

Constitution of the PUCL

(Incorporating amendments up to April 25th 1999)

1. Name

The name of the organisation shall be the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL).

2. Aims and Objects

The People's Union of Civil Liberties will try to bring together all those who are committed to the defence and promotion of civil liberties in India, irrespective of any differences which they may have in regard to political and economic institutions suitable for the country.

The aim and the objects of the organisation will be:

- (a) To uphold and promote by peaceful means civil liberties and the democratic way of life throughout India;
- (b) To secure recognition to the principle of dignity of the individual;
- (c) To undertake a constant review of penal laws and the criminal procedure; with a view to bringing them in harmony with human and liberal principles;
- (d) To work for the withdrawal and repeal of the repressive laws including preventive detention;
- (e) To encourage freedom of thought and defend the right of public dissent;
- (f) To ensure the freedom of the press and independence of mass media;
- (g) To secure the rule of law and independence of the judiciary;
- (h) To make legal aid available to the poor;
- (i) To make legal assistance available for the defence of civil liberties;
- (j) To work for the reform of the judicial system to so as to remove inordinate delays, reduce heavy expenses, and eliminate inequities;
- (k) To bring about prison reform
- (l) To oppose police excesses and use of third degree methods
- (m) To oppose police discrimination on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth;
- (n) To combat social evils which encroach on civil liberties such as untouchability, casteism and communalism;
- (o) To defend in particular the civil liberties of the weaker section of society and of women and children;
- (p) To do all acts and things that may be necessary, helpful, or incidental to the above aims and objects

3. Criteria of membership

- (a)** Every adult person shall be eligible to be a member of the organisation if he/she believes that civil liberties must be maintained in India, now and in the future, irrespective of any economic and political changes that may take place in the country
- (b)** Members of the political parties will be entitled to be members of the organisation in their individual capacity if they subscribe to its aims and objects. They will have all the rights of membership except that:
 - (i.) The President, Vice Presidents, General Secretaries, other Secretaries, and the treasurers of the organisation or any of its branches shall not be a member of any political party
 - (ii.) At least one half of the members of the National Council and the National Executive committee and of corresponding bodies at the State and local levels shall be person who are not be members of any political party.
 - (iii.) Not more than 10% of the members of National Council and the National Executive Committee, and of corresponding bodies at the State and local levels shall be member of one political party.
- (c)** The membership fee will be Rupees 50 per year, to be collected once a year. Student members and non-earning members who are below the age of 25 may pay Rupees 10 per year as members fee. The Executive Committees at every level will be entitled to admit persons from economically weaker sections of society like workers and peasants, at a membership fee Rupee 10 per year
- (d)** Those who pay Rupees 1000 in a lump sum will be Life members. Those who pay Rs. 2000 will be Patron members of the organisation.
- (e)** The National Council will have the right, by a two-third majority, to refuse membership to any person or to remove any person from membership. The council of State branch will have a similar right in the respective State.

3. (A) Institutional Members

In addition to individual members there may be institutional members also. All voluntary groups and institutions (but not political parties or groups affiliated to them) which agree with the objectives of the PUCL and the desire to join it will be entitled to become institutional Member in accordance with the Supplementary Rules laid down by the National Executive Committee (see at the end).

4. National Convention

- (a) A National Convention of the organisation will be held once in two years
- (b) The National Convention will review the work of the organisation and lay down policies and programmes for future

5. National Council

- (a) The National Council will meet twice a year.
- (b) The National Council will determine the policy and programme of the organisation, in conformity with the policies and programmes adopted by the National Convention.
- (c) The National Council will elect the President, one or more Vice Presidents, one or more General Secretaries, one or more other Secretaries, and Treasurers for the ensuing term, as laid down in clause 7(2)

6. The National Executive Committee

- (a) The National Executive Committee will look after the growth and work of the organisation, in conformity with the policies and programmes adopted by the National Convention and the National Council.
- (b) The National Executive Committee will promote the formation of branches of the organisation in every State in India.
- (c) The National Executive Committee will promote the policies and programmes of the organisation during the interval between two National Conventions and meetings of the National Council.

7. Elections and Formation of National Bodies, Calling of National Convention

- (a) At least six months before the next National Convention, the General Secretary would write to all the branches that they should elect, preferably by consensus, representatives of their respective states for the National Council. The number of members to be elected by the States will be conveyed by the General Secretary in proportion to the total membership of the PUCL in the state according to the records with the National office at the time of the above mentioned letter from the General Secretary to the State branches. Besides these names, the General Secretary of the State branch will be an ex-officio member of the National Council. The names of the representative of the State will be communicated to the General Secretary of the PUCL within two months of the receipt of his letter. *(The National President and the General Secretary may nominate, if necessary, some members to the National Council/National Executive Committee).*

People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)

- (b) At least three months before the expiry of the term of the current President and other office bearers of the PUCL, a meeting of the National Council, constituting of representatives of the states, including the General Secretary, if any, will be held at a place fixed by the General Secretary of the PUCL in consultation with the President. This meeting of the National Council will decide, on the basis of consensus, and if necessary by votes, the office bearers as mentioned in Clause 5 (c) for the next term commencing from the date on which the next National Convention will be held.
- (c) The aforesaid meeting of the National Council will also elect the National Executive Committee of the PUCL which will comprise of the President, the General Secretary, other members as may be decided by consensus by the National Council or nominated by the national President and the General Secretary.
- (d) The outgoing President will be an *ex-officio* member of both the National Council and National Executive Committee.
- (e) The aforesaid meeting of the National Council will also decide the venue and the date of the National Convention. The National Executive Committee will act as the Subjects Committee and would meet on the date preceding the National Convention to decide upon the resolutions, etc., to be discussed by the Convention. Members of the PUCL who want to propose some resolution would send them to the General Secretary one month before the proposed date of the Convention.

8. State and District Branches

- (a) With the sanction of the General Secretary, who in this matter will act in consultation with the President, members of any State may set up as state branch.
- (b) As far as possible, in consultation with the General Secretary of the PUCL, the same pattern would be adapted at the State and district level for their functioning and elections.
- (c) A State Council and State Executive Committee of the branch will be elected as far as possible, according to the procedure laid in clause 7 above, in consultation with the General Secretary.
- (d) The provisions analogous to clauses 4,5,6 and 7 above shall govern the State Convention, State Council and State Executive Committee, and office bearers of the same branch.
- (e) Out of the membership fee collected in any State, one-third shall be sent to the National office and two-third shall remain with the State branch and shared equally with the district branch concerned.
- (f) In case of life members and Patron members, 40% of the amount will be sent to the National office. The entire amount of such members enrolled directly with the Central Office will be kept there.

9. Supplementary Rules

Supplementary Rules for the organisation shall be made by the National Executive Committee as and when necessary.

10. Amendments

The National Council will be entitled to amend by the vote of a majority of its total membership to alter any part of this constitution except the aims and object of the organisation and the criteria of membership as specified in clause 3 (a) above.

Supplementary Rules for Institutional Membership (Refer to Clause 3(A) of the Constitution)

1. Those groups desirous of admission as Institutional Members will have to: (a) Announce support to the objectives of the PUCL and (b) Apply for the same, after taking a decision to do so as per their respective by-laws.
2. The PUCL National Executive Committee will have the power to accept or to reject the applications for admission after careful consideration.
3. Each group would be required to pay an annual fee of Rs 100/- irrespective of its size, or nature of activity. The Executive will, however, have to power to reduce the mount of the fee in exceptional circumstances.
4. Each group active in a state will have the right to nominate one representative as a member of the State Council.
5. Each group active in more than two states will have the right to nominate one representative as a member of the State Council.
6. All Institutional Members in a State will together be given one seat on the State Executive Committee in case their number is lees than five, and two, if it is five or more.
7. All Institutional Members represented on the National Council together will, in case their number is less than ten, nominate one person the National Executive Committee or two, in case their number is ten or more.
8. The mode of such representation, as provided in 6 & 7 above can, either be by rotation or by agreement amongst the institutional members or will be left to be decided by them in consultation with the President of the PUCL.