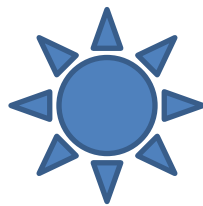


# Facilitator's Guide

to the

*Universal PROUT Study Circle Manual*

With commentary and source material on the  
156 study circle questions and assignments  
in the study circle manual, and general guidelines.



PROUTIST UNIVERSAL 2012

*Facilitator's Guide to the Universal PROUT Study Circle Manual*

1<sup>st</sup> edition

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

PROUT on the web:

[www.proutglobe.org](http://www.proutglobe.org) – with resources, links to numerous PROUT sites, Proutist Universal addresses around the world, original material by P.R. Sarkar and material developed later, current issues material, etc.

[www.proutpublications.com](http://www.proutpublications.com) – with online shop.

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3<sup>rd</sup> class: Chapter One: Human Society and Progress – Section One: Progress, Utilization, Theory; Section Two: The Existence of Human Society **25** (pages 13-20 in the manual)

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15<sup>th</sup> class: Chapter Seven: Integrated Proutistic Solutions – Section One: Samaj; Section Two: Multi-purpose Development Plans; Section Three: Master Units; Section Four: Proutistic Solutions for Crime and Punishment, Population Growth, Environmental Destruction and Pollution **63** (pages 98-105 in the manual)

16<sup>th</sup> class: The Five Fundamental Principles of PROUT **65** (pages 106-110 in the manual)

17<sup>th</sup> class: Examination Questions (pages 110-117 in the study manual), CELEBRATIONS!

## To the Facilitator

You are the facilitator of the new study circle group most probably because you have taken the initiative, or someone suggested you do it. In any event, you have taken a leadership position and will therefore be expected to reflect the ideals and principles of PROUT to a great extent. As the group's facilitator you will be a role model for budding Proutists in many ways. Instruct others by your good conduct as well as by your deep understanding of the contents and importance of PROUT.

We hope you will find this guide useful in your efforts to make the study circle productive and successful. You may have taken on this job with much enthusiasm. Why not, PROUT is great! However, the job of leading a group towards a goal usually has its fair share of challenges. Based on our own experiences we have placed some preparatory material before the main material on study circle questions and assignments. It is up to you to follow some or all of our recommendations for preparing and establishing the group. The material is there at your disposal.

### Your Responsibilities

As the facilitator, your main job is to be very well acquainted with the study circle manual and always be ready to facilitate discussions and satisfy members' queries regarding the meaning of its content, respond well to other relevant questions they may have, etc. You are not required to know "everything" but you will be expected to be sufficiently prepared. This guide is a valuable tool for you in this regard.

Depending on the circumstances of your organization and the people you're working with, you may or may not be the sole responsible for mobilizing study circle participation, finding a suitable place for classess, informing all potential participants about the location and time for the preparatory meeting (should you choose to hold one), and other practicalities. If others help out with all or some of the organization we advise you to keep an eye on them so that when the study circle finally starts you will have the situation reasonably in control and all study circle members will be quite content.

Suggestion: You may delegate the job of keeping track of persons who want to speak during classes to the group members (rotating duty). In the section on suggested rules (under "Do's", page 7) we have proposed: "The job of keeping track of group members who want to speak during classes will rotate between the members. The facilitator may speak at any time." It is up to you to decide on such an arrangement. Your main occupation is in any case to facilitate the learning processes and discussions in the group.

### Do your duty and let others develop too

Be sincere and serious about being fully prepared ahead of classes. Try to set a good example in every respect.

With the study circle up and running, we advise you to stick to your main duty. Do not automatically take on further group duties that others may suggest, at least not those that members may very well carry out themselves. Make it clear to the group members that you are there to facilitate the main work of the study circle and that they are welcome to take further initiatives that may prove beneficial to the group. For instance, if it is suggested that group members convene for collective meditation before study circle classes, and it would require that someone come early to prepare the place, bring in refreshments, etc., such tasks are best left to someone else and not to you. The study circle group may decide to do many things together, and you may be very positive to these suggestions, but you should focus on facilitating the essential study circle processes. Provide leadership from the very beginning and do your utmost to make the group robust and self-sufficient.

### Some Practical Considerations

When people are being invited to the study circle they should be supplied with sufficient practical information, such as:

- A statement about the purpose of the study circle. Suggestion: “To present P.R. Sarkar’s philosophy of spiritual humanism – Neo-humanism – with particular emphasis on the political-economic theory of PROUT, which addresses the practical application of this value system. An oral group examination will be given at the end.”
- Timeframe (start date and end date), and frequency, length and place of classes. See our suggested plan for the semester, page 15.
- The amount of time participants will be expected to spend on preparation between classes. Suggestion: Minimum one hour of preparatory study ahead of each study circle class.
- A PROUT study circle is a “no profit, no loss” service project. There may be costs involved, such as for the production of the study circle manual when provided in paper form, certificate of participation, renting of the meeting place, refreshments, etc. There may be additional costs accruing from the organizing and setting up as well. Present the total budget to invitees and explain it. Ask each person whether he or she would require a paper copy of the manual or if a free electronic copy will do.
- We suggest you arrange for a collective preparatory meeting as well. See the chapter on it. However, it is entirely up to you how you want to kick off the study circle.

## The Size of the Group

The ideal size of a group varies with its purpose. If the purpose is to work at a deeper level, the ideal size would be 6 to 8 members. More members may be included if the purpose is to work at a more formal level such as when teaching a class by way of didactic training (basically lecturing).

If some of the prospective participants are well acquainted with PROUT and others are not, you may want to explore the possibility of running two groups: One advanced and another more introductory in character. You may use the same study circle manual for both groups and get two very good but different results! As the facilitator you owe it to the participants to do your best to provide each one of them with an optimal learning environment where they may feel at home and express themselves properly. You would not want to work with a totally imbalanced group. If there are good reasons for forming two groups we suggest you do it. If one single group is it and includes some who already knows PROUT and others who don't, well, that's life and please read on for advice and guidance.

## Do's and Don'ts of a Study Circle

### Do's

The role of a study circle facilitator is to lead, supervise and support. This may require you to be more expressive in some classes, in others less so. At times you may need to be direct and even firm. In all matters do your best to carry out your duties most benignly.

Rules are a good thing! Groups that follow self-made rules are infinitely more successful than others. Keep rules to a minimum and make sure they are followed to an appreciable degree.

An excellent way to establish and implement group rules effortlessly is to make sufficient time in the preparatory meeting for suggesting and discussing them properly. See the chapter on the first meeting.

Study circle rules may include:

- Be on time. Members should inform the facilitator directly or through another member in case they will be late or cannot attend a class. (Be sure to share your phone number with all at the beginning of the first class.) The facilitator will inform at the beginning of classes about any such reported absences.
- Members should prepare properly ahead of study circle classes, which as a minimum would include going through the text and reflecting upon its questions and assignments, discuss it with someone else if possible and in general try to get into its ideas and principles as much as possible.

- The group may decide that members take turn in presenting a short introduction based on the text agreed upon for each class. It is usually important to fix the maximum time limit for such introductions.
- If need be, decide on a maximum time limit for speakers. This is not always needed but in some cases it is. This rule may be added later should it be required.
- The job of keeping track of group members who want to speak during classes will rotate between the members. The facilitator may speak at any time.
- Members may agree on cultivating an atmosphere of mutual respect, which would include to allow presenters and speakers to complete what they want to say without being interrupted. Additional information, concerns, arguments, etc. should be placed before the group in a dignified way.
- The group may elect a discussion facilitator for each class (rotating duty) whose duty will be to identify a hand signal from upcoming speakers in order to add them to the speakers list and let each speaker know when his or her moment has arrived. The group may decide whether the assisting facilitator should be free to participate in discussions or not. The main facilitator (you) are free to speak at any time. It is better that you take it upon yourself to decide if speakers get too lengthy, etc. and deal with it, and not the discussion facilitator.
- See how it goes. You may decide on an expressly Proutistic rule that says that rules may be changed or added later as needed.

Whenever required remind the group gently about particular rules. (See the following chapter on how to develop the group in a balanced way.)

## Don'ts

Being the facilitator does not mean you have an automatic right to talk a lot in the classes. As the facilitator you would normally know a good deal more about the topics than group members do. There is no reason you should show it off. Be conscious about your actual job which is to assist group members in their learning processes. Saying the right thing may not take much time. Real learning comes from within. Help them as much as possible to get their own knowledge and wisdom out of there. Be present at all times and expressive when needed.

Pay particular attention so that no single member gets to dominate the study circle by his or her talkativeness, recurrent insistent arguing, etc. Proutists may have strong opinions but this study circle is no lecture hall:

- A study circle is primarily a place for reflection and learning. It is not a place for constant airing of personal views, quarrelsomeness, etc.
- Depending on the size of the group you may establish a limit for the maximum total time that one person may use for his or her talking at one class. If so, add it to the rules.



If one or more members just can't help it but continue to waste everybody's time, take him or her aside or arrange for a separate meeting and have a good talk about it. Do what it takes to get the job done.

Always do your best to support members in their own efforts to get a deeper understanding of the inner truth and wisdom of PROUT. Whenever you have facilitated some member or the whole group in assimilating some more of PROUT, consider it a job well done. You will probably feel tremendously fulfilled and inspired as well!

## Develop the Group in a Balanced Way

As the facilitator, do your utmost to continuously strengthen the group by making it more and more balanced. Provide shining examples of progressive utilization! Your efforts may include:

- At the beginning of every class, inquire in a friendly way whether there were any particular problems in preparing for today's class. Be open to all kinds of responses regarding members' practical or intellectual difficulties, and be instrumental in cultivating such sincerity in the group.
- PROUT is totally service-oriented. If any member displays a lack of respect for responses from other members, do your best to make him or her understand about the challenges others may have and be accommodating instead. Share with all that we may expect such difficulties to flourish in the field and that it is very helpful that we get an opportunity to discuss the subject here. Inform the group that the exploration of ways to handle such challenges in a constructive manner is part and parcel of our Proutistic learning process.
- At the end of every class remind everyone gently to prepare properly for the next class.
- Encourage every member to contribute regularly in some way. Remember, to speak prominently in classes and display knowledge are not the only ways to contribute. Preparing the place, providing refreshments, offering a short cultural presentation such as a song or a poem, inviting an experienced Proutist to give a short topical introduction, arranging for a video or some other program, etc. may also be of value to the group and should be warmly welcomed.
- If any member is particularly shy or withdrawn you may want to take that person aside and listen. You may ask how things are going and if there is anything in particular he or she wants to mention, contribute in any way, etc. Be frank and say that you feel he or she is inactive in the group and how he or she feels about that and whether you can help in any way. The important thing is to make contact and state your feelings about this in a proper way. There is a big reason for the presence of each one of you; let that person in particular know that you feel that way.
- A great way to make a group more powerful is to strengthen its weakest link. Everybody comes along out of some interest and for some important reason. If one or some members are generally passive or non-participatory, be double sure to support them whenever they seem to make an attempt to contribute. Do not force it but allow it happen in a natural way. The group as a whole will greatly appreciate such progress which can only improve its overall dynamics.

Serving refreshments at some point in the class, either at the end or at half time, is generally a good way to keep the energy flow strong and maintain the group over time. If the group agrees to have refreshments (a rule), make sure the practicalities of it is discussed during the first meeting – for instance whether all members will be required to take turns for it or if one or some members will take on that responsibility and others will pay, etc.

## The Preparatory Meeting

Experience proves again and again how important it is to establish a group properly. We suggest a preparatory meeting is devoted to practical information, establishing rules, and getting to know each other. The following details our recommendations and you may pick whatever you prefer from it. It is entirely up to you how you want to go about it, and whether you want to have such a preparatory meeting at all. However, don't come afterwards and say we didn't inform you!

And if anyone airs a particularly troublesome concern now or later, try to respond as well as you can, and invite responses from others as you deem proper.

**Flipchart / writing board:** Make sure you have a white board, black board, flipchart or any other means for writing down various types of information for all to see during the first meeting.

**Members' list:** When participants start to arrive for the meeting have them write down their name, home address, mail address, and phone numbers on a paper and with a pen you provide, for you to produce a list to be distributed (by mail or otherwise) to everybody ahead of or at the next class. Announce that everybody will get a copy, on paper or electronically as they wish. The list may be helpful for members in making communications between classes.

**Welcome:** Welcome everybody warmly.

State your name. You may offer some personal background for those who don't know you well, and detail skills, experience, etc., that particularly qualify you as facilitator of this study circle. Be relaxed about it, people generally love personal information! Try to keep it brief ;)

Inform them about the main purpose of the meeting and when you expect it to end, and announce that there will be a short break every 45 minutes or so. (Rule number one for facilitators: Keep your promises.) If refreshments have been arranged, announce the time for when they will be served.

Suggested points for your statement of purpose of the meeting: "The main purpose of this meeting is for us to get to know each other, clarify the purpose of the study circle, its content, the ramifications of study circle work, the half year meeting plan, the examination, inform about the certificate of participation, establish group rules, look at the general procedure for classes, and discuss any other practical issues and questions that may come up."

**Participants introducing themselves:** There are many ways to do this routine and you may use the one that you are most familiar with.

One way of doing it, other than letting everybody just introduce themselves to the group, is to arrange all the participants into pairs and have them tell the other person about themselves, five minutes each. Afterwards everybody sits together and each person takes turn to tell the group about the person he or she just listened to. (Be sure to inform them about the entire process before you start.) Practically, direct them to arrange themselves into pairs. Direct that people who already know each other should seek out someone they do not know. Say that you will let them know when to start and also when five minutes has passed and it is time for the other to speak. Emphasize the importance of being a good listener and allowing the partner to speak uninterrupted for five minutes. If one person is left when even pairs are formed, you may choose to sit in, or one of the pairs may form a triangle with only about three minutes speaking time for each.

This way of doing the introduction usually goes a long way to break the ice.

**Purpose of the study circle:** State the purpose of the Universal PROUT Study Circle clearly. This is one of your main jobs in this meeting. The stated purpose may include:

- To introduce the participators to core ideas of PROUT and also to Neo-humanism.
- At the conclusion of the study circle, participants should be sufficiently equipped to understand and communicate PROUT well.

When you are done with the study circle's purpose, invite questions on it.

**Content of the study circle:** The required reading material is contained in the study circle manual. Every participant should have a copy of it, either on paper (mention the price) or in electronic form (for free). It is better if the practicalities of this are dealt with ahead of the meeting so that everybody already has a copy of the manual with them when the meeting starts.

If anyone wants to read more about PROUT outside of the manual they are most welcome to do so, and you will always be at their disposal should they need any advice in this regard. Emphasize that the manual is compulsory reading; any other material is optional and will not be dealt with during study circle classes unless the material for the day has been sufficiently discussed.

**Ramification of compulsory study circle work:** Members are expected to go through the detailed pages in the study circle manual scheduled for each class ahead of classes in order to be able to follow and participate in collective discussions. Advise that the number of pages for each class will vary from three pages as a minimum to seven pages in several cases.

Questions and assignments on each page vary from one to several and they should be probed properly. It is therefore recommended that participants schedule their study immediately after the previous class and not put it off until right before the next.

It will not be acceptable if group members arrive unprepared for classes.

Emphasize that although the study circle is non-profit and a low cost operation it provides a unique opportunity to get to know the socio-economics of tomorrow in some detail. Those who make a genuine effort to study well, irrespective of the challenges and sacrifices it may entail on their part, will surely experience deep satisfaction and tremendous inspiration in addition to acquiring substantial knowledge.

**Dates:** Be sure everybody also gets a copy of the list of dates for classes when they receive the study circle manual, on paper or in electronic form (you may add your own dates to our suggested plan for the semester, see page 15).

**Examination:** The study circle will be concluded by a group examination. You should detail that the examination will be conducted orally and collectively in the study circle group with all present. Make it clear that it is not a pass/non-pass event but a way to consolidate what has been discussed and learnt throughout the entire study circle. Nobody should feel any undue pressure because of the examination; it is simply another wonderful educational opportunity.

The examination questions with answers are detailed at the end of the study circle manual for all to see and prepare beforehand. However, it would not be a good idea for members to start to study that material at this point. It is advised to first go through the general study circle material as scheduled with the group, and at the end review the examination material as a summary ahead of the examination.

**Certificate of participation:** Group members who complete the study circle including the examination process will receive a certificate of participation.

You may google “certificate” or “diploma” to get an idea or download some template that will provide you with a basis for producing a good certificate. Your certificate should display the name of the person, and detail the title of the study circle, its start date and end date, the name of the issuing organization (“Proutist Universal ...”), your name and signature as well as the name and signature of another authority of PU, and any other suitable item you can think of. If you can also arrange for a prominent golden seal to be stamped on it, that would be the icing on the cake! In that case please send us a specimen by postal mail.

**Rules:** You may want to go through the above chapters on 1) Do's and don'ts and 2) Developing the group in a balanced way ahead of the meeting.

Invite all participants to suggest rules. Take all suggestions seriously in a brain storming process and write everything down for all to see. Allow time for all to think through what their concerns may be. Keep suggesting rules yourself if needed.

When the brain storming abates, move on to facilitating a process of synthesizing the suggested material into simple rules. Any fresh suggestion at this point is also welcome. The final rules should be constructive, as brief as possible, and not fussy.

Make sure all members agree with all rules. Allow for any misgivings or disagreements to be processed properly. Ask for any last comments.

Ideally, write the final rules on a large sheet of paper, have everybody sign the gigantic document, and roll it up and say you will keep it (in that room if possible) and will produce it should anyone require to see it later. These are the rules to be followed by all members of the study circle group.

**Procedures for study circle classes:** Explain how the study circle goes:

- Run through the main contents of the study circle material and begin to make the group aware of what is expected by them.
- Show the list with dates for all classes and their subject matters and page numbers in the study manual. You may follow our suggested half year plan for study circle classes given on the following page. All participants should get a copy of your plan along with the study manual.
- Invite responses and comments.

**Other practical suggestions:** Invite the participants to suggest points, and write them down for all to see, such as taking care of the meeting place, serving refreshments, any other suggestion that members may make. You may suggest points that you have in mind should the group be slow in coming up with their own points here.

**Questions:** Invite questions. Ask if everybody now have a copy of the study circle manual, and discuss all other practical issue you can think of, such as payment, etc.

**Conclude the meeting:** Remind about the topic for the coming class. Encourage everybody with some words of inspiration and support. In general make sure that everybody now appreciates fully their position as a member of the new study circle group.

Thank all for their contributions, and remind all that they may contact you with any concern at any time until next time you meet.

Thank all warmly for coming and tell them you are looking forward to seeing all of them again at the upcoming first class.

## Sarkar on the Importance of Expanding the Mind through Study

“When you fail through study to detect those pseudo-revolutionaries, those who are depriving the masses of the minimum necessities of life, what will you do? You will have to identify them. You will have to analyze each and everything in the proper perspective. Until you come to a clear conclusion after proper analysis, you cannot rescue the people from the tightening noose of exploitation. Here the importance of study is tremendous – you will have to do it. You cannot afford to shut the pages of your books and remain like frogs in the well. You must enlarge your mental horizons and move ahead by shattering all social bondages.

What sorts of bondage? The bondages of geo-sentiment. You will have to shatter all of them. The frog in the well thinks that its well is perhaps the biggest body of water in the world. But when it comes in contact with a big pool, it realizes that the pool is greater than was the well. After coming in contact with a pond it further realizes that this is greater still than the pool. When finally it sees the ocean, it realizes that this is something really big. It thinks, “As long as I was in the well, I thought the well to be the greatest.” Similarly, until geo-sentiment is removed, people will fail to realize the truth. Hence the tremendous importance of study.

But at the same time, care must be taken to avoid the limitations inherent in study. For instance, we are taught that our country is blessed with profuse water and laden with fruits. After hearing this, we may pass on this information to thousands of people. But after proper study, we come to discover that our country is suffering terribly from an acute scarcity of water: People do not even get a sufficient supply of drinking water, what to speak of water for irrigation. We are told, “Our country abounds in agricultural produce, especially fruits, which are then exported to different countries;” but after we study, we discover that our country is importing thousands of tons of food grains from different countries, and the very lives of our people depend upon these imports. Sometimes even rotten flour comes from distant lands, and that flour, after being soaked in water, serves as food. Yet we say, parrot-like: “My golden land, I adore you.” These are some examples of the bondages of geo-sentiment which people fall into due to their ignorance. Those who detect the facts later on simply burst into laughter and think, “When I repeated these tall tales to others, I wonder what they thought of me!” These types of false notion based on geo-sentiment have to be totally smashed, and for this there is no other way but careful study.

- P.R. Sarkar, *The Liberation of Intellect: Neo-humanism*

## Suggested Semester (half-year) Plan for Study Circle Classes

Preparatory meeting: Preparation – Getting together, establishing the group, practicalities.

1<sup>st</sup> class: Introduction – Spiritual Humanism, pp 5-8 in the study manual.

2<sup>nd</sup> class: Introduction – Society and State; PROUT's Political Objectives; PROUT's Economic Development, pp 9-12 in the manual.

3<sup>rd</sup> class: Chapter One: Human Society and Progress – Section One: Progress, Utilization, Theory; Section Two: The Existence of Human Society; pp 13-20 in the manual.

4<sup>th</sup> class: Section Three: Social Development and Progress; Section Four: Spiritual Realization as a Social Goal, pp 21-25 in the manual.

5<sup>th</sup> class: Chapter Two: The Social Cycle – Section One: Social Psychology and Theory of History; Section Two: The Social Cycle, pp 26-32 in the manual.

6<sup>th</sup> class: Section Three: The Dialectics of the Social Cycle; Section Four: Synthesizing a New Vision of History; Section Five: The Role of Moral Leaders and the State of Permanent Social Synthesis, pp 33-40.

7<sup>th</sup> class: Chapter Three: Proutist Economics – Section One: Production for Human Needs and Maximum Utilization; Section Two: Rational Distribution: Guaranteed Minimum Necessities and Maximum Amenities; Section Three: Economic Democracy, pp 41-47 in the manual.

8<sup>th</sup> class: Section Four: Economic Decentralization and Socio-Economic Units; Section Five: Trade; Section Six: Balanced Economy; Section Seven: Three-tiered Ownership, pp 48-54 in the manual.

9<sup>th</sup> class: Section Eight: Planning and Development; Section Nine: Quadri-dimensional Economics; Section Ten: Economic Depressions; pp 55-60 in the manual.

10<sup>th</sup> class: Chapter Four: Agriculture, Industry, and Services – Part A: AGRICULTURE, Section One: Economic Holdings; Section Two: Scientific Accounting in Agriculture; Section Three: Agricultural Cooperatives; Section Four: Ideal and Integrated Farming, pp 61-68 in the manual.

11<sup>th</sup> class: Section Five: Rural Development: Agro- and Agrico-Industries; Part B: INDUSTRY: Section One: Decentralization and Self-sufficiency; Section Two: Three-Tiered Ownership and Economic Democracy, Section Three: Rationalization (Scientific Planning and Development); Part C: SERVICES: Section One: Taxation and the Banking System; Section Two: Service and Buyers' Cooperatives, pp 69-74.

12<sup>th</sup> class: Chapter Five: The Political Dimension of PROUT – Section One: Partyless, Compartmental Democracy ; Section Two: Selecto-Electional Democracy; Section Three: Social Boards; Section Four: World Governance; Section Five: Constitution and Law, pp 75-82 in the manual.

13<sup>th</sup> class: Chapter Six: The Cultural Dimension of PROUT – Section One: Definition of Culture; Section Two: Psycho-Economic Exploitation and Pseudo-Culture; Section Three: Three Levels of Capitalistic Exploitation; Section Four: Dogma versus Dharma, pp 83-90 in the manual.

14<sup>th</sup> class: Section Five: Spirituality and Mental Balance; Section Six: Geo-sentiments, Socio-Sentiments, and Humanistic Sentiments versus Neo-Humanism; Section Seven: Social and Global Language; Section Eight: Indigenous Culture; Section Nine: The Role of the Arts, pp 91-97 in the manual.

15<sup>th</sup> class: Chapter Seven: Integrated Proutistic Solutions – Section One: Samaj; Section Two: Multi-purpose Development Plans; Section Three: Master Units; Section Four: Proutistic Solutions for Crime and Punishment, Population Growth, Environmental Destruction and Pollution, pp 98-105.

16<sup>th</sup> class: The Five Fundamental Principles of PROUT, pp 106-110 in the manual.

17<sup>th</sup> class: Examination Questions, pp 110-117. CELEBRATIONS!

## Sarkar on Education

“How to impart education has always been a very poignant question. The influence of the environment has a tremendous impact on the human mind. The environment in which one is born and brought up continues to exert a tremendous influence till the last days, till the dying stage, of human life. According to the type of education imparted, one’s psychic environment is built up. The psychic environment is more powerful in human life than the physical environment.

Let me drop a few hints. You apply your intelligence and try to understand. Suppose a man is born in a minority community in a particular country. He is put under severe strain because of the atrocities perpetrated on him. In this case, though the country does have an environmental influence on him, due to psychic pressure he leaves his country and defects to another country. This happens because psychic influence is stronger than the influence of the physical environment.

If we wish to do maximum good to the people, we must find out the proper way, the best way, to impart education. If we can mold our minds in the proper way, then everything is accomplished. As soon as the mind is in the proper shape, the people understand where to seek inspiration from. That is, it is to be sought from Parama Puruṣa (Supreme Consciousness).

Education is just remolding the old structure of the mind and goading it unto the highest state of realization, the exalted status of Supreme Veracity, the highest status of factualities.

We have to keep in view three fundamentals before imparting education. The first is that education must always be based on factuality. There must not be the injection of any dogma or fanaticism or any type of geographical or racial chauvinism in the education system.

The second fundamental is that education must awaken the thirst for knowledge in the students’ minds. The students themselves will create environmental pressure by persistent demands for answers to queries like: What is the answer? Is it correct? The longing, “I wish to know... I wish to understand and assimilate the entire universe” should be created. Such a thirst for knowledge should be created in the minds of students. A learner, in Arabic, is called “tālib-ul-ilm”, meaning “a genuine seeker of knowledge.” So a tremendous thirst for knowledge must be awakened in the students’ minds. They will constantly pry their teachers, their parents and their neighbors with questions like: Why is this so? What is that? Why does that happen? Why does this not happen? etc. They are ready to assimilate the entire universe.

The third fundamental of education is that teachers and students should have a balanced mind, unaffected, unassailed by unimportant entities.



These are the three fundamentals of education. Education is a must not only for human beings, but also for all living beings. For instance, if you train a dog, you can take much work from it. If you train a cow, it will give greater service.

Some people may ask: Why does Ananda Marga run many kindergarten schools and not many high schools, degree colleges and universities? A kindergarten school is something basic and the mission of making human beings is accomplished here. If one has already become a thief or a criminal, in that case university education for such a person is of no avail. One is to be molded in one's childhood. If one receives the fundamentals of education in the formative period of one's life, one will keep oneself alright in the teeth of the greatest trials and tribulations in life. A bamboo, when green, can be shaped or bent in any way you like. Once it ripens, any attempt to reshape it will break it. This is why more stress is to be laid on kindergarten schools. Such schools are the first phase of making human beings.

So, what is the need of education? Proper education enables one to stand against the influence of the physical environment and awaken the psychic urge to attain a higher life, that is, the ideological goal. This gives a person much inspiration. We should do our best to impart proper education not only to the entire humanity, but also to all created beings. We can impart training to all trees, plants and birds, and put them on the path of welfare."

From "Talks on Education Excerpt E", *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 18*

Public education is one of the fundamental needs for a successful and smooth-running democracy. In some places even people of education misutilize their voting rights. People cast their votes according to the dictates and persuasion of the pseudo-leadership. Is it not a farce in the name of democracy? Hence the spread of education and proper knowledge is essential. Education does not mean literacy alone. To my mind, education means proper and adequate knowledge and power of understanding. In other words, education is perfect knowledge of what I am and what I should do. – From *The Opinion*

## Material on the Questions and Assignments in the Study Circle Manual

All of the 156 questions and assignments found in the study circle manual are discussed below. The suggested responses and references are wholly optional. You may of course use only that which you find useful, and we encourage you and the other study circle members to add your own examples and material.

Observe that page numbers refer to the manual and not to this guide.

### Introduction, page 5 (in the study circle manual)

- **Name some ideas that emphasized material progress and scientific development and failed to succeed in securing human and other welfare.**

One would be justified in singling out capitalism as it does emphasize material progress and science but has failed to secure welfare for most people. It should however be noted that PROUT classifies capitalism as a self-centered (and not a matter-centered) system as it typically seeks to enrich the individual at the cost of the collective. In the process it may very well embrace the existence of higher mental faculties and even the spiritual, depending on whether it finds such things useful for furthering its selfish exploitative purposes. For instance, capitalism accepts religions (which are dogma-centered systems) as long as they serve the purpose of economic exploitation, directly or indirectly.

However, certain issues continue to separate capitalism and religion, such as family planning. Religions are against family planning as they find the rising number of poor favorable to their propaganda and growth. Capitalism on the other hand is in favor of family planning as it thinks a reduction in the number of the poor would be a hedge against revolutionary uprisings. Religions may fight family planning with religious sentiments and even ethics, while capitalism keeps promoting it as part of its socio-economic science for sustained and increasing welfare.

Environmental planning is another area where capitalism has been able to penetrate and successfully promoted its own sustainability. By appropriating and developing further the scientific arguments of the original ecological movement (which was anti-capitalist), it was able to make much of the middle class somewhat more optimistic about their future with capitalism and less revolutionary minded.

The theory of materialist socialism and the applied system of communism are matter-centered. There is no place for spirituality in materialist concepts of science, sociology, political theory, etc.

Group members may come up with systems subordinate to capitalism and communism, such as Anarchism, Functionalism, etc., as well as classical ideas and systems, such as Hedonism, Militarism, etc. Anarchism gives full freedom to the individual while pursuing socialist ideals, Functionalism

seeks to develop the material world in a rational way, Hedonism is the path of material enjoyment, and Militarism aims at resolving perceived conflicts by flexing military muscles first and foremost.

Page 6:

- **Name the principle formulated by Sarkar in the philosophy of Neo-humanism that encapsulates “radical hedonism”.**

*Atma-sukham tattva*: The principle of selfish pleasure.

“Whatever human beings do motivated by *átma-sukha tattva* is for the sake of pleasure. This principle of selfish pleasure rests on dogma. All the social, economic and geographical forces that normally motivate human beings are guided by dogma; and this dogma in its turn is entirely based on *átma-sukha tattva*. Human beings yield to this dogma with the sole intention of attaining selfish pleasures; even educated people knowingly submit to dogma. They know that they are surrendering their intellect to dogma, and that the outcome will be undesirable; they know and understand everything – why, even then, do they knowingly submit to it? They are all deliberate sinners and intentionally accept dogmas as truth. They observe that these dogmas are based on *átma-sukha tattva*; but they think, “I don’t care whether it does good or harm to others, because at least I have got some pleasure out of it!” Being motivated by this idea, they enslave themselves to dogmas. In the civilized world, even educated people knowingly follow dogmas because they have a desire in the back of their minds to attain some mundane pleasure in this physical world. Even in this civilized world where so much progress has been made in the field of knowledge, people are still following these dogmas, as if they are blind.”

– From *The Liberation of Intellect: Neo-humanism*

The main idea here is that dogmas of exploitation are based on selfishness.

- **How is the Principle of Social Equality (*Sam-samaj tattva*) different from it?**

“Parama Puruśa [Supreme Consciousness] is the goal of everyone. We are all moving towards Him, both individually and collectively; but we will not be able to move ahead if we compromise with all the disparities and inequalities of collective life. We should eradicate all these inequalities, while at the same time we move together towards our spiritual goal. The progress of all would be accelerated if the inequalities were uprooted, if this were the motivation behind our movement towards the Supreme. We may not attain selfish pleasure, but we will enjoy spiritual peace, and pure spiritual bliss in the realization of Cosmic grace. So the endeavor to advance towards the ultimate reality by forming a society free from all inequalities, with everyone of the human race moving in unison, is called *sama-samāja tattva*. That is why I say categorically, that we must totally reject all those hypocritical ideas which are contrary to this *sama-samāja tattva*, and we must welcome all those ideas which will help human beings to be

established in it. All opposing theories must be removed mercilessly, just like thorns from our path.” - Ibid.

According to PROUT, a true human being has a true goal. The only absolutely true goal of living beings is Supreme Consciousness as all other goals sooner or later prove to be unreal. By introducing and strengthening the idea of Supreme Consciousness as the true goal of all we will be able to establish a true human society, a cosmic family. This sort of reflection comes under “ontology” (see page 21 in the manual under “Spiritual philosophy”). You may refer that later when the group studies that paragraph.

➤ **Why could human reason not succeed in establishing a true human society?**

Human reason cannot see beyond the mind. Although the potential of human mind is great it fails if it is not guided by higher faculties. Only through psycho-spiritual development and by cultivating spiritual intuition will we be able to achieve the wisdom needed for guiding ourselves and others on the path of true human progress. A human mind bereft of supreme inspiration tends towards egotism. The human mind supremely inspired gets liberated. This sort of reflection comes under “epistemology” (see page 21 under “Spiritual philosophy”). You may refer that later when the group studies that paragraph.

“Those who are not established in self-control cannot attain Brahma – their Brahma remains confined to books and tall talks. They can never expand their minds to absorb spiritual knowledge. But the knower of truth realizes that Brahma is not attainable by words, nor even by reasoning, for the mind is itself a relative truth, is an ideating entity dependent upon various theories. When the pointed intellect (*agryábuddhi*), attained through concentration, is merged in its subject, Brahma, then alone does He appear. Only when relativity is transcended does spirituality burst into radiance. It is futile to attempt to apprehend this Transcendental Entity – who exists beyond the scope of time, space and person – with the help of the crude organs. Union with the self is union with Brahma. Illuminating this sentiment is the firmament of one’s heart, one has to realize Him; and the one who realizes Him announces thunderingly: “He exists!! Listen, human beings. The words ‘He exists’ are much truer than ‘I am’ or ‘You are’. Oh sons and daughters of immortality of the divine abode, hear me. He exists. I have known Him, I have touched Him with my soul, I have understood Him with the core of my heart.””

From "This World and the Next" (1956), *Subhásita Samgraha – Part 4*

Page 7:

➤ **Name some particular idea or belief system, religious or otherwise, that has enjoyed increased popularity after the collapse of communism.**

The Christian Church, particularly the Catholic, made a resurgence in previous communist countries where it has supported nationalism, such as in Russia, Serbia and Croatia. Islamic fundamentalism has

become a force to reckon with in many Arab countries that recently experienced political upheavals. On the whole, religious fundamentalism remains an unpredictable social force on all continents and in many forms. In China, Buddhism is probably due for a similar renaissance. Before Communist rule in China Buddhism was the world's largest religion, and it is estimated that more than half of the Chinese are Buddhists.

➤ **Identify a dogma in some religion that denies humans the possibility of knowing reality through experience.**

In some religions it is stated that human beings are here on Earth while God is somewhere else, in "Heaven", and there is no way to contact Him other than to wait for Doomsday and in the meantime prepare oneself by certain ritualistic means so that one will be on the right side on that particular day and not be forced to go to Hell. This dogma essentially undermines the mind's ability to think in terms of an all-pervading, ever-present God. PROUT terms such split thinking as "dualism" as it promotes the idea that God and the creation are two separate entities. According to PROUT, the correct existential idea is "Monism-Dualism-Monism", which means that first everything was One, then it appears to be separate – two – and in the end it is again One. Here it is important to remember that "two" is not an objective description of something in the universe but a description of a particular state of mind: We think that things are separate whereas in reality they are always One. This sort of reflection comes under "Ontology" (see page 21 under "Spiritual philosophy"). You may refer that later when the group studies that page.

➤ **Can the mind know truth fully?**

The mind cannot know itself fully, not to speak of knowing its environment and things greater than itself. The mind always struggle to understand itself as it is divided into objective and subjective parts that it keeps mixing up. Furthermore, there is a greater existence, of other unit minds as well as the cosmic mind, outside of human mind that keeps influencing it beyond its own understanding and control. Only by going beyond the mind to realize the all-knowing Soul, can a human being become all-knowing and really truthful. Absolute truth is infinitely greater than the limited human mind. This sort of reflection comes under "Epistemology" (see page 21 under "Spiritual philosophy"). You may refer that later when the group studies that page.

➤ **What is the basic model in Ananda Marga philosophy that explains the creation of the mental and physical worlds as well as the human mind and its finality?**

It is called *Brahmacakra* (the Cycle of the Great), or *Srsticakra* (the Cycle of Creation), and describes the evolution of pure Cosmic Consciousness into Cosmic Mind and Cosmic Elements, the creation of primitive individual mind, and its evolution through various plant and animal stages into human being and final emancipation into pure Cosmic Mind again. This concept comes under "Cosmology" (see page 21 under "Spiritual philosophy"). You may refer that later when the group studies that page.

Page 8:

➤ **Do you know PROUT's concept of morality?**

While some belief systems and systems of thought may treat morality as a goal in itself, PROUT sees morality as a basic, natural feature of a good citizen and an indispensable requisite for spiritual development. Concepts of what is moral naturally change from time to time, from place to place, and from person to person. Something that is accepted as moral somewhere may not be moral to others somewhere else and to people at other times. The essence of morality however remains constant: Its ability to offer human beings stability in their personal and social life is a universal stepping stone to greater development. This essential moral stability enables human beings to aspire to higher goals and achieve spiritual perfection. Without it even an exceptionally great person may fall at any moment. That is why PROUT says that true understanding and steadfast practice of morality carries an even greater significance than morality itself. In simple terms, the goal and meaning of PROUT's morality lies beyond morality. This sort of reflection comes under "Ethics" (see page 21 under "Spiritual philosophy"). You may refer that later when the group studies that page.

The ten principles of Yama and Niyama form the framework of Proutistic morality.

➤ **How would you define spirituality?**

As the mind is limited by its own prejudices (unfulfilled samskaras) it cannot understand something like spirituality that extends far beyond mental limitations. Practical spirituality is the gradual practical process of opening up to the timeless, infinite truth and reality that is shared by all living beings. Spirituality is 99% practice and 1% theory where the theory part cannot be grasped fully until all the 99% of practice are properly worked out. This sort of reflection comes under "Epistemology" (see page 21 under "Spiritual philosophy"). You may refer that later when the group studies that page.

Page 9:

➤ **Why, do you think, was Sarkar less concerned with political structure and more with moral society?**

Public welfare is secure as long as the leadership remains moral, irrespective of the type of political system. A morally indifferent people under an immoral leadership are sure to be exploited. Where the majority of people have become morally conscious they will not accept an immoral leadership and will revolt to establish a moral leadership of their own. An increase in the number of strong moralists will always prove conducive to development of human society. That is why PROUT first and foremost emphasizes the moral quality of a system and not its political form.

Page 10:

➤ **Can you recall any person, past or present, whom you would call as Sadvipra?**

Instead of allowing group members to argue about this or that person being a sadvipra or not, it may be more fruitful to allow members who call someone as sadvipra to share what it is about that person who would qualify him or her as a sadvipra – qualities, capabilities, or whatever. Others may contradict with qualities of the same person that may go against the definition of a sadvipra but in any case the group should be able to evolve a process of distilling qualities that do make one sadvipra.

➤ **Do you know the literal meaning of the term sadvipra?**

*Sat* (Satya=Cosmic Truth) + *vipra* (intellect) = “One whose mind is embedded in Cosmic Truth”.

➤ **How can security for all members of society be ensured “without depending on the bureaucratic structure”?**

Firstly, we may turn the phrase around: Is it possible to ensure security for all by depending on the bureaucratic structure? In most western countries some sort of social security system is in place, but:

1. It does not solve the problem of existential insecurity, and
2. Its economic power collapses with the collapse of the capitalist system that directly or indirectly has been sustaining it.

The poor countries of the post-colonial world have not had the chance to build up a social security system worthy of the name, and their bureaucratic systems are usually thoroughly corrupt.

According to PROUT, physical security can be established in a decentralized economic setup where food, clothes, housing, health care and education are all directly under local control. The subtler aspects of security, such as social coherence and political peace, can only be generated by the cultivation of a proper social and spiritual outlook throughout society. A bureaucratic structure cannot do anything in itself; it is blind to the inspirations and sentiments of those in power. Only by inculcating the human spirit with service-mindedness and building a proper socio-economic system can all-round security be realized.

Page 11:

➤ **Why can physical freedom not be unlimited?**

The physical realm is itself limited; hence it cannot provide unlimited freedom. According to PROUT, physical freedom means guaranteeing the minimum requirements of life. Beyond that, unlimited personal freedom may be realized in the mental and spiritual spheres where one can learn and acquire as much as one likes.

The realism of the limited physical realm may be discussed in several ways. In the socio-economic sphere one concern is that when a few people accumulate great physical wealth, as with capitalism, there will not be enough even for the basic necessities for many. In that case the number of the

deprived will go on increasing until that fault-ridden system of exploitative ownership finally self-destructs.

Another dimension of physical limitations is the individual mental reality. Human beings never attain lasting peace by enjoying limited physical objects. Rather, ownership of numerous physical objects tends to limit and crudify the mind. Mental objects are limited too although they may appear to be in unlimited supply. (Complications that may arise in this sphere are suggested on page 24 in this guide.) The only unlimited object is the spiritual realm. The mind takes the form of its object – physical, mental or spiritual. By attaining that Infinite One, human beings finally achieve unlimited freedom or peace. As human beings are thirsty for such limitlessness they will not rest until it is realized. The unlimited spiritual is the state of real freedom of human beings.

➤ **Discuss the statement “Freedom of thought is more important than freedom of expression”?**

Human expressions however lofty they may be are still colored, inspired and stimulated by conscious and unconscious personal drives. In order to ensure freedom of thought, universal spirituality should be given fundamental importance for both the individual and collective mind to be liberated from dogmas. Where thought is truly free, expressions will certainly generate real progress, but where mental expressions are given prime importance they may limit thought to underlying personal intentions, ambitions, motivations, etc. which would result in perpetual regression. The mind may be a great friend or a great enemy. Its power is tremendously constructive and destructive as well. One better handle this double-edged sword with care.

➤ **Discuss the concept of ‘freedom to’.**

Freedom is often thought of as ‘freedom from’ something, such as freedom from persecution, freedom from jail, etc. This is a negative idea as it lacks a constructive goal. The human mind is ideative in nature – as you think you become – and needs a positive vision in order to progress properly.

PROUT cultivates the concept of freedom to become physically-, mentally- and spiritually liberated. It is a fundamentally constructive vision supported by a one hundred per cent practical methodology. We may say that this path goes “from the unknown to the known” as we do not really know the ideal which we want to materialize. On the other hand, the human mind, which always takes the form of the object of its ideation, has no choice but to embrace the freedom of moving forward towards that unknown goal, as the alternative would be regression and ‘enslavement to’ something crude.

Page 12:

➤ **With the members of the study circle assembled, let one member question and criticize one of the above points (see page 12 in the study manual) and have another member defending it in turn. If arguments have been prepared ahead of the class so much the better. No more than three minutes each or as much time as the group size allows for.**



**Then let another pair of members do the same, and so on until all members have debated nicely.**

Time for heated debate! (Remind about the gift of being a good listener if necessary.)

## **Chapter One: Human Society and Progress, page 13**

Page 14:

- **Give some examples of positive material and scientific developments and their negative side-effects.**

Current affairs material from the general media abounds with suitable examples. It would probably be good if the facilitator reminds group members ahead of the class to prepare for this and the preceding assignment (page 12 in the manual).

A couple of examples: In 2011, BBC World reported that the average speed of motor vehicles in London during rush hours is 13 kilometers per hour, the same as it was in 1900 when all sorts of vehicle pollutions were much less than at the present.

In the 1950s, the invention of plastic was propagated as a godsend. Today plastic consumer articles, such as consumer carry bags, are banned in most countries as they threaten to destroy eco-systems at land and sea. Plastic food containers, plastic bottles, etc., are increasingly seen as a health hazard.

- **Discuss briefly how intellectually developed and sophisticated people may have to deal with internal travails that others may not have to endure to such an extent.**

Many intellectuals complain of sleepless nights and constant personal and social disquiet due to the tremendous thought and emotional processes they go through. The mind just never stops!

Gifted and highly gifted children often experience a lack of adequate care and understanding even from primary care-givers, not to speak of the treatment they may receive at educational institutions where many of them languish in isolation.

Particularly insightful and ingenious people may face significant hardships by being ahead of their times, and may develop some sort of protective personal armor that may deny them a satisfying social and public life.

In sum, the mental cannot fully solve existential challenges. Only the spiritual realm accomodates us all truly and to an extent that will fulfill even the most idiosyncratic of persons.

- **What are the objective and subjective states of mind respectively?**

When the mind identifies itself with its object, such as the taste of some food, the color of a dress, etc., it is in an objective state where the mind-stuff provides the reality of the experience.

When the mind identifies itself with its existential core – ego, intuition or soul, as the case may be – it is in a subjective state. The ego and intuitional states are relative subjective states and the soul state is the absolute subjective state as only the soul is all-knowing.

Page 14:

➤ **Discuss PROUT's concept of being an ideal human being in the world.**

The golden mottos of “Live and let live”, and “Do to others what you want that they should do you” may be cited. An ideal human being lives in the three worlds – physical, mental and spiritual – here and now. He or she lives to reflect the highest truth in all spheres of life and does not shy away from natural duties out of frustration with some aspect of life or because of some particular fascination.

The concept of *Pramá*, proper equilibrium and equipoise in all spheres of life, may be briefly discussed here. You will find material on *Pramá* in the following works: *A Few Problems Solved – Part 8*, *Neohumanism in a Nutshell – Part 2*, *Pramá, PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 9*, and in *Proutist Economics*.

➤ **Define dogma.**

A dogma is an illogical, irrational sentiment. It is a thought construction that does not allow you to think outside of itself. Sarkar writes:

“All dogma must be replaced by non-dogma. Gautam Buddha said that anger should be overcome by sweetness, miserliness by generosity, falsehood by truthfulness, hatred by love and sorrow by happiness. If we adopt the same approach, does this mean replacing a negative dogma with a positive dogma? No, because these attributes are mental propensities, not dogma. All negative mental propensities should be replaced by positive mental propensities, as Buddha advocated. This is the proper approach.”

– From “Religious Dogma, Excerpt A”, *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 14*

“All the countries of the world suffer from dogma. Religion means dogma, communism means dogma, capitalism means dogma – all the political “isms” are expressions of dogma. There is no shortage of money in a number of countries of the world; they may be rich but they are still undeveloped and backward due to the influence of dogma. There physical balance (*pramátrikoña*) has not been attained. There are certain countries whose dogma does not support money-lending and the taking of interest; but if there is no interest, no rolling of money, no movement of coins, how can there be development? But those very countries also have banking, which is fundamentally against the doctrine of their dogma.”

- From “Pramá 4”, *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 9*

➤ **Discuss PROUT's consumption-motivation versus capitalism's profit-motivation.**

The idea here is to acquaint oneself with basic values of a Proutistic economy, which are radically different from the ones of capitalism.

For instance, under PROUT everything is geared towards consumption of crude and subtle items. In capitalism the production of such items is only for profit, not for people and not even for consumption. Capitalist corporations throw away or keep storing mountains of food even when people go hungry in their own countries not to speak of in others. They do so in order to bide their time should there come opportunities for even greater profit margins. Such is the centralization of wealth under capitalism, and this is also main cause of economic depressions; both goods and money are being held back and are not being properly invested.

Competition under capitalism means competition for profits. Under PROUT, competition will be for social value; those with greater social value will be entitled to earn more. There will be competition but for a very different reason than under capitalism.

Competition under PROUT is essentially for individual and collective progress. Review PROUT's concept of progress and what progressive would mean in various spheres – physically, politically, socially, culturally, mentally, spiritually. Discuss how PROUT's progressive flow will strengthen cardinal human values such as health, altruism, togetherness, identity, presence, ingenuity and blessedness in those spheres.

There is a chasm of difference between the fundamental values of PROUT and those of capitalism. We should make people aware of these differences and popularize them.

➤ **Discuss the core values of materialist socialism (Marxism), capitalism, and PROUT respectively.**

Materialist socialism as applied in the communist system is a matter-centered philosophy. It subordinates human being and spirit to matter.

Capitalism is a self-centered philosophy, it subordinates the collective to the individual.

PROUT is a God-centered philosophy, it coordinates individual and collective life for the realization of the Supreme.

➤ **What is the value of spirituality in a theory with regard to managing changes in time, place and person?**

Experience proves that something which is quite useful for a particular time, place and person is totally worthless for a different time, place or person. This is so because social ideals and systems, like everything else, are subject to changes in time, space and person. In simple terms it means that they become victims of such changes. An individual person may feel towards the end of his or her life that "things are no longer what they used to be". A social construct like a collective ideal or an entire social system will have to face such changes even more cruelly. An idea or system that do not take into consideration the reality of temporal, spatial and personal changes – the need for all-round progress in individuals and society – cannot be valid for all countries, at all times and for all kinds of people.

Sarkar said in 1957:

"Society is not a static entity, but a dynamic one. The ideology which was formulated to meet the needs of a particular time, place and person and which was once considered beneficial, becomes backward and outdated when these factors change. Due to the progress of society, it is considered to be an anachronism in a later period. One cannot blindly cling to Marxism or any other socio-economic theory, because any theory has value only for a particular time, place and person. After observing the effectiveness of a theory in a particular context, short-sighted people begin to believe in its eternal effectiveness. This is a total illusion."

From "Questions and Answers on Society (1)", *PROUT in a Nutshell - Part 2*

Two years later, in 1959, Sarkar formulated the five fundamental principles of PROUT, the fifth of which states: "The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, place, and person, and the utilization should be of a progressive nature." In 1988 in Kolkata he commented on this principle:

"Everything in this universe is subject to change and the relative factors of time, space and person are also subject to change. Everything comes within the periphery of time and space, including human beings and society, so proper adjustment must be maintained between time, space and person. If this adjustment is not maintained, human beings will not be able to maintain their existence.

Change is the law of order, the law of nature. If any theory does not adjust with this law, then it is sure to die. Many theories, many ideologies and many so-called religions of the past have died because they could not adjust to changing circumstances. For example, in the past, Tántrikas, whether leftists or rightists, were highly respected by society. During the period of Buddhist influence in Bengal, these Tántrikas used to sit on a symbol called Tantra Cakra while doing sadhana. Because they were sitting on a Cakra, these Tántrikas were given the title Cakravarty as a title of honour. But time and space have changed, so now the title Cakravarty does not denote honour or pride. People do not feel honour in the title Cakravarty. People do not give any special significance to the title Cakravarty. Will such a phase await PROUT?

Time and space are changing and PROUT will also have to adjust with that change. The principles of PROUT will not change, rather the application of PROUT will adjust with the changing circumstances. Human beings will have to move forward by recognizing and adjusting with changes in time and space. Adjustment and flexibility are essentials for human progress.

Let us take some other examples. In ancient time people used to go to the Ganga in groups for a holy bath, but now they do not follow this practice. Parents also used to sacrifice their youngest child by dropping it in the Ganges when there was some crisis in the family. By sacrificing the youngest child, they hoped to save the whole family from disaster. Now people do not follow such a practice, and it is even horrible to hear such things. It is a sign of flexibility in society that people do not follow the same old habits. If society continues to follow the same patterns, it becomes static and dies.

In one religious scripture it is written that to lend money on interest is a sin. If people follow this religious principle strictly, there cannot be any banking system and the whole society will suffer. To run the government properly either the leaders of society will have to either violate this principle or knowingly undermine society by following their religious dogma. If they take the latter path we can say they have been goaded by dogma but if they follow their dogma strictly they will be rejected by the modern age. This type of dilemma is confronting almost all the so-called religions in the world today.

If Hindus follow the caste system they will also undermine society. In the past Hindu widows used to wear a thick white cotton sari and cut their hair very short, but now widows do not follow such a practice. Today if you try to convince a widow to follow such a practice, you will be insulted.

So, everything must adjust with time, space and person. If people do not maintain any adjustment with time, space and person, then they will inevitably become outdated.

About 150 years ago Karl Marx observed that there was social disparity and exploitation in society. He believed that social injustice was caused by differences in income, so he thought that if there was no individual income and people lived in the commune system, and the government provided food and clothing to the people, then there would be no injustice. But has the commune system solved the socio-economic problems of communist countries?

Intelligent people working in the commune system earn the same as ordinary people, and consequently there is no incentive for them to work hard. People naturally question the value of their labour if everybody is paid the same. The applied theory of the commune system has reached a deadlock. In such conditions no one will utilize his or her maximum capacity and the capabilities of a genius will not get any scope for expression. If Raja Bhoj, who was a very wise and intelligent king, had had the same influence in his court as an unintelligent person, his whole kingdom would have collapsed. This is what is happening in communist countries. The commune system of production has proved to be an impractical because it does not encourage individual initiative or provide incentives to talented people. This is the main reason for the failure of the commune system. The USSR has to purchase wheat from Canada, USA and Australia which are capitalist countries, although it has sufficient land for cultivation, because it has not been able to properly harness the productive potential of its people.

Today the applied theory of the commune system has reached a deadlock. The theory has entered a stage of hysteric convulsion. Communists have now lost all logic and reason – they have become hysterical and are simply shouting, hoping people will follow them out of fear. There must be flexibility of intellect in order to follow the path of logic. If this fundamental flexibility is lacking then shouting will dominate logic.

In every field today – including science, religion, social life, etc. – flexibility has been lost. In science, Dalton's atomic theory is already out of date. In some fields new theories have taken over, and in other fields change is now taking place. In chemistry for example, if chemists

procure and perform tests on the same salts from two different companies, the results will often differ. Somewhere in these experiments there is a chord of difference or contradiction. This is because there is a difference in the number of microvita in the salts from the two companies. So this microvita theory will adjust science with time and space.

While change is a natural phenomenon, attraction is also a law of nature. There is attraction between each and every object and between each and every person. This is natural. If a man who is lost in the jungle at night suddenly sees a torch light, he will approach the person holding the light without considering whether he is a thief or a murderer. Similarly, the man holding the torch light will not question the character of the lost person. Rather he will feel it is his duty to guide him to safety. This illustrates the mutual attraction amongst human beings.

Other examples can also be given. Some people think that animals do not love their offspring as much as human beings. But this is not correct. Animals love their offspring according to their capacity. Even in human beings it is found that love differs according to time, space, and person. A mother loves her son very much, but the intensity of this love diminishes when the son gets married and the mother sees that her daughter-in-law has taken over some of her son's affection. To compensate, the mother may give more love to her other children who are not married. The psychology behind this is that where selfishness increases, attraction amongst human beings decreases.

We must increase the jurisdiction of this attraction, this love. This love should include all plants, birds, animals etc., because everything has life, everything has feeling. We should think that others feel as I feel, and this feeling should include plants, animals and inanimate objects. This is Neo-humanism and Neo-humanism is essential for the all-round development of the human mind.

So for the continued welfare of human beings and all of creation, we must adopt such a theory which has flexibility and elasticity. When the elastic band in a piece of clothing is no longer flexible, the clothing is discarded. In the same way, if any theory loses its flexibility, it will not be able to adjust with time, space and person and it will also be discarded. Policies will differ according to changes in time, space and person, but principles will remain the same because they are all pervading and because their cognitive faculty is omniscient.

In this present age of transition, you are seeing many theories change and being discarded before your very eyes. If any group of people clings to the skeletons of the past, they will also be rejected. Intelligent people will not cling to old, outdated ideas. Rather they will wholeheartedly embrace that theory which adjusts with time, space and person and will continue to exist forever.

PROUT philosophy is situated at the height of pinnacle excellence because it moves with the changes of time, space and person. PROUT will always cross the barriers of time, space and person in an ever-progressive way." - From "The Speciality of the Fifth Fundamental Principle of PROUT", *PROUT in a Nutshell* - Part 13

Page 16:

- **Identify elements in your society that provide ‘unity, security and peace’.**

Allow the group members to freely exchange thoughts and ideas on the subject, after first having determined that they have familiarized themselves with PROUT’s ideas of the same.

- **Give some examples of ‘common ideals’ that have divided and united, respectively, society in your area in previous times and today.**

Inquire whether all understand what ‘common ideals’ are, clarify as required, and let there be free discussion on the above issue.

Page 17:

- **Discuss how differences between people may be destructive or constructive.**

After having ascertained that the group now has an understanding of PROUT’s ideas of social division and integration, invite the group to discuss the above issue.

- **Why would you say capital punishment is wrong?**

Hear the group out, and be sure to offer PROUT’s view of it, which is that the headache cannot be cured by cutting off the head. The mind continues to exist after physical death with all its reactive momenta intact, waiting for them to express with the aid of a new body. We have to take a human approach with offenders. Also, many things that are not possible to achieve today will be possible tomorrow. In the meantime we have to develop our human approach. While placing the security of society first, we should continue to give offenders an optimum chance to better themselves irrespective of how damaged and sick they may be. We have no right to take the life of any human being, although inevitable exceptions may occur in acute situations of life-threatening hostility and self-defense.

Page 18:

- **Provide an example from your own or another country of the need for social justice.**

It may be said that the world’s poor and underprivileged state the strongest case for social justice. The generally worse situation of women than of men in many countries may provide another example. The group may discuss the issue in some detail, if it so wishes, until it is exhausted.

- **PROUT's definition of discipline is "that which is conducive to welfare and development". Discuss this concept as opposed to other concepts of discipline as well as some concepts of individual freedom.**

"The Sanskrit term for discipline is 'anushásanam'. *Hitárthe shásanam ityarthe anushásanam*: 'When the code of discipline is imposed with the spirit of welfare, with the spirit of development, it is anushásanam'. There is no corresponding English word.  
– From "The Fear of Him", *Ánanda Vacanámrtam – Part 3*

Some systems are oppressive, suppressive and repressive in their disciplining actions while others become loose. This is seen in families, in the examples of historical eras, in movements, etc. Allow the group to come up with examples that may be discussed. How about systems of discipline in various schools, in the military, in certain eras such as the Victorian where individual will was expected to be subordinate to social dictates, etc.?

One idea of PROUT is that speed without system is dangerous while system without speed is useless. A happy blending, of initiative on one hand and discipline for the increasing welfare and development in individual and collective life on the other, should be evolved.

- **Discuss the need for internal discipline as opposed to discipline imposed from without.**

Members may be inclined to share their experiences of having been disciplined and the various responses it may have invoked in them. This discussion may or may not spill over from the previous one.

Internal disciplining comes from some internal motivation while external disciplining is imposed from outside. While external disciplining may be needed at every stage of individual and collective progress in some form or the other, the goal of discipline is to realize the motivation that drives it – which in individual life is an effortless state beyond discipline; the state of perfection, according to PROUT. Spirituality is a continuous process of internalization and existential realization.

Page 19:

- **If discipline is to be taught from early childhood, what should be the ratio of love and strictness in it?**

Love should always be more than strictness. If strictness is 9, love should be 10.

- **Is war ever necessary?**

Let the group discuss it.



➤ **In your opinion, what is war actually?**

Allow members to express their views.

Sarkar opined:

“War is the black spot of human character. In individual or collective life one can struggle, but war is based on hatred and on divisive tendencies. Is it not black?

Struggle and war are not synonymous. While war springs from hatred, struggle is a part and parcel of life. War blackens everything; it darkens the future. Let life be bright both individually and collectively. Let us fight these divisive tendencies which want to make our life dark. Light is beautiful because it is luminous. When there was no creation, there was only one color – black. Lack of life is black. After creation we see this beautiful play of colors. Why shall we be lost in darkness? All human beings want light. One individual human is more luminous and more throbbing than that universal darkness. So human beings should always be optimistic. The cimmerian darkness cannot retard your progress, cannot cover the light of the human heart. The spirit of your heart must move on and on against obstacles. Kick away your obstacles like pebbles from your feet – you are stronger than your obstacles.” – From *Baba in Fiesch*

➤ **Identify some of the kinds of ‘oppression, suppression and the forces of ignorance and exploitation’ that go into maintaining a static peace.**

Let the group discuss:

- What static peace may be and how it may express itself.
- The differences between sentient peace and static peace

Try to come up with examples, such as:

- What kind of peace is the armistice on the Gaza Strip? Why is it so?
- Do you know about the Versailles peace treaty after World War 1 where Germany was forced to give up parts of their homeland and was punished by having to pay large amounts of money for a long time to come? What was the end result of that unfair treaty? The result was World War 2, due to the burning sense of defeat, loss of dignity and sense of revenge in the heart of the German people that Hitler was able to manipulate. The Versailles treaty is an example of black peace. There are so many others.

Page 20:

➤ **Discuss the relationship between rationality and spirituality as opposed to the lack of rationality in religion.**

Where dogmas prevail, rationality is absent. PROUT defines religion as a collection of dogmas. The original person behind the religion may have said and done things that were opposed to dogmatic thinking of the time but the religion that was established - then became dogmatic, resting on fresh dogmas.

Religions are characterized by superstition and irrational blind belief, and not by any degree of rationality, irrespective of the quality of the ideas of the original preceptor. Religion is an externalization in a ritual form where ideas comes to play a secondary role to exploitation and therefore takes the form of dogma. Sentimentality plays a major role in religion but it is not supported by sentimentality. True spirituality on the other hand is a continuous process of internalization of timeless truth. Spirituality is also sentimental but is always supported by rationality.

In spirituality there is no illogical gap between God and human beings. In it the entire creation is seen as one with the Supreme. Practical spirituality teaches human beings to appreciate and realize their inherent divinity by a gradual, rational approach to increasingly higher forms of consciousness.

➤ **Name some universal spiritual values.**

Universal spiritual values, or cardinal human values, are the same for all peoples on Earth. Among them are Love, Compassion, Forgiveness, Respect, Sacrifice, Service, Presence, Cooperation, and Sharing.

➤ **P.R. Sarkar has suggested a minimum of four universal rights for a world constitution. Do you know them? (See page 81 in the Study Circle manual, and "Requirements of an Ideal Constitution" in *A Few Problems Solved Part 8* or in *Prout in a Nutshell Volume 3 Part 12*.)**

The four universal rights suggested as a minimum for a world constitution are:

1. Complete security should be guaranteed to all the plants and animals on the planet.
2. Each country must guarantee purchasing power to all its citizens.
3. The constitution should guarantee four fundamental rights – spiritual practice or Dharma; cultural legacy; education; and indigenous linguistic expression.
4. If the practice of any of these rights conflicts with cardinal human values then that practice should be immediately curtailed. That is, cardinal human values must take precedence over all other rights.

Page 21:

➤ **PROUT defines ‘collective psychology’, or ‘collective mind’, as the average of the sum total of individual mental momenta or drives. Can you give some example of it?**

Give an opportunity for a brainstorm. All sorts of concepts may come up, such as the manipulated collective consciousness of a group or society that has been exposed to some advertisement, political message, etc.

The four varn'as of PROUT's theory of the social cycle are each made up of a particular mind-set that derives from a certain basic approach to life shared by the individual members of that particular varn'a. Read more about it in Chapter Two in the manual, page 25.

➤ **Justify why one should learn some spiritual philosophy.**

Although the understanding of the underlying meaning of spiritual philosophy only deepens with one's practice it is strongly advised that one acquires knowledge of spiritual philosophy already at the onset of one's practice as the mind will derive momentum – both in the form of inspiration and pleasure – from it. Spirituality is 99% practice and 1% theory. Acquiring an understanding of spiritual philosophy is also part of practice since it aids spiritual progress immensely. This is due to the fact that whatever we take in - will have an effect on us, whether it is physical food, intellectual information or spiritual ideas. In fact, the regular study and deepening understanding of spiritual reading is part of PROUT's concept of essential morality.

➤ **Why are spiritual practices important?**

A person who is alienated from his or her real being cannot be counted as a real person. Everybody wants to realize their highest potential and unless it is done, a human being will not be able to experience substantial satisfaction.

Spiritual practices are the key to real progress in individual and collective life. If we practice it we will gain immeasurably from it, if we stop doing the practices we will never understand what it is that continues to make our life miserable. One path begins in happiness and ends in misery. Another path deals with some misery to begin with and ends in happiness. Spirituality is the latter of the two.

Spiritual life is not only the key to success but also a potent deterrent for all kinds of physical and psychic diseases as it puts our entire being in contact with our real center of being. A spiritually realized person is undefeatable; no worldly force can shake that which is firmly established in the Infinite Whole. We may sometimes suffer on our path and go through innumerable difficulties but the end result is always positive – a stronger, happier and more blissful existence.

Page 22:

➤ **According to PROUT, what is the basic requirement and goal of socio-economic theory?**

In the short term the immediate job is to ascertain whether all members of society are able to purchase the minimum necessities of life, and if not, take the necessary steps to secure their minimum purchasing capacity.

In the longer perspective the job is, by various means detailed in PROUT, to materialize the ideals of integrated physical, psychic and spiritual individual and collective life, and navigate over the hurdles necessary to keep up with all sorts of changes – temporal, spatial and personal. In simple terms it means real progress.

➤ **Give examples of both defective and progressive forms of social outlook.**

Allow members of the group to express freely whether they have understood what social outlook is, and then invite examples of the both defective and progressive forms of social outlook.

➤ **Detail the scriptures of Ananda Marga.**

*Subhásita Samgraha* (all parts), *Ánanda Vacanámrtam* (all parts), and the books *Namámi Krśńasundaram* and *Namah Shiváya Shántáya* form the spiritual scripture (*dharma shastra*). The rest of the Ananda Marga literature is considered the associate scriptures. *Ánanda Sútram* is the philosophical treatise (*darshan shastra*), and *Caryácarya* (all parts) constitute the social treatise (*samaj shastra*).

➤ **Why would societies founded upon the legacy of a spiritual preceptor be much stronger and longer lasting than societies initiated by social preceptors?**

There are at least two sides to this question, the spiritual preceptor and the followers. The preceptor goes to the roots of bondage and liberates people from them. The approach of such preceptors is all-round: physical, mental and spiritual. The approach of social preceptors is usually only social.

Moreover, the timeless teachings of spirituality are more enduring and able to withstand the onslaughts of time even long after the passing away of the preceptor and even the times he or she lived in. Social teachings, on the other hand, suffer defeat quickly at the hands of history which lands them on its vast scrapheap in a relatively short time.

Deep down many people have a genuine reverence for spiritual teachers. They know in their hearts that they are helpless without the guidance of some great personality as well as the continuous interaction that his or her teachings are able to supply over time. The elements of devotion and surrender that such a preceptor inspires in people beyond time and place are most powerful.

➤ **What is the role of a human preceptor in it?**

Human beings are sentimental. They feel for other living beings and they also desire to feel close to God, and they want their Preceptor to be such an endearing entity as well. If human beings are presented only with an impersonal divine entity, some dry philosophical concept, they will soon find it wanting and quite unresponsive. Such a theoretical concept will not be able to inspire their human hearts to open much. That is why we find in various religions and spiritual movements that the life and stories of the preceptor and his or her contemporaries are most precious to followers even thousand of years later. People want to love their preceptor, and they want to see their own challenges and suffering reflected in how the

preceptor dealt with similar human challenges in his or her own time. Spirituality is timeless and to human beings its principles and teachings are well reflected in the preceptor's very own life.

Page 23:

- **Discuss some history and the present state of original culture in your country in light of the above ideas.**

This assignment refers to the mentioning of the rise and fall of various Asian, American and European civilizations and their strengths. Expand as much as you like. Allow the members of the group to approach this subject with all the time they need.

Page 24:

- **Discuss the statement: 'It is the state of realization in personal life which inspires the social behaviors of morality and respect for all living beings.'**

If necessary, make it clear that "realization in personal life" does not mean only spiritual realization. Let the discussion comprise any sort of personal states and their expressions of various social behavior.

- **Which of the six factors of social progress would you say are the most important, and why?**

Let every member of the group have their say here, and you may choose to challenge all or some of them about their various statements.

- **Which element(s) of Neo-humanism would you say align with some or all of the six factors of social progress?**

'Existential value' ↔ 'Social Outlook' is a prime candidate and members should be able to justify it. They may also be able to identify other common factors, such as 'Neo-humanism in Essence' ↔ 'Spiritual Philosophy' / 'Spiritual Practice'.

## Chapter Two: The Social Cycle, page 26

Page 27:

- **Give some examples of professional or other sections of society that fit in with the above definitions of social psychologies.**

This could invite suggestions along the lines of:

- Janitors: Shúdra
- Police / guards: Ks'attriya
- Lawyers: Vipra

- Bankers: Vaeshyas

Let the group work through such suggestions and discussions about them before moving on.

- **PROUT's theory of varn'as is a dynamic concept as opposed to the rigid caste system in India. Can you give a personal example or from the life of someone else, perhaps a famous person, who was born in a family of one particular varn'a but turned out to be of a different varn'a him- or herself?**

It is better to allow the group to come up with examples and be ready with some examples yourself, such as of a well-known writer or artist, or warrior, leader, architect, scientist, humanist, etc. who was born in a family quite different from his or her own character.

Page 28:

- **What is the fundamental characteristic of a shúdra mind?**

The fundamental characteristic of a shúdra mind is that it subordinates itself to its perceived physical circumstances. The easy way to control such a person is to tell him or her when to get up in the morning, what her or she is required to do during the day, when to eat, etc., and when to go back to sleep again. The shúdras are the slaves of the other varn'as.

- **Discuss the statement 'On the individual level, every mind possesses a mixture of and the potential for all the four varn'as – though one psychology tends to be dominant.' Do you see its reflection in your own personality or in friends?**

A picture may be drawn up of a pretty distinct shúdra, ks'attriya, vipra or vaeshya who also display colors of other varn'as in for instance hobbies or a new job. You may have a book editor (vipra) who loves to work in the garden (shúdra), a shop keeper (vaeshya) who devotes his or her free time for community social service work (ks'attriya), etc. The psychological classes of PROUT are collective phenomena, whereas individual persons may exhibit a great variety of skills and strategies in his or her life. Such a discussion could lead on to the qualities of a sadvipra mindset.

If little else, this may provide an opportunity to discuss the increasing number of pseudo-capitalists towards the end of the capitalist era – “bounty-hunters” who originally hail from other psychological backgrounds and who rush in wherever they perceive that opportunities await, such as stock exchange brokers, real estate agents, etc., who may not be genuine vaeshyas. According to PROUT such pseudo-capitalists only serve to extend the misery of the people under capitalism. Instead of blindly hunting money they should take their original values seriously and join in the effort to pave the way for the new era.

- **Can you give some examples of feelings and characteristics typical of warriors?**

The warrior-minded person looks to the past in order to remember and honor the proud tradition and legacy of the ks'attriya hegemony that he or she identifies with. They feel strongly about their glorious history. This would also be the typical frame of mind of supporters at a great derby clash. Irrespective of the varn'a they may identify with in their everyday working life, the ks'attriya tendencies of those people detonate wildly inside the stadium walls for the duration of the match.

The typical traits of ks'attriyas include fighting spirit, sense of responsibility, discipline, dutifulness, society building, protecting the weak, perseverance, ability to control the shúdras, and more.

➤ **What would you say are the positive and negative sides of warriors?**

Allow members to have a free discussion on the basis of the preceding discussion.

➤ **What are the typical traits of an intellectual person and group?**

Vipras navigate through life with the help of their developed intellect, which they use to control matter directly as well as indirectly through the shúdra and ks'attriyas whom they easily control. Being intellectually developed, vipras are philosophical, psychological, political, scientific, inventive, artistic, they think in the present, and more.

➤ **What would you say are the positive and negative points of intellectuals?**

Again allow the group to discuss on the basis of what came out of the above discussion.

➤ **In your opinion, what are the positive and negative characteristics and contributions of capitalists?**

The vaeshyas gain control over society as a result of the downfall of the vipras who become a victim of the formers' money power due to their own petty enjoyment-oriented nature. The increasingly decadent intellectual class simply sell their capabilities to the capitalists in exchange for some money that they think is important to their life style. The vaeshyas are perceptive but with a preference for gaining control over capital. The typical intellectually-developed interests of vipras play second fiddle to the vaeshyas or don't interest them at all. Vaeshyas think typically for the future – “What's in it for me,” “How rich can I actually get?”, etc. They are very brave when it comes to taking risk for capital gains, shrewd in controlling the sensibilities of the other two main classes, and ruthless in their exploitation of the shúdras. With time the vaeshyas gradually reduce the other two developed classes to shúdrahood as well. Towards the end of the vaeshya era, society gets polarized into two camps: The vaeshya exploiters and the enslaved masses who now also include the original ks'attriyas and vipras due to their continuous downfall under the vaeshyas. It is among the disgruntled lot of such ks'attriyas and vipras we find a revolutionary potential of rebels who still cherish their original middle class values and are ready to fight to the end in order to remove the most decadent, exploitative capitalist rule.

The vaeshya mindset will certainly remain in human society also under PROUT. Its constructive capabilities include a knack for generating capital, to identify potential for industrial and other types of expansion and growth where others do not, and in general run business aspects of society well.

Page 29:

- **Discuss the position of the three other varn'as under capitalism today. Is it fair to say that their original psychologies are enslaved?**

Allow the group to express their views and experiences in this regard.

Page 30:

- **Mention some of the ways the study of history may be important to us.**

Our history is nothing but the empirical evidence of what works and what does not. If there is something in it that continues to be of importance to us we can be sure of its relevance to our lives here and now. We should study properly such aspects of our past in order to be able to take new correct steps into the future. By ignoring our history we ignore our legacy and true collective nature.

There are numerous other points as well in favor of a proper exploration of history. The way our forefathers treated nature and utilized its resources comes to mind. The emergence of great personalities who effected significant changes may greatly inspire us even today, etc.

- **Can you identify the emergence of warrior society in the history of your country?**

Allow the group to explore the issue.

Page 31:

- **How did intellectual dominance come about in your country?**
- **Discuss the history of domestic as well as foreign capitalist dominance in your country.**

Allow the group to explore these issues.

Page 32:

- **Reflecting on the developments in Russia and China after their workers revolutions, how important are the basic values of the revolutionaries to post-revolutionary developments, would you say?**

Allow the group to explore this issue.



Page 34:

- **Give one or more examples of 'manifestative motion' (upward movement) and 'systaltic motion' (downward movement) that you know about from history.**

Manifestative motion moves through the upward period of the rise of a varn'a when the typical traits and values of the rising class are high and its motivation noble.

Systaltic motion moves through the downward movement of the fall of a varn'a whose rule has become exploitative.

Allow the group to come up with examples from history.

- **Can you give examples from the history of your own country of some smaller movements that really did not bring evolutionary changes, and some substantial ones that did?**

There are numerous examples of sincere, noble-minded, "goody-goody" individuals and movements, and also of more sinister, ill-motivated, dark forces that did their best but for various reasons did not succeed in altering the course of history substantially, and also some that did manage. Allow the group to explore this area.

Page 35:

- **Any examples of truly powerful movements or initiatives that changed the history of your country or region for better or for worse?**

Again, allow the group to properly reflect on it.

- **The post-WW2 decades saw a gradually globalized capitalist structure imposing its technological, media and cultural hegemony. What do you think will be the main features of a coming global human culture?**

Here too allow for free discussion.

Page 36:

- **Will the revolution in your country be more or less violent, do you think?**

Here the discussion should be based on some concrete criteria and not loose speculations. The number of literate people may be one indication, the level of poverty and pent-up anger another, etc.

- **Discuss how your life is influenced by and is part of the present dominating collective social flow.**

Try to get all members to express something in this regard.

Page 37:

- **The founder of PROUT, P.R. Sarkar, opined that the study of history should explore the lives and conditions of ordinary people rather than focusing on monarchs and politics. Do you know of any thinker, writer, artist, etc. who have given more importance to the life of common people?**

It is an experimental question; just see if something comes up. The British writer Bill Bryson has written entertaining bestsellers about the history of ordinary things and people in his part of the world.

Page 39:

- **Do you know of any personality, past or present, that embodied qualities of some or all the varn'as – physical, fighting, intellectual, commercial – and also spiritual qualities?**

Allow the group to approach the concept of sadvipra in this way.

- **Do you know the literary meaning of the term 'sadvipra'?**

*Sat* (*satya*, cosmic truth) + *vipra* (intellect) = *sadvipra*, “one whose intellect is embedded in cosmic truth”.

### **Chapter Three: Proutist Economics, page 41**

Page 42:

- **The “father of capitalism”, British philosopher Adam Smith, was a pious man who maintained in good faith that God’s invisible hand would regulate the markets. What do you think regulates today’s markets?**

Allow the group to explore the issue.

- **Identify a few important reasons as to why a number of northern countries have been able to develop relatively affluent and even egalitarian societies under capitalism while southern countries have not.**

The history of colonization is an obvious issue. The legacy of western enlightenment, which turned these countries into functional democracies, is another. Allow group members first to come up with their suggestions.

Page 44:

- **How will PROUT be able to guarantee the minimum necessities of all?**

By arranging employment for all by which all will be able to earn a minimum purchasing power. Only a Proutist government can manage to do so. In the immediate post- revolutionary phase the government able to deliver the minimum necessities to all in this way will function as a benevolent dictatorship.

- **In addition to the five minimum necessities of life, which are the other main requirements in your life at present?**

Allow all members to express something in this regard.

- **Do most people in your country have access to these as you do?**

Allow members to confirm as they feel appropriate.

- **Other requirements that you would really prefer to get access to?**

Again, allow some time for reflection.

Page 45:

- **What are amenities?**

Look for a straight answer. Amenities are benefits that make life more comfortable and enjoyable.

- **PROUT accepts income differences within certain limits and where the differences are always decreasing and not increasing. What is your view on this?**

Clarify the concept if necessary, and allow for reflection and views.

- **PROUT suggests that remuneration beyond minimum purchasing capacity need not always be paid out in cash but may be given in the form of amenities where suitable. Your view?**

Possible follow-up question: Does anyone know about a concrete example of this? Fringe benefits constitute one example, such as getting access to a company car, phone, etc.

Page 46:

➤ **Do you vote or not? How do you feel about it?**

Allow for free exchange of opinions. Some people have strong feelings about voting, if that is the case then remind the group of the rule of mutual respect, if need be.

Page 47:

➤ **The four requirements for economic democracy are:**

- Guaranteed availability of minimum requirements to everyone
- The capacity to purchase goods and services should increase
- Local economic control
- No outside interference in the economy

**Which of these do you think are of particular importance to your area?**

Allow the group to toy with the idea.

Page 48:

➤ **Do you believe in “people power”? Do you think “local people” will be able to handle all aspects of their collective economy, finances, etc. well?**

This issue may provoke extreme exchanges between those who are academically educated to some degree and those who may be less so and more motivated by strong social sentiments. Try to make an educational event out of it for both parties should such a confrontation arise. The essential point is that PROUT recognizes the skills of educated people while also doing maximum to bring up the rear. One of PROUT's focuses in the movement for decentralized economy is to provide attractive work places for intellectually developed people in the provinces. Only by doing so will there be hope for the revitalization of innumerable localities out there that are now viewed largely as desolate and “hopeless” places.

➤ **What would be the powerful sentiments that would facilitate local cooperation in your area?**

Often such sentiments build heavily on ethnic cultural legacy. Ask the group what it would be in their case. Whatever the foundation of the sentiments it should be able to unite people in their effort to stand up and progress on their own.

Page 49:

- **Do you know anyone today in your 'block area' that you could cooperate and organize a more progressive society with?**

Clarify what a block is if necessary. The question is intended for listing out any known or prospective partners in the local area.

- **PROUT is not for the kind of gigantic urbanized centralization that we see in the world's leading metropolises and industrial centers today. What is your idea about the perfect human habitat?**

Discuss your vision of how a Proutistic society actually would appear to visitors. You may take master units or just some vision of a living society as the starting point of your discussions. Allow members who really know something of PROUT's principles in this area and those who know something concrete about organic agriculture, country life, architecture, permaculture, city planning, etc. to take part.

- **Think of a benefit of utilizing raw materials close to their source.**

Minimizing heavy transportation comes immediately to mind. Allow the group to come up with their own expertise and genuine ideas in this area.

- **What would it do to local mentality and spirit if the principle of need-based production, driven by consumption rather than profit, is followed?**

It would probably generate an intense feeling of local togetherness, significant self-esteem, and sense of security and control. What does your group say?

- **Cooperative production and management have many benefits. What would be some of them?**

The sense of working together goes very deep in people. As mentioned elsewhere, Sarkar defines it as the best expression of human sweetness in the mundane world. We may expect the cooperative system to have innumerable benefits in all areas of life that are difficult even to conceptualize today. They will be central to speeding up the practical application of the principle of moving together in physical, social and so many other areas of life.

Page 50:

- **What would be the effect in your locality and area if the principle of local employment in local economic enterprises were already followed?**

Allow the group members to reflect and come up with possible scenarios.

- **The intervention of removing basic necessities that are not locally produced from the local market is an example of PROUT creating pressure of circumstances to generate a greater good. What do you think about it?**

Allow all kinds of feelings and views to be expressed about it in the group. PROUT's principle is that all basic necessities should be produced locally as that gives the local people basic security and economic control in their daily life.

Page 51:

- **Do you know anything about the history and practice of barter trade and its benefits? Do people barter in your area or country?**

Barter trade is the exchange of goods without other types of financial payments involved. Sarkar writes: "In foreign trade those countries which have a large volume of very few commodities to sell but many commodities to buy will find barter trade profitable. Otherwise their reserves of gold bullion may get exhausted very quickly." – From *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 12*

And: "If a country has a constant deficit in foreign trade, in that case also there is the possibility of inflation. In addition, if foreign trade is not conducted according to the barter system and the country has to import foodstuffs and export raw materials, inflation will certainly occur."

From *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 13*

PROUT suggests that barter is particularly beneficial for densely populated countries who have little scope for developing fresh areas for their immediate industrial needs. Instead they may export their overproduction of some goods, say rice, and import whatever overproduction from another country that they may require, through barter.

Page 52:

- **Which differences between PROUT's strategy for developing self-reliant zones and capitalist globalization are particularly obvious to you?**

In PROUT's system the whole chain of refinement and final production will take place where raw material exists in a system of three-tiered industry. Under capitalism various places of production and services are continuously shifted to where maximum profits may be extracted.

From the above it is clear that capitalism represents an enormous waste of energy and pollution as far as heavy long distance transport is concerned. This problem will be very much minimized under PROUT.

PROUT's concept of free-trade differs radically from that of capitalism. PROUT's free-trade is a logical development of preceding important steps towards local establishment and economic control.

PROUT's coops allow no middle-men whereas a huge part of the capitalist machinery is based just on middle-men siphoning profits in between raw materials, their production and consumers.

Page 53:

- **Why does PROUT promote the concept of a 'balanced economy' while capitalism does not, do you think?**

The aim of PROUT is to cultivate integrated societies while the aim of capitalism is to plunder as much profit as possible from the world.

Page 54:

- **Under capitalism ownership is typically one of two: public and private sector; where public utilities, previously run as public sector industries, are being increasingly incorporated by private sector. Discuss the pros and cons of maintaining public utilities as government-run enterprises.**

Allow the group members to air their views on this. Typically some will come from a background where respect and loyalty for public sector enterprises is deeper, while others will instinctually favor privatization. PROUT's policy is that big, complicated raw material industries are better run by local governments. "The central government should not control large-scale industries because this may hamper the interests of local people. Where there is a federal system of government, these industries should be controlled by the immediate government, and where there is unitary government, they should be managed by local bodies." (From *Discourses on PROUT*, 3). Such key industries will function on a "no profit, no loss" principle.

Page 56:

- **PROUT's system of planning takes as its starting point the needs at the lowermost level. Where does such a form of planning need to originate and take place?**

Proper planning cannot be done in comfortable office in cities and central facilities. It needs to be carried out in the field itself.

Page 57:

- **Identify one or more important elements of PROUT's concept of people's economy.**

"People's economy deals with the essential needs of the people in general – the production, distribution, marketing, shipping, storage, pricing, sales, freight charges, pro forma costing, and all related activities of such essential needs. Most importantly, it is directly concerned with the guaranteed provision of minimum requirements such as food, clothing, housing, medical

treatment, education, transportation, energy and irrigation water. Continuous improvement in and ready availability of these requirements is the key factor in people's economy.

The minimum requirements can be assured through guaranteed purchasing capacity which should be enshrined in the constitution as a fundamental or cardinal human right. This will give the citizens of the country legal power if their minimum requirements are not met, hence the necessity of purchasing capacity will be reinforced by constitutional law. As people's economy will deal with minimum requirements and people's subsistence problems, it must take precedence over other parts of the economy.

People's economy should also be concerned with the development of both private and cooperative industries. Private industries would be limited in size and scope to prevent monopoly production and exploitation, and would be required to function as cooperatives once they grow too large. Cooperative industries are the best means of independently organizing people so that they take collective responsibility for their livelihood.

People's economy also includes employment for all; the eradication of mass poverty; the development of rural economy; the phase-wise socialization of land into the hands of those who work physically or intellectually for proper production; practical training programmes to impart skills which enable people to find employment in their immediate urban or rural locality; work placement; and the transportation, trans-shipment, loading and unloading of any materials, even if they are not economically viable in the short-term. It is also concerned with the generation of cheap power and the supply of water, which are essential if people are to control their local economies. Finally, it includes economic decentralization, cooperative dynamo and block-level planning.” – From “Quadri-Dimensional Economy”, *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 12*

➤ **What is PROUT's 'psycho-economy' all about? Try to extract some of its essential significance.**

“While people's economy is concerned primarily with the provision of the minimum requirements of life, psycho-economy is concerned with increasing the psychic pabula (food, nourishment) of the individual and collective mind through appropriate economic activity. People's economy will be the main concern of undeveloped and developing countries, but psycho-economy will gain increasing importance in the future once the problems of subsistence are gradually solved. Psycho-economy will be of major importance in a highly developed and mechanized economy where people may only work a few hours a week and have much spare time.

Psycho-economy has two branches. The first branch endeavors to eradicate exploitative and unjust economic practices, behaviors and structures. It will counter all economic and psycho-economic exploitation and make people aware of how capitalists, in their singular or collective roles, exploit society and create unhealthy, artificial demands which not only poison the mind but encourage dangerous habits detrimental to psychic sanctity and expansion. The first and foremost duty of psycho-economics is to wage a tireless fight against all degenerating and dehumanizing economic trends in society.



The second branch of psycho-economy develops and enhances the psychic pabula of the individual and collective minds. This branch is virtually unknown today, but it will become an extremely important branch of economics in the future. It will ensure equilibrium and equipoise in all levels of the economy. It will find new and creative solutions to economic problems to nurture the maximum utilization of psychic and spiritual potentialities. Psycho-economics will add to the glaring glamour of economics.” – Ibid.

Page 59:

- **Do you know of any examples of depressions where there were (are) goods for sale but people did (do) not have money to buy?**

This is usually the situation in any depression. There may be vegetables in the market but the gap between prices and the purchasing capacity of the masses (and their means to organize alternative finance such as credit) is non-negotiable. “Cash is king during the depression.”

- **Do you see indications of the above four causes of depressions in your country or the world today?**

Allow the group to discuss the subject.

## **Chapter Four: Agriculture, Industry, and Services, page 61**

Page 62:

- **PROUT holds that a primarily organic agriculture (see quote on the following page) is the basis of a healthy socio-economic society. What are your reflections on it?**

Allow group members to air their views.

- **What constitutes an economic land holding according to PROUT?**

“To increase productivity and prevent the growth of large exploitative cultivators, the minimum and maximum size of an economic landholding should be determined. The minimum size of a landholding should be equal to the size of an economic holding in a particular region. Thus, the minimum size of an economic holding will vary from place to place. The maximum size of a landholding will depend upon the fertility of the soil, overall production and the expertise of the management. Economic holdings will generally comprise land of the same topography having adequate irrigation and other agricultural facilities. The size of economic holdings must be progressively increased keeping all these factors in mind.

The size of economic holdings may vary from country to country. At the same time the size may also vary within a country. In the Indo-Gangetic plains (fertile, easily irrigated), a five acre holding is abundantly productive, whereas in Ladakh or the Chotanagpur Hills (situated at dry altitudes), even fifteen or sixteen acres of land may not yield enough produce for subsistence. The size of economic holdings in these two places is bound to vary.”

- From “Agrarian Revolution”, *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 7*

Page 63:

➤ **Present the essential idea of PROUT’s concept of agriculture as industry.**

“According to PROUT, agriculture should be given the status of industry. In industry raw material costs, labor costs, interest on loans, depreciation, maintenance costs, profit, the rate of outturn, etc. are fixed and included in costing. In agriculture this has not been done, so produce is usually priced uneconomically. Farmers are forced to sell their produce at low prices due to the pressure of circumstances. (This is known as a “distress sale”.) If agriculture is treated as an industry, all the conditions of industry should apply to agriculture. When this occurs farmers will not be neglected and there will not be any differentiation in the style of development and costing of agriculture and industry.

For example, Orissa produces a single crop of paddy per year. No proper irrigation exists so there is always a dearth of water. Consequently, peasants remain poor, but this poverty must be removed. If we recognize agriculture as an industry in Orissa, costing and pricing will be different. Costing will include the cost of seeds, labor costs, raw material costs, pension funds, storage or inventory costs, depreciation costs, sinking funds, etc. Farmers should also include 10% to 15% profit on their produce as part of their costs. Thus, the value of agricultural produce as an industrial output will be properly calculated.

In a Proutistic society, buyers will have to purchase agricultural produce at this newly calculated price. This is the proper approach to integrated development. In such a system farmers will not be exploited or put to needless hardship.”

- From “Questions and Answers on Society (3)”, *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 14*

Page 65:

➤ **What is the main difference between PROUT’s approach to evolving agricultural cooperatives and the history of collectives in communist countries?**

The collectives were forced upon farmers en masse and therefore never whole-heartedly accepted. PROUT’s agricultural cooperatives are being introduced psychologically, scientifically and gradually.

Page 66:

- **According to P.R. Sarkar, the cooperative system is the best expression of human sweetness in the physical realm. Do you have any thoughts on the effect the evolution of cooperatives may have in other areas of society than the purely industrial?**

Try to facilitate a discussion on the greater good of cooperation and its effects in many spheres of human life, such as the social, political, cultural, etc. outside of the economic.

Page 67:

- **Do you know any good ways to make people vegetarian?**

Listen and learn!

Page 68:

- **PROUT's concept of agriculture is both scientific and sophisticated. Do you know of any agencies or producers in your area who practice some of its methods and principles already today?**

An opportunity for you all to share information and ideas about local resources.

Page 69:

- **An essential PROUT maxim says:  
"Know the area, prepare the plan, serve the people."  
Where in your area or country could any of the concepts mentioned above be realized, do you think?**

Again, an opportunity to share Proutistic thoughts on local developments.

Page 70:

- **In your opinion, what is the defining feature of PROUT's decentralized economy?**

The principles of a decentralized economy are:

1. All the resources in a socio-economic unit should be controlled by the local people.
2. Production should be based on consumption, not profit.
3. Production and distribution should be organized through cooperatives.

4. The local people must be employed in local economic enterprises.
5. Commodities which are not locally produced should be removed from the local markets.

In the passages below Sarkar gives some background for the concept of decentralized economy. Try to read the entire article where you will find all his explanations about the above five points as well.

“The most important economic issue before the leaders of all the countries in the world today is how to increase the standard of living of their citizens through the economic prosperity of the state. This is a burning question, especially in those countries which are economically backward. The matter is not very simple because in many countries people are still directly dependent on nature for their subsistence. Only in a few countries have people been able to utilize their knowledge and wisdom to solve their economic problems.

Most countries in the world – whether capitalist or communist – have adopted the policy of economic centralization. While the economies of the capitalist countries are centralized in the hands of a few capitalists or a few capitalist institutions, the economies of the communist countries are centralized in the hands of the party. After so many years of economic centralization, how successful have these countries been in improving the standard of living of the people? To assess this, the main issue is whether or not economic exploitation has been eradicated and the common people have been guaranteed ever increasing purchasing capacity. The fact is that in a centralized economy there is no possibility that economic exploitation can ever be eradicated or that the economic problems of the common people can ever be permanently solved.

As far as India is concerned, the common people have been led astray time and again by vested interests. Innumerable promises have been made by political leaders, but they have proved to be nothing more than cruel hoaxes. The policy of economic centralization stands exposed as merely a strategy to accumulate increasing capital in the hands of the capitalists. On the one hand the incredulous masses are kept in good humor by promising them something negligible, and on the other hand the capitalists go on amassing enormous wealth. If we examine why this is happening, we will find that the cause is clearly evident. All the economic policies in the country are formulated by a handful of people who are pillars of capitalism.

There is only one way to stop economic exploitation and alleviate the plight of the common people, and that is to implement a policy of decentralized economy in all the sectors of the economy. Successful planning can never be done by sitting in an air conditioned office thousands of miles away from the place where planning is to be undertaken. Centralized economy can never solve the economic problems of remote villages. Economic planning must start from the lowest level, where the experience, expertise and knowledge of the local people can be harnessed for the benefit of all the members of a socio-economic unit. All types of economic problems can be solved only when economic structures are built on the basis of decentralized economy.

The basic question is how to remove the unhealthy influence of centralized economy. The real issue is, who will bell the cat? If the vested interests fail to be guided by righteous intellect, then

people will have to take matters into their own hands. They will have to create circumstantial pressure from all sides, uniting around the slogan: “Abolish centralized economy to end exploitation; establish decentralized economy.”

Decentralized economy is the only way that people can attain all-round welfare because it will not only guarantee economic prosperity, but also pave the way for individual and collective psycho-spiritual progress. Once people’s mundane problems have been solved, they will have greater opportunities to develop their potentialities in the psychic and spiritual spheres. With the establishment of decentralized economy, economic and psycho-economic exploitation will be eradicated, the gap between the rich and poor will be minimized and individual and collective welfare will be greatly enhanced. This in turn will create greater opportunities for the psychic and spiritual progress of all members of society.”

From “Decentralized Economy 1”, *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 21*

Page 71:

➤ **In what ways does workers’ involvement in management differ under PROUT and capitalism (both public and private sectors)?**

In cooperative sector (the absolutely dominating sector under PROUT) workers will have control over their enterprises to the degree of them being shareholders on par with other shareholders. Initially there are mainly three ways to be a shareholder: By investing, by owning the property, and by working. Over time work will come to exercise the main hold over cooperatives, as the other two – investment and ownership – by then is assimilated into the cooperative. On other hand, under capitalism workers’ representation is marginal and often decorative.

Perhaps the most potent force of workers under PROUT is 100% employment. Sarkar said: “Under PROUT workers will not run after jobs, jobs will run after them.” Moreover, PROUT’s basic drive for continuous education and development both in individual and collective life, will make the work force increasingly more competent and knowledgeable. With further scientific development work hours under PROUT will also increase significantly and thereby liberate workers from physical and mental dependency on their work places to a great extent. In such circumstances any significant manipulation of labor force will be impossible.

➤ **Can you come up with examples of industrial or other types of enterprise that may thrive as privately owned under PROUT in your area, other than the ones mentioned above?**

Handicrafts, jewelry, and services such as restaurants are mentioned in the text.

Page 72:

➤ **How do you see people spending their increasing number of free hours under PROUT?**

Allow a free discussion. This is an opportunity to request all members to say something.

➤ **Is there anything in PROUT's model itself that would influence the way people would spend their free time?**

PROUT is very much about cooperation and service. Therefore it may be reasonable to expect that activities such as coming together for various purposes, developing one's local society further, and doing some sort of service may become more common than they are today. Cultural and spiritual activities would probably too get a boost as many of the leaders and known people of Proutistic society will be identified with such activities.

Page 73:

➤ **Identify one great benefit of not taxing income.**

- Less complications and hassle for salary takers.
- Less bureaucracy.
- Improved circulation of money as there will be much less black money to hide.
- Fewer instances of shadow-economic and criminally run enterprises as the amount of black money drastically reduces.
- The level of honesty among ordinary people may increase when such criminality decreases.

"PROUT advocates the abolition of income tax. In India today if income tax is abolished and excise duty on excisable commodities is increased by only ten percent, there will be no loss of government revenue. When there is no income tax, nobody will try to accumulate black money. All money will be white money. As a result there will be economic solidarity, an increase in trade and commerce, more investment, more employment and an improvement in the position of foreign exchange. Intellectuals should demand the abolition of income tax." - From "Some Aspects of Socio-Economic Planning" in *PROUT in a Nutshell Part 15*, and in *Proutist Economics*."

➤ **Do you know of any financial institution in your country – governmental or purely alternative – that comes a bit close to being Proutistic?**

Let's hear it!

## **Chapter Five: The Political Dimension of PROUT, page 75**

➤ **PROUT requires both candidates and voters to qualify; what do you think about it?**

First ascertain whether everybody has properly understood the requirements for participating in PROUT's electoral system. Then allow for discussion on whether or not this is a suitable system for present society.

“In a democratic system securing the highest number of votes is proof of a person’s eligibility. However this eligibility is not adequately examined in all cases. In my opinion the popularity of a candidate securing the highest number of votes needs to be tested again if he or she polls less than half the total number of votes cast. In this test arrangements will have to be made so that people can vote either for or against the candidate. If the candidate polls more favorable votes, only then will he or she be declared elected.

No candidate should be declared elected without a contest. Rich and influential people can compel other candidates, by financial inducements or intimidation, to withdraw their nomination papers. So in cases where it is found that there is only one candidate, the popularity of the candidate will have to be tested. If the candidate fails in this test, the candidate and all those who withdrew their nomination papers will forfeit the right to contest the subsequent by-election for that constituency. This means that they will have to wait until the next election.

Although the system of seat reservation is against democratic principles, temporary arrangements for seat reservation, if desired, may be permitted for backward communities. But generally it is found that among the representatives of backward communities, the number of competent persons is very few. Hence the right to contest reserved seats should not be limited to those belonging to a particular community. At the time of the primary election of the candidates for the reserved seat, however, only those belonging to the community for which the seat has been reserved will enjoy the right to vote. That is, two people will be nominated for the one seat in the primary election. Later, either of the two will be finally elected by the vote of the general public. If, in the primary election, only one candidate is nominated – that is, there is no other contestant – in that case his or her popularity must be tested before the general public. Only if a backward or minority community clearly demands seat reservation will it be adopted, otherwise not.

A candidate must declare his or her policies in black and white. After an election, if it is found that a candidate is acting against his or her declared policies and this is proved to be the case in court, his or her election will be cancelled.

The slogan “adult franchise” is, of course, very pleasant to hear, but the fact that voters without political consciousness weaken the governmental machinery cannot be denied. In the interests of the general public, it is desirable that uneducated and less-educated people do not have the right to vote.

Democracy is a mockery in a country of uneducated people. In such a country cunning, fraudulent persons very easily secure or purchase the votes of illiterate people. Moreover, the general public in such a country is easily misled by the propagation of casteism or communalism.

The success of democracy depends upon educated, sensible voters. Hence, in a democratic country, the spread of education is of the highest priority. For the convenience of the general public, the educational system must be free of cost. No overbearing government pressure

should be exerted on the educational system, otherwise the party in power will continue to propagate its ideas through the medium of education. Frequent changes in the government will also result in frequent changes in the educational system, consequently the entire system of education will be jeopardized.” – From *Problem of the Day*, 1958

Sarkar’s direction to voters (from *Caryácarya – Part 2*):

- Do not be misled by anyone’s tall talk. Judge merit by seeing the performance.
- Remember, whatever position one is in offers sufficient opportunity to work.
- One whose character is not in accordance with Yama-Niyama should not get opportunity for becoming a representative.
- Only people established in Yama-Niyama are worthy of your support; in case of more than one such person, vote for the best worker.

Page 76:

➤ **How do you think PROUT’s political system will function where candidates and representatives operate individually rather than representing a party?**

Again, make sure the group is informed about the main features of this system, including candidates being required to publish their program and being responsible for it, voters’ right to challenge candidates mid-term should they find them insufficient, etc.

Also, there may be grounds for discussing “party system versus partyless system”.

➤ **What would be a main gain from implementing the principle of independently functioning departments?**

“As the government (at present) is formed by a particular party, the independence of the government servants is also impaired. The members and leaders of the ruling party interfere with the work of the executive and force it to tow the party line. Under duress, work is done which benefits a particular party but harms the interests of the people at large. In the democratic system government officials cannot go against the wishes of the government leaders as the former work under the direction of the secretariat which is headed by the cabinet formed by the ruling party.

In so-called democracies even the judiciary cannot function independently as the ruling party pressurizes judges and judicial officers. Thus judgments are sometimes delivered which strangle justice.

Independence of the audit department, too, is indispensable for the proper functioning of the public exchequer. But owing to the pressure of the party in power, it often fails to act independently. For want of proper auditing, public funds are squandered and misused.



Consequently nation-building activity is not carried out properly. A government is to govern and serve the people, but it is not possible to govern in the democratic system, for who is there to be governed? The public are placated in order to secure votes which makes the would-be rulers unfit to rule. And the would-be rulers are themselves incompetent, immoral, hypocritical exploiters or how else would they get elected? They take recourse to devious strategies and the power of money. That is why there is no one to provide worthy leadership. And as far as the question of the people is concerned, that is meaningless in a democracy. In this system the party and the leaders serve themselves in all possible ways.

Thus, it is crystal-clear that the democratic form of government is riddled with lacunae. Without removing them it is impossible to properly run the administration of a country.

Now let us discuss some reforms to democracy. Democracy cannot succeed in countries where people are illiterate, immoral, or backward. Countries like England, the USA and France are suitable for democracy, but even these countries need to introduce some reforms.

...

To provide a fearless and independent ambience to the administration, the secretariat should be kept free from pressures from the cabinet. The cabinet should confine itself to legislation, the passage and passing of the budget, the implementation of its plans and policies, defense etc. The power of ministers should remain confined to the parliament and they should not poke their nose into the workings of the secretariat. The chief secretary (leader of provincial government) should not be under the president or the prime minister but should act independently as the executive head. All the secretaries should work under the chief secretary. Free from cabinet pressures, every department will serve the people well.

In the present system the judiciary functions under a cabinet minister and pressure from the minister may impair its independent functioning. To remove this defect and to ensure impartial justice, the judiciary should have the right to function independently. In no case should the chief justice be treated as inferior to the president or the prime minister. Only moralists and honest persons should be installed on the hallowed seat of justice. If people fail to keep this issue under their close scrutiny, injustice will take the place of justice.

Finally, for the proper utilization of the nation's revenue and to ensure that every coin is spent on building up the nation, it is extremely important that the audit branch as well be independent. The auditor general should be independent of the president. Only the independence of the auditor general can ensure that this branch will be able to fearlessly check the accounts of every other branch. Thus it should be a separate administrative branch of government, and independent of the party holding a majority.

All the four branches mentioned above should be given the scope to function independently. Thus there will be four compartments. No compartment will function under another.

But in such a situation there is still the possibility of injustice and exploitation. So to supervise or monitor the function of all these compartments, the benevolent dictatorship of the board of Sadvipras is required so that spirituality will reign supreme."

– From “Compartmentalized Democracy” (1961), *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 14*

Page 78:

- **Now, explain PROUT’s selecto-electoral voting process.**

The term “selecto-” indicates that the electoral (voters and candidate) need to be qualified.

Page 80:

- **Are you familiar with the term “watchdog”? How will you best describe PROUT’s concept of social boards?**

Social boards and sadvipra boards are synonymous.

- **Another term for PROUT’s social boards is “Sadvipra Boards”. If you could have such a board in your locality right now, what should it focus on to begin with?**

Allow for free sharing.

Page 81:

- **Several organizations and movements seem to desire some sort of world government. Discuss some of the specialties of PROUT’s plan for it.**

“Many people say that divergent national interests are the only impediments to the formation of a world organization, or a world government. But I say this is not the only obstacle, rather it is just a minor impediment. The main obstacle is the apprehension of local leaders that they will lose their leadership. With the establishment of a world government, the total domination which they exercise today in their respective countries, societies and nations will cease to exist.

Divergent national interests and popular skepticism may stand in the way of the formation of a world government. To allay baseless fears from the minds of the people, this task should be carried out step by step. Obstacles will have to be negotiated with an open mind, and the world government will have to be strengthened gradually, not suddenly. For example, to run the world government, two houses may be maintained for an indefinite period. The lower house will be composed of representatives from various parts [countries] of the world, elected on the basis of population. The members of the upper house will be elected country-wise. This will provide opportunities to those countries which cannot send even a single representative to the lower house due to their small population, because they will be able to express their opinions before the people of the world by sending their representatives to the upper house. The upper house

will not adopt any bill unless it has been passed by the lower house, but the upper house will reserve the right to reject the decisions of the lower house.

Initially the world government should go on working merely as a law-framing body. The world government should also have the right to make decisions regarding the application or non-application of any law, for a limited period, in any particular region.

In the first phase of the establishment of the world government, the governments of different countries will have only administrative power. As they will not have the authority to frame laws, it will be somewhat difficult for them to arbitrarily inflict atrocities on their linguistic, religious or political minorities.” – From *Problems of the Day*

## Chapter Six: The Cultural Dimension of PROUT, page 83

Page 84:

- **Discuss PROUT’s concepts of civilization and culture.**

Ascertain that the group has got some understanding of these concepts. Then allow for some discussion about it.

Page 85:

- **Identify expressions of foreign cultural imposition that have taken hold in your country.**
- **Would you say your country has been a victim of psycho-economic exploitation?**

Allow for discussion of both issues. Either of the discussions may be carried out by dividing the group into pairs if suitable and then come back in the group for collective reporting.

Page 86:

- **Discuss how pseudo-culture may have affected the original character of the people of your country.**

Again, allow for a form of discussion that suits the subject matter in this group.

Page 88:

➤ **Discuss various aspects of intellectual exploitation and how it hurts individuals and society.**

“Vipras use all their abilities for intellectual exploitation. They try to gain prestige in society and maintain that prestige by composing mythological stories which play on the weaknesses of the human mind; by preaching the divine power of certain gods and goddesses under certain circumstances; by convincing people of the vipras’ social superiority; and by injecting the confusion of religion even into spirituality. They spend most of the mental resources of their precious lives scheming to gain prestige and plotting to maintain it.

If one reads the scriptures of any religious community, one will find ample examples of this. Even if one undergoes austerities, practises ritualistic fasting, undertakes pilgrimages, bathes in holy rivers and springs, worships a sacred fire or studies the scriptures, one will not be blessed unless one also offers sacerdotal fees to the vipras. Only the vipras are authorized to recite even ordinary páncálii [long folk poems] about laokik gods and goddesses(3) – and needless to say, a vipra would never visit anybody to recite such poems without remuneration.

Occasionally even sinful, antisocial elements are led to believe that if they frankly confess their sins to a vipra, the vipra through his special efforts will obtain a dispensation saving them from the consequences of their sins; every intelligent person knows that a vipra will never act as an agent of God without some remuneration. Just see the way sins are condoned!

Even so, vipras have more capacities than kśatriyas. A kśatriya seeks happiness only through physical enjoyment, but a vipra is capable of some mental enjoyment as well, however little it may be.

Disasters occur when there is a lack of balance between people’s physical and intellectual efforts. If the reins of society are in the hands of people who suffer from such imbalances, society as a whole will suffer the consequences of those disasters.

The amount of intellectual labour performed by shúdras is negligible compared to their physical labour. Although the intellectual labour of kśatriyas is not completely meaningless, it does not have much practical value.

Even if a vipra administration does not itself create disasters, it will not be able to prevent them from occurring for long. What happens with the vipras is that [intellect] is given a higher valuation than the application of physical force. Thus under a vipra administration others work to enhance the vipras’ prestige and to maintain the vipras’ standard of living, while the vipras use their intellect to live an unbalanced life and to suck the vitality of others like parasites.

Where there is more physical clash in life, physical force will increase faster than intellect or the expression of intellect, and likewise, where there is much psychic clash, there will be only the expression of intellect, coupled with a gradual but eventually severe increase in physical indolence. From a psychological point of view, people dominated by intellect in this way gradually become more and more atrophied, so that whatever magnanimity exists at the beginning of the Vipra Age is lost by the end of the age. The end result of this lack of

magnanimity is that the vaeshyas become dominant in society. At the beginning of the Vipra Age the vipras provide advice about how to protect society as well as how to exploit it; they also take advice from others about how to protect and exploit it. But by the end of the Vipra Age the vipras only give advice but no longer accept it, and the advice they give concerns only how to exploit. – From *Human Society – Part 2*

➤ **Have you noticed any spiritual exploitation in your area?**

Allow members to express themselves freely.

Page 89:

➤ **PROUT defines a dogma as an idea that does not allow you to think outside of its boundaries. Do you know of any such dogmatic ideas in any sphere of life?**

Page 90:

➤ **Why is spiritual meditation such a powerful weapon against dogma?**

Spiritual meditation liberates the mind from imposed and acquired samskaras. In the process the person becomes more expansive and large-minded, and less susceptible to the influence of narrow-minded, dogmatic thinking.

Page 92:

➤ **Identify various forms of geo-sentiments prevalent in your area and country.**

First ascertain whether the concept of geo-sentiment is clearly understood or not. Mention in particular that it has several forms, such as geo-economic sentiment, geo-religious sentiment, etc. Then allow for discussion.

➤ **Would you say such thinking is dogmatic, and if so – why?**

Geo-sentiment is a most dogmatic form of thinking that most people would recognize as one, due to its crude demarcation: “The flower on this side of the border is great as it is of my country while the flower on the other side of the border is less so as it belongs to another country!”

➤ **Identify various forms of socio-sentiments prevalent in your area and country.**

Allow for discussion, and be ready to remind group members about the actual concept of socio-sentiment should they deviate from it.

“Now, family sentiment is also a kind of socio-sentiment, but its radius is very small. Greater than this is the radius of caste sentiment, and still greater is that of community sentiment, national sentiment, international sentiment, and so on. Now, the narrowest of all the socio-sentiments is technically called “socio-sentiment minimitis”, and the greatest is called

“socio-sentiment maximitis” or “socio-sentiment excellencio”. What is the difference between these two terms?

The small theoretical gap between excellencio and maximitis makes little difference so far as the collective welfare is concerned. It merely soars high in the realm of theory, just like the argument whether the pot contains the oil or the oil is contained in the pot, or the argument whether the palmyra fruit falls first or the sound of its hitting the ground comes first. This is how the ancient logicians used to endlessly debate.”

– From *The Liberation of Intellect – Neo-humanism*

Page 93:

- **Discuss how ordinary humanism may inflict damage and hurt.**

This would include humans encroaching on and abusing the rights of animals and plants.

- **Discuss the role of teachers and holistic education in rooting out dogmas and narrow sentiments.**

PROUT classifies teachers as gurus of society. Their responsibility is immense and on a par with judges who at the other end of the scale judges pronounce punishment on offenders.

A specialty of Ananda Marga Neo-humanistic education is that moral and spiritual education runs through the entire system from nursery to university.

Page 94:

- **Any language issues in your area or country, in the educational system, at work, public life, etc.?**

Allow for a free airing of views in this area that may be sensitive to some and not so much to others.

Page 95:

- **Ananda Marga promotes the system of revolutionary marriage. Do you know it and its benefits?**

You may also discuss why it is Proutistic: It is a very efficient way to make universal citizens. We should promote this type of marriage.

Page 97:

- **Have you recently enjoyed good art. If so – can you share what was good about it?**

Allow for free sharing and suggestions.

## **Chapter Seven: Integrated Proutistic Solutions, page 98**

Page 99:

- **Identify general samaj tendencies in your country.**

Allow first for a general discussion on background of history and current movements.

- **What is the role of samajas?**

Samaj is the movement-oriented part of Proutistic work. You may detail and explore its concept together.

- **Do you know the PROUT samajas of your country?**

Let the group members mention the samaja(s) of the country and explain in detail wherever necessary, largely depending on responses from the group. Be ready with the proper information!

Page 100:

- **What types of multi-purpose development schemes do you see as realistic and required in your area and country?**

First make sure all have understood what a multi-purpose development scheme is, and then allow for suggestions.

“The only solution to the world-wide problem of malnutrition and of the maladjustment and misallocation of resources is to implement multi-purpose development schemes. Multi-purpose development schemes are based on the degree of poverty in a country and aim to immediately elevate the standard of living of the people and bring about integrated development throughout the world. Such schemes are for the entire globe, and include undertaking temporary and permanent relief and upgrading the standard of education

wherever required. In Europe, for example, in Rumania, Albania and the Balkan states we should concentrate on temporary relief; in Portugal on permanent relief; and in Greenland on education. The Basque area of Spain is poor, while Greenland has few people. Work should start in the areas of greatest need and radiate out.

Italy is developed but not highly developed. It has crossed the threshold of a developing country – that is, the threshold of developing and developed. It is more developed than Portugal and almost as developed as Spain. Horticulture, forest resources and terranean wealth can be further developed. Sericulture, especially mulberry silk, can be developed. Oil can be found in the southern portion of Sicily and Sardinia. Italy is potentially rich in paddy production, and it should grow a little bit of wheat. The Po Valley is a paddy growing area. The southern portion of Italy grows Mediterranean fruit. This industry can also be further developed. Large industries such as the oil and steel industries no doubt exist, but other big industries are imported from various countries.

...

Rendering all-round service to the people is an extension of the multi-purpose development schemes. Different types of service, both extensive and intensive, have to be done in all the poor countries. Extensive service means that service must be provided down to the village level, while intensive service means that as many people as possible must be benefited. This programme is necessary due to defective economic management in many parts of the world, and has nothing to do with party politics.

...

One of the most important reasons for psychic ailments, defects and deformities is the lack of proper education. Education means proper psychic training and exercise. This training is initially imparted by teaching literacy. That is, it is done through teaching the letters of the alphabet: A-B-C, ka-kha-ga, etc. You can see that in most of the countries in the world – in almost the entire world – the vast percentage of the downtrodden people are illiterate. They are lagging behind in the realm of education. Everywhere, especially in Muslim countries, you will observe that the major portion of the population is downtrodden. Even where there is no shortage in wealth, in Muslim countries and certain other countries, the people are still in a downtrodden condition."

– From "Multi-purpose. Development Schemes", *PROUT in a Nutshell – Part 18*

Page 101:

➤ **How many master units are there in your country, and in your region?**

Be prepared with the correct numbers!

Page 103:



➤ **What are the chief forms of crime in your country?**

Don't ask: "How do you know that?"

Page 104:

➤ **PROUT welcomes all newcomers to Earth. Do you agree?**

"Vested interests do not favor population growth because this will mean sharing mundane property at the cost of their hoarding. Capitalism would like the extinction of the intellectual class as this would give it free scope for exploitation. The intellectual class usually belongs to the middle income group. Capitalists encourage family planning and birth control to check the growth of this middle class, thus these measures are a creation of the capitalist order."

From "Sambhúti and Mahásambhúti", *Discourses on Tantra 1*

Page 105:

➤ **What are PROUT's essential mechanism to safeguard the environment?**

1. Consumption-motivated economy (as opposed to profit-motivation). It will accommodate the interests of the people and their environment.
2. Integrated farming (see "Integrated Farming" in either *Ideal Farming Part 2*, *PROUT in a Nutshell* – Part 16, or *Proutist Economics*).

## **The Five Fundamental Principles of PROUT, page 106**

Page 107:

- **Previously, in connection with the theory of the social cycle, it was mentioned that the merchant, or capitalist, mindset is one of the four natural collective psychologies of human beings. However, in the first fundamental principle of PROUT, discussed here, it is stated that no one will be allowed to accumulate physical wealth without the permission of society. In light of it, do you think there will be capitalism under PROUT? If not, how shall those with a merchant psychology be able to express their typical mentality?**

PROUT's policy is first to prevent capitalists from exploiting people and then educate them, along with all others, in the fine art of becoming a good citizen. The special abilities of vaeshyas to generate capital, see opportunities for growth where no one else sees them, manage businesses, etc. will certainly be utilized to its maximum under PROUT.

Page 108:

- **Discuss some areas in your country where the principle of maximum utilization can be implemented with great benefits to society.**

Allow for discussion.

- **Define rational distribution.**

The concept of rational distribution is first to ensure the minimum necessities of all through adequate purchasing power earned by working, and then distribute the surplus among the meritorious. According to PROUT, the gap between the amenities for some and the basic necessities of all should always decrease, and the focus should be on increasing the minimum purchasing capacity.

Page 109:

- **PROUT holds that the importance of society lies in the good of individuals and that the good of society lies with individuals – that the individual is important to society and that the society is important to the individual. Which of the two do you think is more important?**

Let the experts have their say!