

# CONSTITUTION of People's Union for Democratic Rights

The present organisation came into existence in January 1977 as the Delhi unit of the People's Union for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights (PUCL & DR) which had been formed during the Emergency under the chairmanship of the late Jai Prakash Narayan. Soon after the Janata Party came to power, the national body became defunct, but the Delhi unit continued to function. The emergence of the organisation was a direct response to the suspension of constitutionally guaranteed rights and liberties and extraordinary legislations during the Emergency. Thus the fight against institutionalised forms of repression came to be the focal point of the organisation and continued to be so with more draconian legislations coming into effect.

During the course of its work in the Janata period, the organisation became aware of the need to focus also on the social and structural roots of repression in the context of the iniquitous social order that prevails in the country. Soon after Congress came back to power the national body was revived in 1980, but in a new form. The new body, now calling itself PUCL, also made, among other things, a dichotomous division between civil liberties and democratic rights. The Delhi unit chose to maintain a separate existence. Thus People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) came into existence in February 1981. The distinctive thrust of PUDR became a concern for the rights and liberties of the masses in the context of their socio-economic needs and political aspirations, an attempt to keep the working of the organization free from the expediencies of political parties, and a commitment to democratic functioning within the organisation.

The need for the existence and strengthening of the organisation arises from the fact that there is no effective mechanism to defend the people when the state or its agencies violate the law. However, in recent times, attacks on the rights of the people, from sources other than the state, have become more organised and strident. Within the parameters of the focus on the role of the state, PUDR has taken up other such violations of rights of the people.

As an organisation PUDR is aware of the need to adopt a flexible approach so as to be responsive to the changing needs of the civil liberties and democratic rights movement. At the same time it will also attempt to consolidate its experience continuously and lay some institutional basis to

enable its limited experience to grow beyond the present. However the organisation will be constantly on its guard against the dangers inherent in the very process of institutionalisation.

*December 1991*

## **Name**

The name of the organisation shall be People's Union for Democratic Rights.

## **Aims and Objectives**

1. To protect, extend and help implement the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and to make people aware of the same.
2. To work towards making the Directive Principles of State Policy enforceable and justiciable.
3. To build public opinion towards the ratification and enforcement by the Indian government of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other such covenants and charters.
4. To defend and help democratic struggles against caste, class, community, ethnicity, religion and gender based oppression.

## **Tasks**

Towards the aforementioned aims and objectives, the organisation shall endeavor, in particular:

1. towards the repeal of all extraordinary and draconian legislations that violate the ethos of the Constitution and to defend victims of such legislations irrespective of their political, religious and social faith.
2. to take up the assault on people by ruling powers including vested interests, communal and casteist forces and such other anti-people forces.
3. to protect the right to free expression and dissent.
4. to make the right to work, right to shelter, right to education, right to employment, right to living wage and right to live with dignity as part of the fundamental rights.
5. to build public opinion on these issues through investigation, courts,

legislatures, media and such other legal and democratic channels, and help victims of these violations through these channels.

## Organisation

1. The PUDR shall be an independent organisation and shall not affiliate itself to any political organisation, party or group.
2. The organisation shall be a Delhi based organisation.
3. All the members of the organisation shall constitute the General Body.
4. The organisation shall have an Executive consisting of:
  - i) two Secretaries,
  - ii) one Treasurer, and
  - iii) five members.
5. All executive functions of the organisation will be the responsibility of the Secretaries jointly, or by one in the absence of the other, in consultation and coordination with the activists and subject to such directions and guidelines as the Executive may issue from time to time.
6. On matters relating to the organisation including on those not provided for in the constitution, rules and by-laws, the decision of the Executive shall be binding, subject to ratification by the General Body.
7. The Treasurer of the organisation shall have custody of all the moneys and the Treasurer shall keep the moneys of the organisation in such manner as the Executive may direct. All withdrawals from the bank shall be signed by the Treasurer and at least one Secretary, or any other person authorised by the Executive.
8. The organisation shall not receive any money from any source in any form from abroad.
9. The organisation shall be self-financing through the income received from sale of its literature, membership fee, and donations raised from members and sympathisers from time to time and shall not receive funds from any political party, government or any institution.
10. All members of the Executive, including the office bearers shall be elected in the Annual General Body Meeting directly by secret ballot for the term of one year.
11. No member, unless she/he has paid her/his subscription in advance for the current year and is without any arrears, shall be entitled to take part in the election.
12. Nominations duly proposed and seconded by eligible members for the

elections of the office bearers and other members of the Executive shall be filed ordinarily at least seven days before the election. A candidate so proposed shall be entitled withdraw her/his nomination for the election ordinarily two days before the election.

13. The Annual General Body Meeting of the organisation shall ordinarily be held not later than 25 December every year. Ordinarily a notice of not less than 12 days shall be given to the members for the Annual General Body Meetings. The following shall along with other matters, be included in the agenda of the Annual General Body Meeting:
  - a) Report by the Secretaries on the activities of the organisation in the year.
  - b) Report by the Treasurer on the accounts for the year.
  - c) Election of the new Executive including the office bearers.
14. The Executive may appoint advisors to the organisation and may coopt them into the Executive, subject to ratification by the Annual General Body meeting, or any other General Body meeting, which ever is earlier.
15. The Executive shall call a General Body meeting upon a requisition given in writing by atleast one-fourth of the members of the organisation. The meeting shall be called not later than two weeks of the receipt of such requisition.
16. The quorum at all General Body Meetings shall be one fourth of the total members. In the absence of such quorum the meeting shall stand adjourned to such time or date as decided by the meeting and for a meeting so adjourned no quorum shall be necessary.

## Membership

1. Open to all who agree with the aims and objectives of the organisation subject to an application from a constitution and its approval by the executive committee.
2. Membership must only be on individual basis and not on organisational basis.
3. Members must work actively and support the programme of the organisation.
4. A subscription of a sum of Rs 10/- per year will be charged from members and each member is obliged to renew her/his membership every year.