opinions on personal experience and whatever information we have access to. So naturally we ought to make a few attempts to understand the present socio-economic set-up, both in our local area and the world at large. And we should try to carry out this research both on the basis of established and alternative views to see which make out better under comparison.

PROUT is short for the Progressive Utilization Theory, a socio-economic theory propounded in 1959 by the Indian thinker Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar (1921-1990). Offering highly integrated solutions to general local and global problems, PROUT has for some years now drawn the attention of not only experts in the socio-economic field, but academics and lay people of all kinds.

A speciality of PROUT is that it allows the concept of spiritual consciousness to embrace not only the individual but collective life as well. On the basis of its spiritual view of the collective human race, PROUT promotes the ideal of one universal family sharing the properties of the universe together. This concept of universal fraternity is

the ideological base from which springs PROUT's ideas of decentralized economy, local self-sufficiency, enlightened organized democracy, the need for world government, and so forth.

Development plans based on PROUT principles have so far been prepared for certain Asian and African areas. In certain places such plans have been initiated on the practical level, even quite extensively so. The present economic set up makes it, however, somewhat difficult to introduce a proutistic society on a larger scale, as many of PROUT's progressive solutions demand a definite change in the way things are run. Applied PROUT around the globe can presently be studied in various practical and specialized projects such as agricultural set-ups, village development and small-sized economic ventures established outside or parallel to the economic mainstream. Indeed, PROUT has much to offer those who are working to see the successful growth of an alternative and self-sufficient people's economy.

Before discussing various aspects of PROUT, it is essential to acquire some basic understanding of its ideas of "progress", "utilization" and "theory". These concepts, having been explained quite differently by earlier schools and thinkers, have a special interpretation in PROUT. These interpretations, some short discussions and finally a few examples of PROUT's solutions to some global problems form the content of this little booklet.

## PROGRESS

The wind blows gently on the sweet baby moving its arms and legs happily in the soft grass, while it looks curiously at the passing clouds high up in the sky. Soon the little child grows into a curious youth, and on into experienced maturity. What happened to that baby who grew up so quickly? It seems indeed that movement and change is the real nature of our world - nothing stands still.

In a great many places, however, society's economic movement has come to an apparent standstill. "Catastrophe" is the word we use to describe life in third world areas, while "recession" and "depression" are mentioned frequently in the materially developed countries. Many are deeply concerned about the degeneration in various other spheres - in social, political and cultural life. In Europe, such signs of frustration have spurred fascist movements to rally under racist and neo-nationalist banners, a development which naturally makes Europeans uneasy as they remember their recent history.

PROUT takes all this to be signs of staticity, or pause. A pause, however, is not everlasting, but rather of a temporary nature. Something which now seems slow and sluggish, if not almost dead, will the next moment leap into fresh life. In the pause phase, fresh momentum

is being formed - the seeds of new development. There is no mystery about the nature of pause. The vital question is rather: which direction will the new movement take? What will be its goal? Will it be benevolent, malevolent, or perhaps even neutral?

Here we arrive at perhaps the most significant idea of PROUT, its concept of *progress*, the very mention of which instills in us heart-throbbing enthusiasm, an acute sense of forward movement, and a deep-felt wish for the good of all, so much that we cannot help but frown upon the many improper uses of it. The term progress is derived from the latin *progradi*, which means "forward movement". The root of the Latin word is the Sanskrit word *pragati*, meaning "well directed movement". It follows that any development may not necessarily be of a progressive nature, as it may or may not be forward and well-directed. Steadfast forward movement toward greater individual and social consciousness lies at the very heart of PROUT. Its concept of progress demands an integrated physical, mental and spiritual development to increase the realization of the entire human and social potential.

Can real progress take place in the physical sphere alone? We should try to analyze the matter deeply. No one knows how many things human beings have invented in the physical sphere throughout history. A strong urge to make everyday life more convenient and conducive to welfare is a part of our human heritage. Only a few centuries back people depended wholly on animals for their land transport. A hundred years ago horsedrawn carriages were still in wide use. Today we go by motor-

bikes, cars and planes, and tomorrow we will perhaps ride in small and superfast family rockets. In this way we enjoy the great benefits of technological advancement, and will continue to do so in future.

But there is another side to material development as well. Development or movement in the physical sphere is never one hundred percent without drawbacks or side effects. Quite the contrary, at every step some mishap, big or small, may interfere. The relativity of the material world makes it so: anything and everything in the world is subject to changes in time, place and person. The slightest change may cause something which appeared to be functioning quite well at one point to develop certain negative qualities at another. Worldly developments of even a very high and positive order will be vulnerable to some kind of negative reaction. This seems to be a natural phenomenon, a natural law of action and reaction in the physical sphere.

Let us take an obvious example, the development of automobile traffic. Once upon a time the automobile was welcomed as the very ideal of western civilization; it instantly became the symbol of individual freedom. Cars, however, kill people, their exhaust pollutes our environment, and traffic jams steal away our precious time, so much so that no one in his or her right mind would maintain that heavy traffic be considered progressive. One would do better to examine the history of the automobile from various angles before lavishing praise on it, indeed the trend in many communities is towards minimizing traffic at present.

Another example: 40 years ago the invention of

plastic was looked upon as a great blessing. Today it is an indisputable environmental hazard, as it has become the main source of a burgeoning waste management problem. Many people these days are trying to skip the habit of using plastic bags indiscriminately, preferring more ecologically sound alternatives whenever possible.

Such examples crowd round us, and a faithful recording of material developments will only add to an already breathtaking display of the two sides of physical achievement. The experience of the relativity of the material world has forced us to dive deeper and still deeper into the mysteries of the material universe. The realizations thus acquired have heightened our general awareness and made us gradually more cautious of our movement. In this way we have learnt, and are still learning, how to direct our material movement in a less harmful and more proper way. Today, a growing number of people want to see movement which will channel both crude and subtle developments towards higher welfare for all, and not in the opposite direction.

Here we have established that real progress cannot take place fully in the material sphere alone. The natural reaction and limit to any physical action or material development will actually nullify any advantage gained. What about mental resources then, can they bring about real progress?

The waves of the mind may be short or long, at times even quite sustained, but as long as concentration remains within the ordinary mental sphere the waves or vibrations will not be infinite. This means that on the intellectual plane the mental waves will always fluctuate

and never reach a state of serene peace. Of course, psychic force is more subtle and powerful than crude physical force, but being subject to relativity, too, it can only function within certain limits.

The range of the mental sphere is indeed vast. Psychologists, parapsychologists and sociologists have mapped some of its functions. Many of these functions remain to be realized, though. Human emotions and intellect are influenced by subtle and largely unexplored psycho-physical functions: the mind's bio-psychological propensities, which are ultimately controlled by the mind's spiritual faculty. Without knowledge of the subtler functionings of the mind, mental work becomes very complicated. The more one delves *only* into the purely emotional and intellectual areas, the more one may get lost, as the ideal of enlightened consciousness is not present there. The ongoing discussions about the mixed blessings of psychoanalysis and certain parapsychological practices amply illustrate this fact.

If higher consciousness is not allowed to grow, the resulting negative reaction will seriously endanger human physical, mental and spiritual welfare. The present social flow, which stresses selfishness in the form of sentiments like nationalism, groupism in its various forms, and religious dogmatism, does not further the growth of a broadened intellect. We see aggressive expressions of such regressive collective consciousness even today. Both the present slaughterhouse of former Yugoslavia and the ethnic clashes in Germany are typical products of such narrowminded thinking. Severe economic problems and poor education serve as a most potent fertilizer for the ill

feelings between the apparently irreconcilable groups there. This fact should better be understood by those who want to solve the problem.

Alas, all over the world it appears that the negative results of material and mental development neutralize their positive contributions. The lack of universal consciousness is expressed everywhere. Accelerating figures for suicide, divorce, drug abuse and an exploding plethora of psychic diseases indicate that positive education and true feelings of love and spirituality are missing in modern society. Both the individual and collective mind easily get lost in emotional complications and dry intellectuality. A continuous inspiration towards a higher ideal is needed in both spheres. We have to look beyond the borders of the quite extensive, but still limited, spheres of matter, emotions and technical intellect to find the original source of real progress.

As we have already established, movement is of two types: backward or forward. Here backward implies crudification of consciousness, degradation, whereas forward implies evolving consciousness, a more refined, subtle state of being. There is no third alternative, no permanent standstill.

We all have an innate urge which makes us strive for something better in life. This drive may express itself more or less selflessly. Some work by and large for their own betterment only, while some strive for others' welfare as well. Everyone aspires for improvement, for a higher status of some kind, for fresh happiness and satisfaction. This flow, once it is allowed to express itself as an undogmatic physico-psycho-spiritual movement, will pro-

duce an expanded social consciousness and care for all living beings. Such unrestricted social harmony would sweeten collective life immeasurably. According to PROUT, the expansive sentiment of devotion to the universal all-pervading consciousness is the mark of a real human being. It is this basic spiritual trait which really sets human beings apart from the animals. Again, spiritual qualities may be more developed in some and less in others, but the need and potential for expansion and social contact is there in all of us. This socio-spiritual urge is the one basic human potential we must develop to safeguard further individual and social progress.

Human actions are initiated with the motivation of achieving satisfaction of some sort or the other. Some seek deliverance in crude pleasures, others find it in more subtle treasures. This never ending search for happiness is true for all - even for a suicidal person whose main interest is to be relieved of some trouble in this world.

Limited objects will not lead to lasting happiness. Only an infinite object can fulfill the great thirst human beings nurture in their hearts, and the only infinite object is infinite consciousness, limitless and unblemished. And the knowledge, the consciousness, of being in the process of realizing that infinite consciousness inspires individual beings as well as collective society to continue forward towards new progress.

Spirituality is progress itself, as movement in the spiritual sphere is only forward and above the relative factors of time, place and person. When human beings work actively to realize their spiritual potential they experience rapid higher growth. Their life becomes sweeter

and more inspired than before; the awareness of something infinite in their personal life makes life more valuable and interesting. On the social level, spiritual practice in daily life makes the individual mentally strong and service-minded. His or her general understanding, intuition and social awareness unfold spontaneously. The process makes it clear that individual progress is the lifeblood of social progress.

Returning to the discussion of movement - how do things move in the first place? Each and every movement has its cause; nothing comes from nothing, everything comes from something. The universal process of incessant movement takes place within all-pervading cosmic consciousness. The highest stance of this consciousness is pure and omniscient consciousness. For the individual, the ultimate achievement of life is the attainment of this supreme consciousness. This is so because all life's necessities, interests, urges and desires are fully satisfied only by the most supreme realization. PROUT, being a very practical theory, points to well tested and workable methods to attain this spiritual goal so that everyone may experience the state of ecstatic beatitude. Details of these individual methods may be found in genuine spiritual teachings. Here it is sufficient to point out that PROUT supports the view that the harmonious fulfillment of human physical, mental and spiritual longings is the goal of human life.

PROUT defines a constructive goal for collective life as well: the establishment of a progressive world society on the basis of a universal sentiment, a philosophy for all humankind. It differentiates not between people of

different race, colour, sex or creed; all have the same spiritual potential, the same fundamental right to physical, mental and spiritual progress. Even so, the final spiritual realization is attainable for the individual only. It is not possible for a group of human beings to realize the final unqualified state of consciousness collectively. Then there would be no more individual beings left with their distinctive characteristics, and the creation would have come to an end - something which is very hard to imagine. Rather, we shall always have to think in practical terms for both our own realization and the all-round welfare of everyone else on this planet, including those who will follow after us.

Finally, always stressing the importance of collective socio-spiritual movement, PROUT asserts that the concerted efforts to bridge the gap between the initial expression of moral integrity and the establishment of well integrated universal society is social progress.

## UTILIZATION

In one of his more satirical and humourous works, the Bengali thinker Bankim Chandra Chatterjee allows one of his characters to interpret the word 'utility', which had appeared in some notes left behind by a most philosophical friend, Kamalkanta. After establishing that there was no Bengali equivalent for Bentham's mysterious term 'utility', he comes to know from his somewhat better informed son that: "U' implies you (singular or plural), "till" implies to plough the land, and "eat" implies to partake of food. What the 'e' sound at the end stands for is not for sure. It seems that with that 'e' ending Kamalakanta is implying 'You eat by ploughing only' - what a brute!"

This concern for Bengal's lethargic masses, made politically passive by long-term dogmatic religious thinking and a hundred years of British exploitation, was voiced in 1875. It applies as well today. Actually, the first thing that springs to mind, when discussion turns to the present mis- and nonutilization of so many resources around the globe, is the almost total dependence on the Third World of the First and Second Worlds (Western Europe and the USA respectively) economy. So-called

Third World countries are just not allowed to take control over their own resources.

It is not only the poor who have run into mismanagement. In their parts of the world material resources may be undeveloped, yet elsewhere the absence of mental force and spiritual wisdom may be more apparent. Nowhere do we find integrated growth and the balanced utilization of physical, material, mental and spiritual potential. A passage from *The Economist*, a London conservative weekly, illustrates well this global evil:

“As the rich world gives with one hand so it takes away with the other. The EC is the main offender. It sends cheap European beef to West Africa. Ostensibly designed to help poor African consumers, the beef programme is really aimed at helping rich European farmers. They produce (fatty) beef that no one will buy at the price at which they want to sell it, so they are subsidised by the European taxpayer to dump it in West Africa, where it destroys the livelihood of poor farmers.

Thanks to the tsetse fly, the countries in which this beef is dumped - Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana - rear few cattle of their own. But these countries have long enjoyed a thriving trade with cattle farmers in the Sahel - Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad - directly to the north. Traditionally, herds men used to walk their animals, often for days, to markets in the Sahel where merchants bought them and drove them to the markets in the south. Since the mid-1980s, however, when the EC started dumping beef, the merchants have increasingly given up. European beef can be bought in West Africa at half the price of that produced in the Sahel.

The EC is spending large sums on projects expressly designed to support cattle farmers: building refrigerated abattoirs in Burkina Faso, improving cattle breeds in Mali and fattening cattle in northern Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. So far the

Community has not even conceded that these projects are undermined by its own beef-dumping policy. It does not want to recognise this specific clash because it does not want to recognise that the entire common agricultural policy rests on a bigger fraud: systematic overproduction of food in Europe, paid for by Europe's taxpayers to please a powerful lobby, Europe's farmers."

West Africa only buys 0.5% of the beef reared in Europe each year: a minor plus for the powerful rich making a big minus for the already weak and dying. The famines, the lakes and mountains of unutilized food-stuffs, the seemingly endless queues of unemployed ... in which place do we not see the result of poor utilization and non-distribution?

As suggested in the preface of this booklet, we are simple researchers who are not going to be bogged down by any exclusive expert terminology. A few simple figures will suffice to make us aware of the immediate need for global change. We will pick some of them from the world of advertisement which very expressively depict the present global socio-economic situation; others will be straight national economy figures (the sources of this information are given in the back of the booklet).

In 1988, the world's advertising budget (\$225 b) more than doubled the combined gross national product of Africa's 45 poorest countries (\$108 b). Most of the money was spent by the US, Japan, UK and West Germany. The previous year, a single advertiser, the multinational consumer goods company Procter and Gamble, spent nearly \$1.4 b in the US alone, exceeding the combined GNP of Ethiopia and Sudan (total population 65 m). The

millions of tons of ink and paper involved surely throw all commercial high talk on ecology and environmental protection into the garbage can.

Here the appropriate socio-economic question is: Why is so much money being squandered only on marketing in a lightly populated area, when so many people (Africa alone has 10% of the world's population) live sub-standard?

First, let us turn to the obvious. Are those who are in the best position to do something about the situation, *the multinational corporations*, at all contributing to continued all round growth in the areas they are involved in? What are their policies? Surely they can join in with Socrates and claim that they are "not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world". But in which sense?

Briefly, let us look at one aspect of multinational entrepeneuring: instant food substitutes in Latin America. It has been estimated that between one-half and two-thirds of the world's population suffers from malnutrition or undernutrition. One of the most serious nutritional problems is lack of protein. The supply of traditional sources of protein - meat, eggs, fish, milk and dairy products - are too expensive for impoverished consumers in Third World nations; the per capita income in most Latin American countries ranges between one fifth and one third of the US level.

Preschool malnutrition may irreversibly retard the mental and physical development of those who survive. It is seen that the adult population of such areas has less vigour and enterprise and is therefore unable to contribute as fully as they might to economic, industrial, and

social development. This unfortunate situation obviously leads to a lot of thinking in US board rooms. Consequently, multinationals have started to prepare cheap foods from locally available protein sources.

One such giant company is Quaker Oats, USA. Quaker Oats operates more than 50 plants on four continents. Its Latin American brand of bland flour, Incaparina, can be used as an ingredient in drinks (similar to low-calorie diet products that are sold in large volume in rich countries). With the help of an intergovernment agency looking after malnutrition in the area Incaparina has been marketed successfully in Latin America. Quaker Oats sells other locally produced food substitutes as well: in Mexico - Atolvena (an instant thin porridge), in Colombia - Frescavena (a powdered formula of oat flour, sugar, and various ingredients), and other similar products in neighbouring countries.

The company has made no secret of its policy of taking a well-established local food and adding "convenience". Corn is a staple food in many of these countries. So Quaker Oats have long been marketing their locally produced precooked corn flour with great success there. Needless to say, the financial growth produced in the area is negligible compared to the substantial profit the mother company takes home to the US. Everywhere one gets the same picture: an almost apathetic dependency on foreign banking, manufacturing and expertise.

Then there is national cash-cropping. It continues all over the Third World. In strife-stricken Sudan, green iceberg lettuce produced only for European export is reportedly grown in restricted areas. Needless to say, the

income from these exports has largely been diverted to the leadership and upper bureaucracy. But the skyscrapers of the Third World megacities cannot overshadow the fact that there is practically no local food processing industry there. Naturally there is not much growth in local talent and initiative either.

The examples are everywhere. Twenty years ago African countries were able to trade one ton of coffee in exchange for 32 barrels of oil. Ten years later they could only get 9 barrels, and coffee prices have been falling ever since. These countries, literally drowning in coffee beans, get no opportunity to build up industries that supply local demand. They have no capital to educate the people or to invest in proper ventures and maintain growth. The multinationals, who do have the capital, are just engineering the industrial world system according to their own economic priorities.

Not much in the Third World can be used as an example of proper utilization. Lately, however, a handful of Asian countries have been able to learn the trick. Thailand, one of the five booming "Tigers" of South East Asia, is now developing a dynamic export industry for finished goods. In 1992 the country enjoyed the fastest growing economy in the world. But such countries are simultaneously developing a huge dependency on an imported consumer culture and non-traditional materialistic values. Their social backbone is withering away fast. Countries such as the Tigers<sup>1</sup> bear testimony to the fact that utilization of material resources simply is not enough.

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<sup>1</sup> *In addition to Thailand, these are Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea.*

An all round development of physical, mental and spiritual resources is needed.

A few more figures: Throughout the last few decades more than one fourth of the annual gross world product has been generated in North America. In contrast, the combined force of South America, Africa and Asia (minus Japan and the Middle East) could only produce one fifth. Obviously North Americans are very industrious people. There is nothing wrong with that, but the fact remains that only 8% of the world's population live in North America whereas almost four out of every five - 78% - live in the other areas mentioned. It strongly suggests that something is very wrong.

Africa is probably the richest area on the planet in terms of natural resources. Its future is potentially enormously bright, but economically it remains the poorest section of the world family. No one seems really to care about its future development. Extensive lists of hard African facts can be produced: child mortality rates, health standards, life expectancy, education standards, water shortage, the increase of fallow land, the spreading of deserts, the percentage of finished goods out of the total national product, the ratio of export/import figures, the ratio of higher to lower income groups, and so on. These figures are representative of the development in other poor areas of the world as well. As we remember, about 4/5 of the world's population live in these "poor areas".

Let us leave the statistics for now. They surely give a very dismal picture, and will not aid us much in gaining a greater understanding of how we can generate a positive

movement towards self-reliance and fruitful global cooperation. But before we leave the multinationals, we will raise a simple question: Why don't the extremely powerful multinationals fix things for the large poor areas of the world. After all, it would relieve the world of a lot of tension! The global market would be more solid and extensive than ever, and the poor wouldn't be poor anymore. Turnover from a world market would surely increase the profits of the big companies even further ...

Well, there are many answers to such a simple question. Firstly, the multinationals are already doing splendidly well in their trade with the poor. Cheap raw materials are being brought out, refined and sold worldwide with considerable profit. It is really quite difficult to imagine how multinationals could maintain their profits if the poor were to be paid properly for their raw materials.

Secondly, capitalists are occupied solely with foreseeable profits. They avoid investing capital in very long term projects if the returns seem a long way off.

Thirdly, the capitalist mentality is predominantly materialistic. As such it is steadily moving away from human values towards cruder consciousness. This means that their will to do good, to think and act in a human way, is decreasing.

Fourthly, capitalists compete fiercely amongst themselves. It is a "do or die" situation, not only for us, but also for them. They do not team up willingly unless there is an immediate danger of bankruptcy or a matter of increased market shares.

Fifthly, capitalism in its present degenerate stage is struggling with its main inner contradiction: it wants to

expand, but sucks the life out of its customers. Like parasites in a tree, capitalism will die when the tree dies. Today the world is on the verge of social, ecological, political, moral and cultural bankruptcy. Consequently, a good many pessimistic capitalists are wary of investing. Soon no one will be in the mood to invest at all. This stagnancy will lead to economic depression in which risk capital will be a rarity.

There may be many more reasons for capitalists not to "do good" on a large scale. They would all indicate the same however: the present capitalist approach is not at all progressive, but rather shortsighted and one-sidedly materialistic.

PROUT asserts that human capabilities do not originate or end in the world of crude matter. Its basic principles of utilization are based on this fact. If the human thirst for limitlessness is forced not to expand beyond certain limits, people will sooner or later end up in utter despair, not being able to satisfy that infinite need, not to mention their immediate obligations towards family and locality. Therefore, efforts to utilize any crude or subtle resource or potential ought to be for all round progress, not for imbalanced development.

Someone forced to live a purely materialistic life, in which only a minute fraction of his or her potential is utilized, will never be able to experience complete fulfillment. The optimum utilization of his or her potential will remain a vague dream, a strange hallucination of some sort, a lost treasure. Again, the solution to this crisis is the harmonious integration of physical, psychic and

spiritual activities. At the same time as the basic necessities of life are made available to all, one must not hesitate to introduce extensive mental and spiritual activities on a large scale. Sooner or later people will realize that the material world cannot offer them the infinite fulfillment they desire.

Material resources and physical potential abound, whereas mental strength and intellectual wealth are comparatively rare. Most of us can flex our muscles, but only a very few can control and channelize mental faculties at will. People endowed with extended mental capabilities should get the opportunity to serve society in their special way. To secure their further harmonious development, spiritual practices should be encouraged and blended into their personal routine.

No two people are exactly the same. As such, everyone may be of great service. It may be mentioned here that to order highly educated and developed human beings to toil manually for a certain period of the year in the name of equality and solidarity, as was the practice in some of the previous so-called socialist countries, is decidedly regressive and detrimental to both individual and collective progress. (As mentioned earlier, there is almost no end to the harm done in all spheres by the naive and narrowminded outlook of marxism.)

Even more valuable than intellectual competence is spiritual awareness and insight. Intuitionally and spiritually developed people may offer society service of the highest calibre, as they are able to understand the subtle needs of their neighbour. Unfortunately, spiritually inclined people have been known to live a life of withdrawal

and permanent reclusion. Nevertheless, as masters of the inner self they will be able to serve their fellow human beings in a selfless way while living in the midst of society. PROUT advocates that spiritually adept men and women be placed in the forefront of society, where they will be given the task of seeing that all-round development is brought about everywhere.

The principle of progressive utilization proposes the harmonious development of human potential. Those who are mostly physically gifted can of course contribute according to the best of their ability. Simultaneously they ought to get the opportunity to take up education for their intellectual growth and spiritual fulfilment. People of a more intellectual or spiritual nature will be urged to continue their integrated development so that their valuable service may grow and expand. Only to make use of a person's immediate potential without giving any scope for further development may lead to stagnancy and degeneration. Social progress would also suffer; the collective good lies in the individual and the individual's good lies in collectivity.

A tiny stream of water in the high mountains gradually flows into a mighty river, passing through different landscapes while watering and nourishing the various fields so that harvests and lives are fed and developed. Here the tiny, almost invisible, but all-important headwater in the high mountains is the spiritual source - the unifying point of individual and collective interest. Progressive utilization, recognizing that spiritual source, will espouse universal human values and a common spiritual ideal while providing proper material necessities and ameni-

ties for all.

The utilization of objects and personal capacities generally brings about their further development. This refinement of so many crude and subtle objects has caused a continuous upgrading of human civilization. Nowadays new techniques and phenomena are invented and discovered almost daily, so that many have come to see rapid change as the very nature of things. Naturally, all of us hope that such dynamic development will enrich future generations as well. The present state of global affairs demands that radical steps be taken immediately to effect a thorough change towards the upliftment of all living beings. If the negative trend towards their destruction and degradation continues much longer things may soon be beyond repair.

So far there have been no clear signs of any real will in the important world fora to bring about much needed changes. A growing number of people today feel that someone with moral authority, compassion and the necessary guts should come forward and secure the proper utilization of the abundant resources of this glorious planet Earth and her children.

## THEORY

A large number of theories have been put forward since humans first developed the capacity to put their thoughts into conceptual strings of ideas. Actually, at one time, in eras long gone, philosophy commanded the greatest respect, enthusiasm and attention. It was then, in ancient Greece and renaissance Italy, that the study of the good, the beautiful and the virtuous was regarded as the supreme intellectual achievement.

Thus far no moralist, aesthetic or capitalist thinker has succeeded in giving successful solutions to the many problems humanity has come to face. The sole reason for this is that human intellect is limited and subject to the relative factors of time, place and person, so much so that a single philosopher hardly can formulate a theory which may be valid for a long time, in various places and for all sorts of people, not to speak of being altogether above the relative changes in time, place and person.

Why do theories end up on the rubbish-heap of history? There are various reasons for this. The two perhaps most immediate causes are:

*\* The theory is either the product of a narrowminded intellect without a sufficiently universal outlook; or*

*\* the thinker was so influenced by contemporary affairs that the theory got tangled up in the prevailing conditions.*

Successful problem solving is based on concrete experience. A workable theory for human beings in the living world must necessarily be preceded by practical experience. Mere speculation and abstract theorization produces hypotheses and assumptions, not a pragmatic theory. The highest experience is the ultimate awareness of all-pervading supreme consciousness. In the awareness of the interrelatedness of all things lies the key to both individual as well as collective social success. PROUT maintains that the realization of universal love and thereby a non-compromising spirit of care for everybody's welfare ought to guide our actions and development.

What does history say? Let us go back to the examples we dealt with in the first part of this booklet - communism and capitalism.

Marxism was the unfortunate brainchild of a sensitive humanist, strongly moved by the suffering of the working classes. Marx depended heavily on his own impressions of the prevailing exploitation, while leaving out historical facts which did not appear clearly to him at the time. For example, Marx rejects the importance and separate existence of the independent martial and intellectual classes. "Quite a false move," the enlightened middle class of Europe thought, and due to this they never accepted Marxism, even though socialism was quite fashionable at the time. Marx took the classes of the

military minded and the intellectuals, historically formed long before the capitalist class, to be inseparable parts of the capitalist-produced middle class. This terribly flawed notion made him claim that the military-oriented and the intellectuals were typical members of the proletariat, and that they would merge into a future classless society along with the rest of the exploited masses as soon as capitalism was abolished.

Marx's theory was regressive, and so was its successive practical development. To think that such prominent social contributors as the military-minded and intellectual classes will quite naturally retreat into a prehistoric, primitive stage is indicative of an over-simplistic mentality, and is perhaps as constructive as trying to beat a colourful butterfly into a creeping caterpillar again. As indicated earlier, this basically negative spirit of marxist philosophy allowed a great number of inhumane and highly regressive developments to take place behind the Iron Curtain. Still today the effects of Marx's deficient analysis may be observed in the economic stagnancy and unsolved social questions in certain East European countries.

Early capitalism emerged quite naturally as a consequence of previous social and intellectual development. Prominent capitalists would be expected to be men of integrity, perhaps espousing goals of a somewhat idealistic or religious nature. This image was soon to be tarnished. The only real pleasure of a genuine capitalist is to count and savour his or her wealth. In this way the mind quickly becomes materialist, to the exclusion of other values of life. The degenerate nature of modern capital-

ists has definitely had a negative bearing on capitalists themselves as well as on collective consciousness; the social consequences of the moral collapse on Wall Street are in no way inferior to those of earlier downfalls from once mighty royal thrones and papal chairs.

Capitalism's gospel of the free individual helped unleash an entrepreneuring spirit of considerable proportions. Today, however, the theories of Adam Smith and other liberal thinkers are labouring beyond their abilities and beyond the limits of their positive utility value. Greed has become a widespread and generally accepted sentiment of our time, expressed in the steep increase and popularization of gambling, tax evasion and other serious economic offences. Having become degenerative, capitalism has left society in dire need of a less egoistical spirit.

We have already discussed some of the material effects of global capitalism in the light of a few facts and figures. Now let us try to say something more about the possible *mental* consequences of degenerate capitalism. Cynicism is perhaps the most threatening and dangerous trend in the later capitalistic era. It is characterized by a lack of ability to feel what is really going on outside oneself. The senses, the emotions and the mind just do not function together. Something has been cut off. Emotional numbness and a barren intellect typifies such cynicism. In the younger generation it easily produces feelings of alienation. We have already seen that a purely materialistic outlook is outright harmful: marxist countries quickly showed a decline in human values and civilization as one-sided materialism was allowed to set in. The same social trend is now evident in capitalist coun-

tries, where humanist idealism, the spirit of service and a sense of responsibility shrink day by day in a restless race for survival and sensuous enjoyment. The overwhelming sensuousness created by capitalism is typically one factor that breaks down the individual's inner harmony and leads to cynicism.

Modern capitalism has come to actively scorn human values. Social life has become considerably less value-oriented than it was, say, 30-50 years ago. Simplicity and sweetness, ethical integrity and meaningfulness have all become as rare as moonlight on an overcast night. We live in an unscrupulously brutal world. Social researchers and scientists are worried that the powerful influence of the all-pervading consumer culture may be paralyzing our motivation for self-development. In the world's most developed capitalistic society, the US, 60% of the present population have not read a single book after leaving school. In the same country, 2,5 million young students carry a gun to protect themselves at school. (*In Context*, volume 32, a US publication). It has become quite clear that the engineers of degenerate capitalism leave no stone unturned in their frantic search for profit. We can safely conclude that capitalism has reached a stage where the most inhumane actions may be expected.

But at that time the exploiters will not be able to hide their intentions anymore.

A third example of a theory which has failed to keep up with humanity's evergrowing needs is the so-called mixed economy, the flagship of certain European social democratic countries. This system is actually a compromise

between the left's demand for an extended social welfare structure and the right's need for large scale private enterprise.

In post-war social democratic Scandinavia, this unholy alliance could for a few decades somehow satisfy the majority's craving to be taken care for. However, without any deeper understanding of the subtle interaction between crude and subtle human needs, the system of mixed economy has also eroded human values, paving the road for capitalist consumerism. In this process the public sector has been heavily burdened. Today the gap between the few rich and the many poor has again become very distinct in these countries, and the theory of mixed economy will probably go down in history as one of the great capitalist post war smokescreens.

As we have established earlier, our world is subject to constant change and there is no such thing as a permanent pause. The correct socio-economic theory must therefore allow for frequent changes, otherwise the theory itself will become obsolete. PROUT is most robust. It can stand the test of time because it allow for the natural changes in time, place and person: the fifth of PROUT's fundamental principles states that the method of utilization must change according to these natural variations.

## PROUT

Progress or regression are the two options laid out for human beings who have risen above the stage of blissfully innocent animality. Thus there are two forces dragging at human beings - a forward force towards further individual and collective enlightenment, and a backward force towards personal and social darkness. We say that the unifying force is a *synthetic* force, whereas the divisive force is *analytical*. Today the whole world is getting polarized for a conflict between righteous and unrighteous forces. The reason for this great and violent antagonism is that the analytical force reigns supreme; an overwhelming lack of local unity and world fraternity plagues the world. PROUT asserts, that the analytical force must be subordinated to the synthetic force to ensure growth in any sphere and area. A universal code of basic unifying values and principles is thus needed. PROUT's approach to this problem is discussed below.

We know that present humanity is facing problems without precedent in history: at this point the entire human race and world civilization may be in jeopardy. Who knows the real number and dimension of global problems? What is their root cause and where lies their solution? Which is an individual problem, which is collec-

tive? Perhaps we shall have to deal directly with these tasks ourselves. Our great dormant potential and abilities, once activated and utilized, will surely allow us to solve problems of any size.

Present leaders clearly lack well thought-out plans and solutions. It is as if they want only to get through another election, and they do this by fooling us with numerous short term solutions, disguising powerful strategies of exploitation only to prolong their rule *in absurdum*. The seriousness of the situation evidently has a paralyzing effect on people; most of the time we seem set upon dozing off into Armageddon. Has the world, our global home, really come to this, so soon after the catastrophes of two world wars?

Here we will briefly outline some of PROUT's progressive solutions to present socio-economic and political problems.

**PROBLEM:** The global problem of unbalanced and unfair distribution of wealth. This is perhaps the one problem demanding our most immediate attention, as the hoarding of enormous wealth by a few and the abject poverty of the many makes welfare for all an impossible dream.

**SOLUTION:** PROUT stresses that material objects are limited and therefore should be restricted. Too much for some means too little for others. There is enough around for everybody's need, but not enough for even a single person's infinite greed. The solution to the problem of economic disparity is that no one should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permis-

sion or approval of a collective body (see next paragraph). Simultaneously the government must guarantee each and everyone a minimum purchasing power - the power to maintain the minimum standard of life: food, clothing, housing, medicine and education. PROUT advocates that education should be free, from the playschool to the university, so the government must be able to guarantee all its citizens the right to partake freely of that education.

In short, there is no way anyone may satisfy their infinite thirst in the material sphere. The lasting solution is to turn to more subtle mental and spiritual wealth and help oneself out there to one's heart content. So education is an integral part of the progressive solution to poverty, both for the exploited and the exploiters.

**PROBLEM:** Now that we have established the need for an uncorrupt and efficient collective body it would be wise to discuss the proper way out of the present political crisis. This crisis is wholly a moral one as corruption and professionalism are plaguing today's world of politics.

**SOLUTION:** PROUT upholds the system of enlightened, organized democracy. The most obvious requirement for both the candidates and the electorate in PROUT's concept of democracy is *education*. In a number of undeveloped countries, democracy means a democracy of illiterates and so it is just a farce. In the so-called developed world people generally do not know more than a fraction of the party programme. The turn-out on election day is poor in most of these countries as well, as democracy has become just another hollow institution. Such a system of

election makes it possible for only a minority of the qualified electorate to stand behind the leader who does finally get elected. This gap between the electorate and the elected consequently leads to structural alienation and moral downfall.

The electorate should be qualified. An age limit is simply not enough to make people conscious of their democratic duties. The qualifying demands will naturally vary from country to country. In addition there should be active efforts towards the progressive enlightenment of the qualified electorate and its expansion. Here one should understand that the democratic demand in the US to remove the requirement of literacy on the part of voters in the late '50s was a false populist move and not something borne out of genuine compassion for the downtrodden poor. The fact is that the politicians in those states did not do enough to raise the educational standard of the illiterate.

**PROBLEM:** The present UN is a weak and partial world body. It has not been able to deal properly with a serious matter such as the Yugoslavian problem, but did not hesitate to rush into the Gulf. A few powerful nations are the permanent members of the UN's Security Council, and perhaps some of them also have an invisible hand in other matters of the organisation.

**SOLUTION:** PROUT proposes the formation of a world constitution and thereby world government. The government will consist of one lower house and one upper house. The lower house will accommodate the country's

representatives on the basis of their population. The upper house, having the veto right, will consist of an equal number of representatives from each country, say two from each. In this way, those small countries who are less represented in the lower house will get the chance to voice their opinion on matters to be approved by the upper house.

A bill of rights should be included in the world constitution, including at least the following points:

1. The existential value of all plants and animals around the world should be recognized.

2. Each country must constitutionally guarantee adequate purchasing power to all its citizens for the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, housing, medical care and education.

3. The four fundamental rights - spiritual practice, cultural legacy, education, and indigenous linguistic expression - should be guaranteed by the constitution.

4. Basic human values must take precedence over all other rights.

**PROBLEM:** The present banking system has developed serious capital problems as a result of speculation. Interest rates and the tough demands for security bar the young and the average wage earner from receiving simple loans. Loans taken under more favourable circumstances some years ago have been subjected to such steep interest increases that quite a large number of ordinary citizens have been forced out of business and even out of their homes.

**SOLUTION:** PROUT's answer is an extensive system of cooperative banking. The people involved will be the owners of the cooperative, and no outside shareholders will be allowed. Speculation will be a thing of the past. Interest rates will be nominal, and so the financial growth of the banking cooperative (outside that of necessary administration costs) will depend wholly on the success of its involvement with local enterprises. PROUT's banking cooperatives will in other words function directly in connection with other kinds of cooperative enterprises. Naturally, those who are more involved with the bank, both in the form of financial and other services, will receive a proportionate part of the yield.

**PROBLEM:** The rich and the wealthy can easily manipulate income tax laws and other such regulations to their advantage, something which is quite impossible for ordinary wage earners.

**SOLUTION:** PROUT favours the system of consistent value added taxes, a progressive tax on property and inheritance, as well as a small rise in levies on imports and luxury goods. The income tax should be abolished. Not only will the removal of income tax let black money surface and join the white economy, thereby rejuvenating the entire economy, it will also effect a much needed moral boost.

**PROBLEM:** Worldwide unemployment.

**SOLUTION:** The solution to this global plague is the abolition of big private corporations, to be replaced by coop-

erative ownership of the large middle-sized section of the economy, in other words economic democracy. To introduce economic democracy, a system of decentralized economy is needed. In PROUT's system, all industries which produce consumer goods come under the cooperative umbrella. Only very big industries and small firms come outside of PROUT's cooperative structure. Big key industries, which extract raw materials, should be state owned, whereas small enterprises may be privately owned. In this way the people involved in the largest section of the economy, the future cooperative sector, will be able to exert decisive influence on policies concerning production, employment, increases in the average amount of free time, wages, etc.

The true genius of the socio-economic theory PROUT is the idea of integrating physical activities, mental development and spiritual emancipation within a pragmatic socio-economic set-up. PROUT upholds the need for progressive practices in all spheres. It also gives practical guidelines for the successful fulfillment of this all-round development. PROUT extends spirituality to the entire social organism. Its roots reach deep into every aspect of human life. The theory of progressive utilization is an ideology in the true sense of the term, taking both the individual and the collective progressively closer to all-round liberation. PROUT stands for a happy blending of individual freedom and collective interests:

- Economically there is plenty of scope in PROUT for both private enterprise and successful cooperative structures.

- Politically PROUT blends moral integrity, a sense of responsibility and democratic values.

- Socially its call for a leadership capable of moral and spiritual excellence is the only guarantee against prolonged exploitation.

- Culturally it stands for one universal family - one multifaceted human culture.

On one hand PROUT can bring an end to all sorts of exploitation. On the other hand this theory can offer the individual the opportunity and means to serve a progressive society and strive to reach the final goal of human life.

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