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## Culture of Violence in Society Pushkar Raj

The recent attack on IBN-Lokmat offices in Mumbai and Pune by Shiv Sena activists is a continuation of violent tactics intimidating and silencing opposing opinion. It is a shameful act against freedom of expression, rule of law and civilized norms of society. This is not the first time that the party has indulged in such an act and probably it is not going to be the last. Some time back the same outfit unleashed a reign of violence in the streets of Mumbai against the hapless north Indian taxi drivers. This forced many of them to flee the city, undermining guaranteed freedoms under the constitution. There is not much evidence that those who were responsible for those offences were punished. A repeat of the same was executed in Maharashtra legislative assembly when a people’s representative was manhandled for taking the oath in Hindi. It seems no place has remained immune to violence in Mumbai when it comes to Shiv Sena’s exclusion agenda.

It is not only Maharashtra, though where violence is being used as a means to force what one particular group or party thinks is ‘right’. Recently Karnataka also witnessed similar incidents where churches were desecrated and women in pubs were attacked. Communist cadres in West Bengal and Kerala have a long history of using violence to make a statement regarding their point of view as the only one that should be acceptable. It is ironic that the country that takes pride in a long tradition of non-violence and peaceful existence should witness such a spate of growing violence in public life.

At a macro level this culture of violence has its roots in our recent past events and how we dealt with them. The perpetrators of horrendous violence leading to mass murders that took place in Delhi (1984), in Mumbai and other parts of country (1992-93) and in Gujarat (2002) have largely gone unpunished. Committees and Commissions have taken decades to find out the ‘truth’ and where they did find out a modicum of it, the reports have gathered dust and no action has been taken against those indicted. Political interference has rendered the rule of law ineffectual and accused have not only gone unpunished but in many cases have been rewarded in many forms. In other words, our political establishment has indirectly been according legitimacy to violence in public life with hope that they will be unaffected by it. However, it will not be so. The Maharashtra legislative assembly incident is proof of it.

Violence is becoming a norm because those who indulge in it go unpunished as they enjoy patronage of one party or the other. ‘Crime without punishment’ is becoming a norm and one finds various manifestations of violence in public life. It is high time we became aware of the menace of impunity that has the potential to turn us into a lawless society. □

## **PUCL National Convention held from 31 Oct. - 1 Nov. 2009 in Ranchi, Jharkhand passed the following resolutions:**

The resolutions which have been passed in the National Convention of the PUCL consists of those issues which would not be looked upon as an exercise of tokenism, instead they should be developed as the agenda that PUCL would undertake in the next two years. The other Resolutions have been adopted in view of the urgency of the contemporary events and circumstances.

The National Convention of PUCL at the outset paid homage to the unparalleled services rendered by Dr. Y P Chhibbar (former General Secretary). All the delegates paid their rich tribute to his selfless and dedicated services to the organization for nearly three decades for which PUCL will always remain indebted to him.

Sh. K. G. Kannabiran (former President), D. Jagannathan and Sidney Pinto (former Treasurers) could not attend the National Convention due to reasons beyond their control. All the delegates immensely appreciated the commitment and dedication shown by them for all these long years for the organization. It is due to their sincere efforts and leadership that the prestige and credibility of the PUCL grew considerably.

### **Resolutions**

#### **State Offensive and Maoist Violence**

PUCL calls upon the Government and the Maoists to cease all hostilities and engage in a dialogue. We also believe that open and free access to the public, civil society and the media should be permitted in these areas so that all information gets reported, and no restrictions should be placed due to threats of the Government or Maoists or other Naxalite groups. We also reiterate the urgency of equitable development in the tribal areas.

#### **Displacement and Acquisition of Land**

Our constitution provides for the utilization of material resources in

such a manner that it promotes equality and checks concentration of wealth. All processes of development should address themselves to this basic constitutional mandate. Therefore, no development should lead to deprivation; it should empower people, instead.

Displacement affects peoples' constitutional rights of life and liberty. The State should ensure that there is no displacement or minimum displacement that too with prior consent of the affected people. Acquisition of land should be allowed only if it is backed by prior resettlement and rehabilitation. In tribal areas, it should be done as per PESA and Schedule V of the Constitution. There should be prior consultation with the gram sabha before any land is acquired by the State. Persons who are displaced should be provided employment security and shareholdings in the companies or Public Sector units.

#### **Repeal Anti Democratic laws**

PUCL calls upon the Central and State Governments to repeal a slew of draconian laws including the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967, as amended. Certain sections of Chapter VI of the IPC called offences against State and State Legislations like the Chattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005. It is our belief that these are undemocratic and undermine constitutional protections available to the citizens. It may be instructive to note that there are more than 40 such draconian laws which seriously undermine constitutional principles.

#### **Granting clemency to prisoners facing Death Penalty**

PUCL takes notes of the proposal of the Council of Ministers to review all the cases of death penalty of prisoners whose clemency petitions are pending for long. PUCL would like to call upon the Council of Ministers to take a principled stand not to execute these prisoners.

#### **Abolition of Death Penalty**

In this context the PUCL would like to reiterate its consistent stand that death penalty is an anathema in modern law, and India should follow the example of over 133 countries who have abolished death penalty thus taking a stand in favour of the protection of the Right to Life. The Indian State must sign the UN protocol against the death penalty at the earliest.

Here PUCL would like to stress the result of the joint PUCL-Amnesty India study of Supreme Court Judgments on death penalty between 1950-2006 which clearly establishes the extreme arbitrariness in the application of 'rarest of rare' principle in death penalty cases. The death penalty was a virtually 'death lottery' in the judicial system with those from the weaker sections being the ones who got picked up and taken to the gallows with those from the upper classes escaping the noose by virtue of their class all of which warrants the abolition of death penalty.

#### **Anti-Torture Law**

PUCL notes with concern the continued news about widespread torture being practiced by police and security agencies across the country as a matter of routine. PUCL demands from the Indian Government to enact a law which incorporates the internationally recognised anti-torture principles as stated in the United Nations Convention against Torture and other cruel, Inhuman or degrading treatment or Punishment (UNCT). PUCL also demands that the Union of India abandon its current draft version of the Prevention of Torture Bill, 2008 as it falls short of these principles and to initiate a nationwide discussion before finalization of the bill.

#### **On Frequent Police firing**

PUCL notes with extreme concern repeated news of police firing all over the country on peaceful protestors causing serious injury and death of numerous people taking recourse of

self defence. PUCL demands that in all cases of firing FIRs of complainants be filed by the police and the actions of the police be investigated by an independent agency. The onus must be on policemen to prove that they resorted to firing in self defence as in the case of an ordinary individual.

#### **Extra Judicial Killings**

PUCL notes with great concern the increasing number of incidents of extra Judicial killings by Police and security forces in different parts of the country. PUCL stresses that in all cases of encounters FIR's be lodged on behalf of family's of the deceased and that a Magisterial (judicial) inquiry be conducted as per the Cr. P. C. Sec 176 (amended in June 2006). Besides in all encounter killings recommendations of the NHRC must strictly be adhered to.

#### **Police Reforms**

PUCL notes with concern that both the Central Government as also the State Governments have been stonewalling bringing about police reforms despite recommendations of the National Police Commission and the directions of the Supreme Court of India. PUCL demands that state governments consult the civil society and people at large while passing new police laws making the police more professional, transparent and accountable. The new law must ensure that the police force operates in a manner free from external intervention and function within constitutionally mandated principles in accordance with the directions of the Supreme Court. PUCL stresses that police service at all levels should be sensitized to the fact that their mandate is to adhere to the Rule of Law and the Constitution.

PUCL is concerned on the increasing communalization of the police in the country and its blatant role in communal riots. The prevailing culture of impunity emboldens the police in crushing the voices of the poor and marginalized.

We demand that police training be such that it reinforces the culture of secularism. The PUCL further reiterates its consistent stand that

along with decommunalization there should be special measures to sensitize the police to issues of diversity and vulnerability of the marginalized sections of society.

#### **Pendancy of cases with NHRC**

PUCL is deeply concerned at the large number of cases pending before the National Human Rights Commission and delay in taking decisions on them. It is common knowledge that it takes on average about five years to take a decision on each case. This by itself results in grave violation of human rights. PUCL demands that immediate measures be taken to rectify the present situation and a social audit of the functioning of the institution be conducted.

#### **Requirement of strengthening the Human Rights Investigation Mechanism at the NHRC**

The PUCL demands that the Union of India consider making the Investigation wing of the NHRC more sensitive, accountable and efficient for investigating into the Human Rights violations. There should be sufficient number of personnel in the investigating wing of the NHRC who should be given periodical training in understanding the human rights and how Human Rights violations should be investigated. The PUCL disapproves the current practice of deputing serving police officials from the various para-military services from across the country for investigation the Human Rights violations.

#### **Transparency and Accountability in Judiciary**

PUCL notes with concern allegations of corruption in judiciary as also lack of transparency in judicial appointments, especially at the higher level. PUCL strongly feels that judiciary is a very important institution of the State that needs serious reforms at various levels. PUCL demands that immediate measures should be taken to clear the backlog of cases at all the levels and ensure speedy justice to the people.

#### **Proposed RTI Amendment**

The PUCL demands from the Union Government must not make any

changes to the existing RTI Act, 2005. The Government move of amendment in the name of "frivolous information" is simply a sinister move of curtailing the rights of the people to know the decision making within the Government, Judiciary and other arms of the State apparatus covered under the RTI. We instead demand full implementation of RTI Act, 2005 along with increasing transparency and suo moto release of information.

#### **Urging the Government of India to Intervene In the Situation of Tamils in Sri Lanka**

PUCL notes with concern that as on date, over 2.5 lakh Sri Lankan Tamils are still living as IDP's (Internally Displaced Persons) in cramped, dangerous and difficult conditions with threat to life and security. PUCL feels that the Government of India should have shown its greater concern and sensitivity to the sufferings of Sri Lankan Tamils in the detention and refugee camps run by the Sri Lankan Security forces. PUCL demands that the Government of India should come out with its policy and role vis-à-vis Sri Lankan Tamil issue and clear stand it is ready to play in ameliorating the sufferings of Sri Lankan Tamils.

PUCL further demands that the Government of India should play a more proactive and positive role in ensuring return and resettlement of Tamil IDPs to their home villages, dismantling of restrictions depriving right to life, living, livelihoods, free movement and speech and expression, permitting observers, including national and international observers to move about and interact with victims and other measures to restore democratic functioning in Sri Lanka. Until these are brought about the Indian Government should not disburse any further financial allocations.

#### **Firing at Indian Fishermen by Sri Lankan Forces**

PUCL notes with concern the continuing firing by Sri Lankan security forces on Indian fishermen fishing in the coastal waters between the two countries. Over the last 25 years more than 400 Indian fishermen

have been killed. PUCL feels that the Government of India has not been firm with the Sri Lankan Government to put an end to the shooting; nor has compensation been paid to the families of victims. PUCL calls upon the Government of India to use its diplomatic and moral pressure to demand prosecution of security personnel involved in the killings and to ensure Sri Lankan security forces forthwith stop attacks. PUCL also demands that the Indian government should ensure recognition by the Sri Lankan government of mutual fishing rights by fishing communities of both countries in the international waters and to work out confidence building measures to bring about amity amongst fishermen of the two countries.

#### **Release of Indian Fishermen from Pakistani Jails**

PUCL expresses its deep concern about the fact that more than 594 Indian Fishermen are languishing in Pakistani Jails and similarly 127 Pakistani Fishermen find themselves in Indian Jails. These figure are only increasing year after year and in a few cases on either side of the border fishermen have spent more than fifteen years in prison. PUCL demands from both the Indian and Pakistani Governments that as recommended by the Indo Pak Joint Judicial committee, fisher folks from both sides be released, de-criminalise minor visa or maritime border-crossing violations and stop violating the UN Convention that prohibits the arrest of fishermen crossing a maritime border.

#### **PUCL Salutes Irom Sharmila of Manipur**

PUCL salutes the historic non-violent struggle of Irom Sharmila of Manipur whose fast unto death demanding repeal of the AFSPA, has entered its tenth year. PUCL expresses grave concern on her personal well being and regrets the indifferent attitude of the Indian State which has steadfastly remained insensitive to her protest and has not responded to the issue despite the overwhelming evidence against AFSPA having become a tool for abuse of State power. PUCL also takes this opportunity to appeal to

Sharmila to withdraw her fast as it has been successful in playing an important role in building a nationwide public opinion against AFSPA and has brought the civil society together against it.

#### **Ban Genetically Modified Seed**

PUCL believes that Genetically Modified Organisms / substances are inherently hazardous for India which is rich in bio diversity and in variety of food crops. We strongly oppose the recent clearance of Bt Brinjal by Government controlled Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC). PUCL believes that permitting the GMOs will not only compromise public health but will also destroy agricultural biodiversity and make farmers dependent on multinational companies as it triggers a process which is irreversible. The Government has resolutely remained silent about the concerns raised about GMOs and the demand for a nationwide public debate on the issue. Given the serious negative consequences of GMOs, PUCL demands its total ban in the country.

#### **Electoral Reforms**

PUCL demands that the declaration of assets and criminal record of every candidate should be made accessible to the people by the Election Commission of India by all possible methods. The right of marking in the ballot paper "None of the Above" should be recognized as an important right of every voter in a democracy.

#### **Narco Test as a Method of Investigation**

The PUCL is greatly disturbed by the use of narcoanalysis as a method of investigation by our prosecuting agencies. It views with concern the increasing trend of courts ordering narcoanalysis of accused persons even against their wishes. PUCL stresses that academic research in several countries has clearly established that narcoanalysis as a method of investigation are not free of methodological problems making these tests inherently arbitrary and dangerous to rely upon. PUCL wishes to point out that the use of drugs on citizens against their wishes falls well within international definitions of

torture. PUCL also decries the involvement of doctors in narcoanalysis, including the examination of citizens by medical institutions and doctors in order to determine that they are "fit" to undergo narcoanalysis. This amounts to collaboration in torture and is clearly against all norms and medical ethics.

#### **Hunger, Famine and the Right to Food**

PUCL is alarmed at the lack of attention and response of the government to the severe crisis of rural livelihoods, aggravated by drought conditions in more than 278 districts in the country. We demand immediate declaration of scarcity conditions in drought affected areas and providing relief as directed by the Supreme Court at the minimum along with protecting the people's right to life as guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. We also demand the provision of full employment under NREGA and relief works without any restrictions, universal provision of grain at Antyodaya rates in these areas and universal provisions of free cooked nutritious food to children under ICDS and MDM schemes with enhanced allocations of Rs. 5/child/day along with pensions to the aged, infirm and single women. We also demand that in order to prevent morbidity of the aged/infirm/physically and mentally challenged and single women, pensions be expanded in this period of distress. The PUCL also demands that in the context of spiraling prices, guarantees on access to safe and adequate food be enacted. We call for an immediate reversal of all policies that are creating and exacerbating hunger.

#### **Restrictions on Drought Relief Activities in State of Jharkhand during Period of Elections**

PUCL is dismayed to learn that restrictions have been imposed by the Election Commission on all drought relief activities in Jharkhand State. This is a violation of people's right to life and these restrictions must be withdrawn immediately instead drought relief measures should be implemented to the hilt.

### **Attack on NBA activists**

The PUCL condemns the recent arrest and brutal lathi charge on Narmada Bachao Andolan ( NBA ) activists in Khandwa MP, who were carrying out a non-violent protest demanding implementation of the HC & SC orders relating to granting of monetary compensation and land in lieu of displacement caused by Indira Sagar & Onkareshwar Dam. We are also shocked at the manner in which the NBA office was ransacked, computer data stolen and office locked by the police. We demand immediate release of the detainees and strict action against the district administration for their illegal actions. We also demand immediate implementation of SC&HC orders on displacement.

### **Commercialization of Education**

PUCL expresses its deep concern on the opening of Education Institutions for private interests promoting commercialization of education. PUCL demands that "Foreign University Regulation Act" should be withdrawn. PUCL expresses its deep concern over the policies introduced by various states and central government encouraging privatization

of education and emphasise that education is core area of governance and it is primary duty of government to provide good education to all.

### **Investigation in Ajmer and Other Blast Cases**

PUCL demands that the investigation of the 2007 Ajmer Dargah Blast, Samjhauta express bombings, the 2008 Modasa Blasts and the 2006 Malegaon blasts and such other incidents in the country, be expedited urgently. We demand the immediate arrests of the culprits and fast tracked trial.

### **Communal Campaign in Karnataka**

PUCL condemns the systematic campaign of communal intimidation and terror of religious minorities in Karnataka by various right wing outfits. These violent attacks have been carried out with total impunity by these groups. PUCL regrets the silence of the Government agencies and exhorts to all civil society groups to come under common umbrella to fight against it.

### **Harassment of Tribals in TN-Karnataka in Veerapan Related Cases**

It has been brought to the notice of

PUCL that many innocent tribals and villagers are implicated in the cases related to Sandalwood smuggler Veerapan. Many are languishing in jail for up to and more than ten years. The harassment of the locals and tribals is continuing for more than 15 years. This has created acute security crises in the minds of the villagers.

PUCL demands that the governments of Karnataka and TN should review all criminal cases and drop charges in cases involving non-heinous offences, as a first measure. In all other cases, the Governments should ensure that trials are concluded within a specified period of time. Following the recommendations of the Sadasiva Commission appointed by NHRC to inquire into charges of human rights abuse by STF, the Governments of both States had announced allocation of Rs. 5 crores each for distribution as compensation to victims of the Special Task Force. The victims are still awaiting disbursement of full compensation. PUCL calls upon both governments to forthwith disburse the compensation amounts to the victims. □

## **National Office bearers elected in National Convention on Nov. 1, 2009 at Ranchi**

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## PUCL: The Challenges Ahead

### Prabhakar Sinha

The human rights movement is passing through difficult times. When the PUCL was formed in 1976 during the Emergency, there were several factors favourable for the restoration of democracy. Firstly, the people rejected Ms Indira Gandhi's claim that the Emergency was clamped to curb the grave internal disturbance in the country and were fully conscious that it was shamelessly done to save her 'Gaddi' ( throne) by silencing the demand for her resignation following the judgment of the Allahabad High Court declaring her election to the Lok Sabha. illegal. Secondly, the mainstream parties were not only divided but one section (led by the Congress) had ruthlessly attacked the other ( the opposition) in an effort to suppress it, and thirdly, the entire populace had the first hand bitter experience of an authoritarian rule. Even those who had not been victimized lived in an suffocating atmosphere of fear. They seethed with anger, but camouflaged it with a deceptive silence and bided their time. And when the opportunity presented itself at the Lok Sabha election of 1977, they threw out Ms Indira Gandhi and her supporters lock, stock and barrel.

Now, the mainstream parties are once again united on the question of the State assuming more and more power and ruthlessly using it violating the constitution and the law. This identity of view was evident even during the early days of the Naxal movement, when no party objected to the killing and detaining of a large number of innocent persons in course of governments' effort to suppress the Naxalites. Later, TADA, which was purportedly enacted to fight Khalistani terrorists, was misused throughout the country detaining seventy six thousands person under it. In fact, nineteen thousand persons were detained under it in Gujarat alone where there was no trace of terrorism in the 1980s. There was no other armed movement of any kind in the

state, yet the criminal detention of 19000 persons admittedly not involved in terrorism remained a non-issue for the political establishment of the country. In the name of fighting Maoists, terrorists and the others involved in armed action against the state, a large number of innocent citizens are being detained in prisons, several are being killed and quite a few women being raped by the security forces, but there is no sign of outrage in the political class. The incarceration, killing and rape and other atrocities committed against our own citizens are being treated as nothing more than collateral damages – an expression used by George Bush to justify killing of innocent Iraqis and the destruction of their property during the aggression on that country. In fact, the strong sense of outrage in the Western democracy against the atrocities committed on the Iraqis in Abu Garaib ( prison), terrorists of foreign origin detained in Guantonamo ( a U.S. prison now closed due to huge protests), the killing of an innocent Brazilian in London on the suspicion of being a terrorist in 2005 and the killing by NATO military of Afgan civilians presents a sharp contrast to the conspiracy of silence of the mainstream parties on the reign of terror let loose on our own innocent people.

The issue is not whether any armed group or organization should be allowed to wage a war against the State or establish a State within State. There can be no question of expecting the State to abdicate its responsibility of putting an end to the acts of violence by individuals, groups, organizations or parties, establish its authority and ensure the rule of law, but there is a vital question regarding the means the State uses and the manner in which it uses it to achieve the goal. The State, in discharging its duty, is obligated to act within the bounds of the law and cannot and should not be allowed to

act lawlessly and tyrannically as it has been doing. No democratic State or civilized society can have a claim to call itself democratic or civilized if it deliberately violates its own constitution, subverts its own laws and uses or allows its police or security forces to act as murderers and marauders for any purpose much less for establishing the rule of law. The Indian State has been guilty of acting lawlessly and recklessly for years and its conduct has seriously undermined the people's respect for the observance of law and has accorded legitimacy to the lawless acts of violence of the State as well as of the organizations challenging the State with arms according to one's sympathy. The undermining of the rule of law by its contempt for the constitution and the law of the land in the name of upholding the rule of law has so seriously eroded the spirit of our democracy and made it so hollow that the knowledgeable and vocal section of the society has, by and large, come to support the State in the subversion of the principle of the rule of law itself without which no real democracy can survive. The State has succeeded in persuading this section to believe that human rights, Civil liberties and the principle of the rule of law are in conflict with our national interest and need to be kept in abeyance till normalcy is restored. A large number is persuaded by the State to view human rights activists as supporters or accomplices of the armed groups/organizations because they take up the cudgels for the innocent people being victimized by the State in the name of fighting to end violence and restore law and order. Many others, not so thoroughly brainwashed, view the human rights activists as 'busybodies' unnecessarily poking their noses into something which is not their affairs and obstructing the State in doing its duty instead of minding their own business. The pejorative term 'Human rightswala' is revealing of their attitude and mindset. This section, relatively

in a better position than the masses, ironically has a feeling of being secure blissfully ignorant of the denial of many of its own rights and dignity.

The masses struggling to eke out a living and used to oppression and exploitation by the police and bureaucracy from the pre-independence days are not aware that human rights or civil liberties have any relevance to them. In fact, quite a large number believe that the police have the right to beat, abuse and humiliate them and accept these as a way of life. The rulers of independent India, who framed a democratic constitution after the British model, did not consider it necessary to organise the police and civil bureaucracy on the pattern in Great Britain to give the benefit of democracy to the common man. The Manual of 1861 framed to create a police to keep the subjects of the empire in subjugation by oppression was retained and the police of democratic India continues to retain its oppressive character. Even where the Police Manual has been reluctantly replaced under the direction of the Supreme Court., only some cosmetic changes have been made but care has been taken to ensure that the police continued to serve its political masters rather than the people. The bureaucracy continues to be the master of the people oppressing and exploiting them with impunity. It has been made more powerful and less accountable and has become far more corrupt over the years. Instead of empowering the people, the bureaucracy has been made more powerful vis-a-vis the people and spineless vis-à-vis the political masters.

In addition, the repressive laws enacted by the colonial government continue to be in force with its vast potential for repression and exploitation. The unbridled power of the police and the civil servants is routinely used against the people for 'extortion'. To call it a bribe is a misnomer. A bribe is what you pay to make undue gain; what you pay for what is your right and what you are

entitled to get as a matter of course is extortion. The bureaucrats use their unbridled power in the same way and for the same purpose as the goons use their gun- for extortion.

Mr Tarkunde (V M Tarkunde) was persistent in his advice that the PUCL should take up corruption as a civil liberties issue. It could not be done in view of our meager strength and the magnitude of the problem, but there was also a feeling among many of us that it was not directly related to our concern. But the experience of watching at close quarters the treatment meted out by the State functionaries to the deprived and marginalized section of society constituting 70% or more of the country's population is blood-chilling. They must shell out Rs 5000.00 to Rs 7000.00 out of the meager amount of Rs 35000.00 they receive for building Indira Awaas, Rs 500.00 to Rs 700.00 out of Rs 1600.00 they receive for the care of the child and the mother at the time of the child birth, part of the small amount they receive under NAREGA, a hefty commission to the officer of the bank for any loan they may be entitled to get and a negotiated amount whenever they receive some benefit from the government. This blood sucking of the starving population goes on with full knowledge of all concerned. It is a non-issue for the society and it is also a non-issue for the political parties whose workers either choose to be mute spectators or participants in the shady deal. The helpless victims of horrifying atrocity expecting no help from any quarters not only pay through their nose but are also grateful to the 'Dalal' ( broker) who arranges the deal.

The weak and poor are arrested without a warrant on the drop of a hat, are subjected to the third degree method in the police custody occasionally leading to death, remain languishing in the jail under sub-human condition for periods longer than their alleged offence warranted because they are too poor to move for bail. They have to submit to atrocities committed by the powerful

because they cannot afford to pay the police for filing an F.I.R. or getting the perpetrators charge-sheeted. If occasionally the accused is tried, they cannot afford to pay the Public Prosecutor who, then, supplements the fee paid by the State with the huge amount he takes from the accused to ensure his acquittal. What was done to the case of Jessica Lal by the police and Prosecutors is the rule in this country and not an exception just as what was done by the media to get the case reopened is not the rule but an exception.

These helpless people, constituting more than 70% of our citizenry, are second or third class citizens of the country. The fundamental rights like the right to personal liberty, personal dignity, equality before the law and equal protection of the law as well as many other rights enshrined in the constitution and other statute books are like a banker's cheque the bank refuses to honour. To suggest that these semi-starved people take recourse to the constitutional remedy (under Art.32 and Art.226) by approaching the Supreme Court or the High Court is a cruel joke. The ruling elite of the country chose not to give them the full benefit of democracy and they are now the forsaken citizens of India expected to be grateful for small mercies like NAREGA and Indira Awas while there are three thousand CEOs drawing more than one crore ( Rupees) as annual salary.

The PUCL and many other civil liberties organizations were formed under extraordinary circumstances to meet extraordinary attacks on the civil liberties of the people. The PUCL was formed to oppose the subversion of democracy and attempt to impose an authoritarian rule similarly, many other organizations were formed from time to time to oppose lawless acts of the State in the name of suppressing armed struggles by certain organizations. Because of the peculiar circumstances of their origin and their specific goal determined by them ( i.e. the circumstances of their

birth), the suppression of the rights and liberties of the common man in the day to day life did not receive the attention it deserves. In fact, when Ms Gandhi was ousted from power and the Emergency was lifted, there was a feeling that democracy was restored and the task of the organization was almost accomplished leading to inertia. It is significant that the PUCL was revived with the present constitution only in November, 1980 when Ms Gandhi returned to power. Since then, the successive governments have been enacting a slew of repressive laws:- from The National Security Act, 1980 to the amendment to The Unlawful Activities (Prevention of) Act, 1967 via TADA, POTA, CLA etc (the Armed Forces Special Powers Act was enacted much earlier in 1958). The task of meeting the challenge to the life, personal liberty and dignity of the innocent citizens under these laws (since 1980) has been formidable demanding our full attention, effort and resources. In fact, human rights organizations are not equal to the task of meeting the existing threat to life, liberty and the dignity of the innocent people and the threat, which might be far greater and far more dangerous in the days to come

The Union Government has repeatedly announced its resolve to use massive force including the use of Air Force helicopters with the authority to use force purportedly in self defence to fight the Maoists. In addition, it is proposed to concentrate on development as a measure to reduce their influence. However, the use of power by the police and security forces without accountability has always been resulting in the death and detention of a large number of innocent persons. The experience so far has been that all the so called special laws (black laws) have been misused by the authorities, who have been granted impunity against legal action for their illegal acts. Hundreds of thousand of innocent persons have suffered due to misuse of MISA, TADA, AFSPA, POTA, ULAA and CLA till date, but the grave injustice done

to the innocent commoners has not been even debated by the ruling parties. MISA was repealed by the Janata Party only because it was misused against one section of the mainstream parties by another and was reminiscent of the dark days of the Emergency and their own suffering. There appears to be unanimity on the use including misuse of force and the special laws to curb violent movements even if the innocent suffer so long as the victims are the downtrodden. Death and indiscriminate arrest and detention of a large number of the marginalized people are inevitable under the proposed plan of action, which is bound to cause further alienation and drive the victims, their kith and kin and many members of their community to organizations pledging to stand by them with or without arms.

Big industries to be set for the kind of development to which the government is committed to benefit big capitalists is bound to cause massive displacement (of the poor tribals or other marginalized people) followed by protest by the victims. The stock response of the State would predictably be more repression, which would cause further alienation.

The only way to eliminate violence is to make it unnecessary by establishing the rule of law and guaranteeing justice, but that course is incompatible with the policy and programme of the ruling parties. The model of development, which has been declared a human right by the United Nations and which alone can lead to peace in the areas disturbed by armed confrontation, is in conflict with the interest of the big industries the governments are committed to serve. The UN declaration on development as a human right unambiguously states: "that the human person is the central subject of the development process and that development policy should therefore make the human being the main participant and beneficiary of development." Instead of taking up small projects in which the locals could participate and of which they

may be beneficiary as stipulated in the

UN declaration, the policy of the governments is to take up big projects in which the locals are not competent to participate and of which they are not going to be the beneficiary. The consequence of such projects is massive displacement, uprooting of the poor from their traditional homes and pauperization in grave violation of their human right. The protest against this grave injustice has always been ruthlessly suppressed. On the one hand the ruling parties are united in repressing the poor who protest against being ejected from their homes where they have been living for generations, on the other, they are solidly united in protecting several lakh better off inhabitants of Delhi guilty of illegal constructions. The mainstream parties went to the extent of using the Parliament to enact a new law to thwart the efforts of the Supreme Court to enforce the law by removing the illegal constructions.

There can be no two honest opinions that it is natural for the people subjected to such grave injustice to experience violent anger, and it is not unusual for a few to gravitate towards those who pledge to fight for them with arms and for many to sympathise with those who risk their lives for their cause. The principle of the rule of law mandates that whereas those indulging in acts of violence must be punished according to the law, no innocent person should be unjustly made to suffer. The principle followed by our judiciary that let hundred persons go unpunished, but let not one innocent person be unjustly punished should be followed by the State in dealing with the violent movements also. In fact, even the so condemned U.S government has been releasing foreign nationals detained in Guantanamo prison for lack of conclusive proof even though they believe them to be guilty of acts of terror. India certainly can do for her own citizens what the US (a victim of terrorism) can do for foreigners.

The State cannot convert those who are committed to seize power by means of armed confrontation for it is an article of faith them, but the thousands or lakhs of the downtrodden who follow them are not committed to any such ideology. They are disaffected and angry victims of grave injustice and can be mollified and brought back to the life of peace if the State ensures the rule of law and give them justice. The peace loving people have not become violent or supporters of violence by anyone's persuasion but due to a strong reaction and resentment against injustice they are made to suffer. The State has been taking recourse to use of force because the interest it seeks to serve allows no room for justice.

The rising tide of attack on human rights can be stemmed only by wide societal support which it does not currently enjoy. However, the task is Herculean, as the Indian society does not offer a very fertile ground for rapid growth of human rights. Owing to its caste system, feudalism and colonial rule, inequality of man is part of its psyche. Education, which should have been an enlightening influence, itself has created a barrier between the educated and the uneducated. Equality of every member of human society, which is the foundation of human rights and democracy, is in conflict with the existing internalized value of our society. It stands in the way of our identifying with those who do not belong to our social class. This aspect of our mindset has been keeping the educated and the other privileged section of society callously indifferent to the atrocities committed against the poor, who constitute the overwhelming majority of our people. To remove the barrier dividing the privileged and the rest is a difficult but unavoidable task before us.

The relatively privileged section of society has an extremely narrow view of human rights due to the context in which it has been hearing of it. Human rights, to the members of this section, are a matter

of interest to terrorists, Maoists, the others fighting the State with arms and criminals who might occasionally have been dealt with by the administration in violation of the law and who take its advantage by making a hue and cry against the authorities. Their outlook may change if they are made aware of the all embracing nature of human rights. For example, it may be a surprise to them to learn that our democratic system, independent judiciary, fundamental rights and many other laws are human rights known to us by their names in our constitution and statute books. Awareness of human rights in totality, particularly the economic and social rights, is bound to draw attention to how much they themselves are entitled to and how little they have receive. The realisation is likely to shake off their apathy and indifference.

The routine violation of the human rights of the common man including the indignity daily heaped on him but treated as normal needs to be taken up as an important item on our agenda. The source of this unacceptable phenomenon is to be found both in the colonial laws and the old practice continuing from the pre-independence days. The anti-human rights provisions in the existing laws need to be identified and their repeal demanded. Effort should also be made to cure the society of its insensitivity to the humiliating treatment of the poor by the police and other public servants. There is so much insensitivity that the sight of a police constable slapping a 'Rikshaw-puller' or any other poor man, undertrial prisoners being taken to a court with hand-cuff and rope around their waist and the police robbing the poor labourers returning home of part of their earning in the trains evokes no protest. All acts of injustice which affect the largest number of the common man need to be highlighted to create awareness in the society and build opposition against them. The victims should also be made aware of their rights and inspired to stand up and fight for themselves..

In this vast country, there are bound to be a number of human rights issues of crucial importance peculiar to an area which should be taken up locally but with support from the rest of the country. The PUCL at the national level has to play a vital role in ensuring a coordinated and concerted action.

Though the domain of human rights includes all aspects of life, and there is a very wide choice in respect of issues which may be taken up, the primacy of the right to life, personal liberty, human dignity and freedom from the fear of torture cannot be overlooked. This primacy does not flow from any theory, but is based on the natural preference of a person. The first priority of an ordinary person is to save his life, personal liberty, and his body from physical harm; the other things come later.

However, with the present miniscule strength of the organization, very little can be achieved, and our first priority should be to enhance our strength. It is not easy given that there is dearth of people interested in working in an organization which makes a claim on their time and money without offering them anything in return except for the satisfaction serving this great cause may give them. The alternative of quick expansion by indiscriminate enrollment may be suicidal. An organization with members with no belief in its aims and objects is destroyed from within due to the dilution of its commitment to its aims and objects. Such members are an unbearable liability for any organization.. The experience of many political parties with genuine commitment to their ideology going stray as a result of indiscriminate enrollment under the pressure of electoral politics should be an eye opener. Our organization has no such compulsion and can avoid the pitfall. However, since human rights is not a well known or popular cause, there may not be many who may be interested. We have to inform, inspire and motivate well-meaning socially orientated persons to join us. In the

early days, the Socialist and the Communist parties motivated people to join them and continued the process of debate and discussion. Even now many Marxist parties (C.P.I.-M-L or SCUI etc) follow the practice with varying degrees of success.

Apart from enrollment of only the people with commitment to or, at least, sympathy for human rights being right in principle, it is also necessary on practical grounds. Human rights are under attack from the establishment, and it has succeeded in creating an unfavourable climate. A human rights activist has to give a good account of himself in the frequent debates and discussion he has to informally enter with the people. Many state and district units have been organizing work-shops, seminar and informal discussions to keep their members informed. Literature have also been published

for the benefit of the members and the general public to create awareness in the society..

When the present constitution of the PUCL was framed, great stress was put on bringing in its people with different ideological persuasion including the members of political parties who declared their faith in the aims and objects of the PUCL. The clause 2 of the constitution reads as follows:

“2.Aims & Objects: The People’s Union for 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 difference which they may have in regard to political and economic institutions suitable for the country.”

This provision should be taken seriously because it underlines the spirit of inclusiveness and is a

direction to bring together all who are committed to civil liberties with a view to give strength to the organization. The experience of the state units which have been following it has been very enriching. Apart from creating a culture in which the people with irreconcilable and antagonistic ideologies could work together for years to pursue a common goal in an atmosphere of friendship, it has kept the organization from the slightest deviation. from its course. The organizations consisting mostly of like minded persons are not likely to have these benefits.

This is one view of the challenges and the measures to meet them. There are bound to be many more. The organization at different levels should try to identify more challenges and think of measures to meet them. □

## General Secretary Report to the National Council-Convention Meeting

Dear PUCL Delegates

It is my pleasure to welcome you all in this beautiful city of Ranchi for the National Council meeting. I thank the Jharkhand unit for taking this enormous responsibility of volunteering to host National Council and Convention. I congratulate them for arranging everything in a near perfect manner.

Friends, the last National Council was held in November 2004 in Ahmedabad. During this period PUCL lost about 15 members. The greatest loss was death of our General Secretary Shri Y P Chhibbar last year. He was in a way pillar of PUCL for over three decades. His dedication and commitment to the cause of civil liberties and PUCL is unparalleled. I salute to his service in building the organization.

Amongst the other members that we lost some were founders and very active members of PUCL. Their names are as follows: Smitu Kothari, Delhi; G S Bhargava, Delhi; M A Rane, Bombay; Iqbal Ansari, Delhi; Abu Baker, Delhi; Dev Vrat Pathak,

Gujarat; Kirit Bhatt, Gujarat; Ruddar Datt, Delhi; Dev Kant Kakati, Assam; O N Sood, Himachal Pradesh; C Thangmura, Mizoram; Amulya K N Reddy, Karnataka; Pattabi, Karnataka; S K De, Gujarat.

I propose that we stand in silence for one minute in respect of their memory after I finish reading this report.

After the death of Sh. Chhibbar we shifted to new rented office. It is in the vicinity of the earlier office with a rent of Rs. 12500/- . We now have three employees – one computer operator and two office helps. Out of these two, shortly only one will be with us. The total expenses of all this run into about near fifty thousand.

The financial condition of the organization remains precarious. It is only some lawyer contacts of justice Sachar who have been contributing and organisation has been surviving. Earlier this council had decided that Rs. 1000 should be contributed by every national council member for the national office running. That has not happened. This council must

deliberate some ways through which some resources could be generated for the national office.

PUCL Bulletin publication was resumed in January 2009. It could not be published in November and December 2008 because of ill health of Dr. Chhibbar. Till recently we have had a contract with a person who used to publish and distribute our Bulletin. However there were reports from some members that they were not getting the Bulletin regularly. Consequently we cancelled his contract and changed the press. Now we ourselves post the Bulletin. This saves a few hundred rupees and ensures proper delivery of the Bulletin to the subscribers.

In regard to Bulletin material I think that since it is PUCL Bulletin it must have reports of PUCL activities from all over the country, howsoever small or big. This is my understanding that a large number of activities are carried out by various units of PUCL all over the country but perhaps reports do not reach us and therefore are not published. This is particularly true of Hindi speaking areas. I request

that reports of all the activities be sent to the national office. If this council thinks appropriate we can consider the Bulletin making bilingual adding a few pages to the existing journal. This will have twin effect. One there will be greater reporting of PUCL activities and second our readership will increase.

Similarly the cost of Bulletin at present is Rs. 6. Our monthly expenses on it are around Rs. 8000/- , meaning about Rs. 8 per copy. Its annual membership is Rs. 50/- . I think it needs to be revised. While appropriately increasing the single copy price and annual subscription, we can also include another category of three years or five year subscription. Many people might like to subscribe for three years or five years instead of annually renewing for a small amount of fifty. Many of them do not remember to renew it and it is an extra work at office of reminding people for it.

I shall also request members to explore the possibilities of advertisement for the Bulletin so that it could become self sustaining.

Similarly PUCL website is being worked on. I am getting all our reports typed and proofed so that they are available online. This will ensure that the past reports are not lost in shifting or do not decay in office with the passage of time. Presently all our present issues of Bulletin are available online. Shortly all earlier Bulletins will also be online. I have also discussed with Sandeep Vaidya, our website manager to make the website more interactive. Further suggestions in this regard are welcome from the members.

Another development has been formation of PUCL Civil Liberties Trust. The idea had germinated because a donor had offered to donate Rs. 6 lacs. And given the precarious financial condition of the organisation it was accepted. I request sh. Sinha to talk about it briefly later in the day as I do not know much about it.

We have been holding Tarkunde Memorial Lecture. At the same time

family members of Sh. Tarkunde and some lawyers constituted a trust and they also hold a lecture in his memory. Justice Sachar had suggested that there could be a combined PUCL – Tarkunde Trust Lecture. I think it is an appropriate suggestion and should be considered.

There has been earlier efforts to revive some of the state branches. But I am afraid there has not been much progress on it. In the states where there is potential of growth and that needs immediate attention are Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Mumbai. I am glad to mention that the Punjab unit has begun to function and representatives from the states are attending the meeting. I think that the unit which is immediate neighbor should take interest and provide vital inputs to national office so that initiative of galvanizing a state unit could be taken up.

PUCL has a big name in judicial intervention and making the system work. Much of work in this regard falls on the shoulders of Justice Sachar and Sh. Sanjay Parikh at national level and because of them PUCL has secured several human rights victories. Similarly I suggest that we should have same kind of team of activist lawyers at the state level that could intervene on behalf of the state unit.

Ladies and gentleman, there are many burning human rights issues that this council and later the convention should debate and take a stand. We are living in quite turbulent time where human rights are under constant attack by the state and non-state actors. Similarly the human rights defenders are also under constant attack. We from PUCL have represented to the National Human Rights Commission on this. Following that NHRC had deliberated on it in the first week of October. We hope that some concrete guidelines emerge on this subject that is of some assistance to human rights activists in their work.

The state has been insensitive to the aspirations of large sections of society ignoring its commitment under

part IV of the constitution. As a result there has been armed insurgency in some parts of the country. There is a spectacle of violence and many innocent lives are being lost. Besides development drive of the state in cooperation with private business interest has been ruining tribal areas driving them out without adequate rehabilitation.

The new police Acts are being passed in several states. It is a historic opportunity to intervene where these Acts are in the process of being formulated. If with our effort there is a little change in the law somewhere it would be a good contribution. The related issues for deliberation are government of India's stand on law against torture and capital punishment. Apart from it government's move to change RTI Act, continuous existence of draconian laws, growing encounter deaths government of India's apathy towards Sri Lankan refugees and judicial accountability also call for immediate attention.

Lastly may I submit that this council has important function of electing new national office bearers. This council has to choose a new President, a new General Secretary and a new Treasurer. Sh. Kannabiran due to his ill health has shown his unwillingness to continue as the President. He very much wanted to come to attend the council meeting but has not been able to come for indifferent health condition. After the death of Dr. Chhibbar the National Executive met in Delhi and asked me take over function of the General Secretary temporarily. So a new General Secretary needs to be elected as the national council is the only authorized body to do so. Sh. Jagannathan has also shown his unwillingness to continue as the Treasurer due to his other professional responsibilities and hence need for another Treasurer.

With these words I open this meeting for discussion.

With thanks

**Pushkar Raj**

General Secretary, National PUCL.

## Treasurer's Report

Dear friends,

It is my pleasure to place the Treasurer's report at this National Convention at Ranchi, for your kind consideration. You may be well aware the financial audit report of the National PUCL for the year 2007-08 was published in the bulletin – September, 2009 issue. I must share with you that the sad demise of my friend and the committed PUCL General Secretary Dr. Y.P. Chhibbar, put the organizational working to a virtual standstill for about two months. With kind support of the President, vice-Presidents and senior members of the National PUCL, the work was resumed. Due to these developments the audit of the accounts was considerably delayed and the process of maintaining the records of accounts got postponed. Hence I would request you to kindly accept my apologies for being unable to place before you audited accounts for the year 2008-09. The process should be completed in another two months time and the same should be published in the Bulletin which the New National Council to be elected, I am sure, would ensure.

I am placing before you summarized details of receipts and expenditure for the period April 1, 2008 to October 15, 2009 in the enclosed sheet. I wish to remind you that they are not audited yet and hence to be read as approximates. I request you to approve the report and allow me to present you the audited results soon.

I have been the Treasurer for over 14 years, thanks to late Dr. Chhibbar. It was a great privilege to be associated with such an organization. I wish to state few issues for your kind attention:

The Organisation office should be strengthened in terms of space, personnel, maintenance of records and above all being visible in the society.

The strength of the organization also depends on the discipline of the members in their contributions towards the cause and the finance for running organization. The membership fees should be paid and duly remitted, as provided in the constitution.

A trust named "Civil Liberties

and Human Rights Trust" has been formed to finance the activities of PUCL and organizations with similar objectives. I request the members to consider steps for improving the finances of the Trust so as to take up more human rights related developmental activities by PUCL, all over the country.

As on date, the National PUCL Office would require about Rs.1.5 lacs per month to meet the organization expenses, which would include an effective organization set up, with appropriate Staff and ability to publish the Bulletin. This excludes any expenses towards activities that would strengthen the causes for which PUCL stands.

National Conventions and the elections to the Councils to be conducted as per the Constitution.

I would like to thank all the members of PUCL for their support to and acceptance of my role as Treasurer, National PUCL, all these years.

**D. Jagannathan**  
Treasurer-National PUCL

### Position of Cash in Hand and Cash at Bank(Unaudited)

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Bank A/c.</i>	<i>Cash in Hand</i>
Balance as on April 1, 2008*	Rs. 208154.58*	Rs. 26643.35*
Balance as on April 1, 2009	Rs. 100710.88	Rs.32713.00
Balance as on October 15, 2009	Rs.121845.71	Rs.3281.00

*\*Marks indicate these figures are audited figures and published in the Bulletin –September 2009 Issue.*

### Summary of Revenue Expenses (Unaudited)

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>1.4.2008 to31.3.2009</i>	<i>1.4.2009 to 15.10.2009</i>
Bulletin Expenses	Rs. 95500	Rs. 50269
PUCL Org. Expenses	Rs. 4,32,531*	Rs. 2,18,891

*\*Excludes an expenditure of Rs. 84200 towards the holding of Special National Conference held at Delhi in March, 2009.*

### Summary of Receipts (Unaudited)

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>1.4.2008 to 31.3.2009</i>	<i>1.4.2009 to 15.10.2009</i>
PUCL Bulletin	Rs.3,53,363 Rs. 18046	

October 29, 2009

**D. Jagannathan, Treasurer**

## Rajindar Sachar's Speech for National convention of PUCL at Ranchi - 31-10-2009

Dear friends, colleagues,

Let me first apologize for my absence from the convention. Unfortunately due to some temporary health problem I am not advised to travel. Believe me the pain of not being with all of you is greater than my medical problem. This is the first time I would have missed National Council / Convention being held since 1986, when I was privileged to be associated with this wonderful organization; in fact all my public activities are part of my small association with PUCL, which has been fortunate in having been led by stalwarts like Jai Parkash Narain Ji and Tarkunde Ji. I promise to make up for this absence with my visits to various units in near future.

We of course miss deeply our redoubtable, untiring, strict but invariably correct lead given by our erstwhile General Secretary Chhibbar Sahib, who single handedly and in all adverse circumstances kept the working of PUCL afloat, even in absence of proper funding and office wherewithal. I pay my tribute to the memory of these stalwarts whose dedication will continue to inspire us.

I must congratulate you all in having elected Prabhakar Sinha Ji, as our new President. I know how hard it was to persuade him to accept the office – his persistence in keeping low profile, though determinedly and forcefully letting us take advantage of his dedication, knowledge of the principles governing PUCL, has been a source of strength. I have no doubt that under his leadership all of us in PUCL will have supreme confidence that PUCL will keep its principles aloft and will continue to be recognized (even if I may be accused of being immodest) as the premier most human Rights organization in India.

I know all of you are wiser than me and enriched with field experience will work out the programme for future. Evidently it will entail priorities for regional areas. But some points I would like to place before you, so that if there is any doubt or it needs any clarification the same can be usefully discussed at the convention.

I have always maintained that PUCL is not a reactive body i.e. to say that it remains inactive till some agency violates civil liberties – so that we only prepare reports (no doubt essential) and our recommendation. This I believe is the minimum of area. To me civil liberties are not merely political right of free speech, assembly, but they constitute broader human Rights of the deprived sector, the homeless, the tribal and denial of their rights recognized by the constitution. Working for Human Rights is to wrestle within you to strive to remain firm to commitment to unvarnished truth, even when people may misinterpret your motives including some time hurl calumnious accusations. But that is a price one must be willing to pay in the firm belief of victory of our National motto *Satya Mave Jaite*.

A good percentage of the press has also gone along with the vicious executive propaganda that human rights organizations are concerned with the rights of terrorist rather than that of the victims of terrorism. This is untrue, considering that established human rights bodies like Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) have unequivocally condemned the killing and taking of hostages by terrorist, whether in Jammu & Kashmir or the northeast or the Maoists though at the same emphasizing the culpability of the State agencies. The painful part is that even when the statements by the NGO's condemning the killing by

terrorists of human rights activists in various parts of the country is published in newspapers nevertheless the media because of its prejudice against the human rights organizations continues to present this wrong picture of the human rights activists.

PUCL maintains that meeting the challenge of Terrorism requires determination, proper utilization of intelligence information and support of public and not these draconian laws violating the human rights of citizens.

Human Rights Organization firmly believe that by indulging in violence the militants, Maoists clearly violate the human right of the individuals in the society. But this does not mean that unlawful excesses by the State agencies are justified or can be condoned, even though one appreciates the strains and risks under which these agencies operate. Any such condonation will destroy the fabric of democratic institutions.

I must also share with you that PUCL in the legal field can legitimately take pride at being pioneer in fighting legal battles to preserve the rights of individuals and the various aspects of human Rights.

It was the PUCL which challenged TADA, POTA Though we were not able to get them declared unconstitutional but Supreme Court read down many of the stringent provisions. Because of this and pressure of public opinion government has not tried to introduce even in the latest security legislations the most obnoxious provision of making confession before the police admissible.

Another important contribution of PUCL is to have the Supreme Court declare the mandatory requirement of candidates for declaring their assets and information about his criminal chargesheeting.

Another first is the banning of telephone tapping by the police unless authorized by higher quasi judicial authority. I have no hesitation in saying that in all these legal battles my young friend Sanjay Parikh has really been the architect and bastion of strength for all these victories. He could tell you of many of his victories and you should not let his modesty withhold this information.

In the wake of 26/11 Bombay attack, a wave of panic and anger was naturally to be expected. Instead of doing honest and impartial assessment of the failure of various government machinery, an easy, uncalled for resort to Anti Human Right Legislation was resorted to, and not unsurprisingly all the parties thumped their patriotic chests to pass this most draconian legislation N.I.A. and amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention Act. 1967).

Such like indifference to the human rights has been a common feature of the political class. It is important to note that the practical utility of TADA was shown to be nil because during 1985 – 93, conviction rate of those arrested never exceeded 0.89 per cent. But the saddest part was the almost total somnolence of our legislators which shows that discussion in Parliament on TADA from 1985 to 1993 has varied between 1 hour and 10 minutes (1993) to a maximum of 8 hours in 1985. The participation of MPs varied from 8 MPs to a maximum of 34 in 1985. It would seem that gradually the sensitivity of MPs at the deprivation of basic rights of citizens is becoming dulled.

It is also a matter of regret that the media, which is expected to be a protector of human rights, played a damp squib in opposing such anti Human Right Legislation.

The government has been seeking to take cover by seeking to call in aid U.S. Patriot Act., as being equally restrictive – first that Act

does not apply to U.S.A. citizens. The Act has received severe condemnation at the hands of American Civil Liberties Union, thus - “This law is based on the faulty assumption that safety must come at the expense of civil liberties.” A quiet acceptance of this obnoxious legislation led to shameful excesses of Guantanamo Camps. Similarly taking cover under this draconian legislation, the Executive acts in a manner which is inconsistent with civil liberties and human Rights of individuals, and the poorer sections of society, especially tribals, Dalits.

PUCL absolutely rejects violence as a means of social change because it believes that violence though it may purportedly tend to show greater effectiveness in shorter run, it inevitably results in encouraging an atmosphere where average poor person becomes a pawn between the votaries of private violence and the state. The real issues are thus spirited away and all effort of an average person is spent in how to avoid physical annihilation.

Of the many violations of human rights that can be listed, none is worse but less spoken of in fashionable seminars on human rights – I am referring to “poverty” the mother of all human rights violations.

No doubt human rights violations manifest themselves in various forms – brutality of police, or gender injustice, pollution and environmental degradation, social ostracism of the Dalits – but ultimately the answer to all these must be found in our commitment to the elimination of poverty.

Freedom of an individual, which is the postulate of human rights, obviously can have no meaning so long as the poor in the country do not have their economic conditions improved and the discrimination based on privilege do not become mere memories instead of becoming more and more aggressive as time passes on. The present situation

must cause concern to all human right activists.

Thus participation by PUCL in the fight for homeless, the exploited tribals, and for provision of even drinking water not only in the villages, but in the country where even according to government figures one third of India’s population has no access to safe drinking water, are the priorities of items of work of PUCL.

I am mentioning some items of priority work for discussion before the meeting which you may debate and on which differences in emphasis could be expected. I feel that each unit of PUCL has to prioritize items, programme it will concentrate on. Each State Unit naturally has its compulsions and priorities. But it is fruitful to have an overall discussion on these items so that we could benefit from each others views.

I was wondering whether one or two programmes which are of all India impact and whether PUCL can or should take them as priority items of work (this is what convention needs to decide) take for example N.R.E.G. Govt. statistics show that 10% - 20% are able to benefit and the rest is being misappropriated. I was wondering could not our PUCL members by mobilizing the beneficiaries and exposing the misdeeds of local small official satraps (no doubt having the full backing of the higher rung of administration) which deny to the poor their rights will be able to give strength to the work of PUCL which is to see that the right of the poor are not denied to them. Does it sound like political work – in my opinion no – getting to the poor their rights is the first priority of human Right activists which all of you by being members of PUCL have voluntarily accepted. Let us not forget that PUCL was born in the crucible of fire to fight against the denial of not only civil liberties but all political Rights guaranteed by the constitution.

In this regard I have no manner of doubt that the convention will also seriously discuss the plight of tribals who are helpless victims, between the violence of Maoists and the government. While I have no doubt that the senseless and shameless violence and illegality perpetrated by the State against tribals and poor people (witness the recent admission of Jharkhand State Government in withdrawing 1 lakh false cases against the tribals – (this is kind of provocation which alienates tribals thus conducive to violence) obviously as a defence to create a ground for proceeding against the tribals so as to facilitating the snatching away of land of the tribals for the benefit of Indian and foreign corporate giant. I also feel that in the current public debate on issue of governmental action against Maoists (which in reality touches all of us and especially working in Human Right filed), PUCL should reiterate its view against violence in public life. PUCL had issued a statement sometimes back which will be coming up for discussion before the convention. I personally feel that we need to reiterate that we condemn equally strongly the violence either by the State agencies or the Maoists because according to me violence vitiates the whole straggle of the poor and tribals. I am just mentioning this aspect which you may only use as a discussion point so as to work out a definite resolution.

“PUCL calls upon the government and the Naxalites to cease all hostilities immediately and engage in a dialogue. We also believe that open and free access to the public, civil society and media should be permitted in this area to report on full information regarding those areas, and no restriction should be placed by the threats of the Government or Maoists/Naxalites to them. We also reiterate the urgency of equitable development in the tribal areas. We especially note with

great concern and totally oppose any effort at taking away the rights of the tribals on the fallacious and untenable propaganda of industrialization which is only a fig cover to conceal the illegal benefits being given to large industrial houses, foreign and Indian, to the total detriment and deprivation of the rights vested in the tribals by our Constitution.

There is another equally urgent matter requiring the attention of PUCL. We see the atrocities against Dalits are multiplying. Notwithstanding format/legal and even constitutional protection we daily read instances of atrocities on Dalits increasing and their rights of representation in Panchayats and other local formations totally denied. Surely PUCL must draw road plan on this aspect.

Our hearts go out to Tamilian Ceylonese whose human Rights of even survival is at stake. I am quite sure the convention will draw out an action plan for this vital matter.

Another grave issue which PUCL must take is the abolition of death penalty. Strange that land of Gandhi should ignore his moral exhortation which he openly proclaimed that, “I cannot in all conscience agree to anyone being sent to the gallows. God alone can take life because he alone gives it.”

The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour called the death penalty “.....a sanction that should have no place in any society that claims to value human rights and the inviolability of the person”.

So far 133 countries, from all regions of the world, have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice and only 25 countries carried out executions in 2006, a recorded 1591 executions compared to 2105 in 2005. World opinion is now strongly veering round to the abolition of death penalty.

Some time a question has been raised whether PUCL can participate on a common issue with other N.G.O.'s. I do not think it raises any complicated issue. The overwhelming consideration before PUCL member is that his actions representing PUCL are to be consistent with the principles of PUCL. If subject to this overwhelming presence there are some other organizations who are also raising identical issues, I can not see any objection to PUCL units working together for this common objective. But I must emphasis that group of PUCL will retain its own autonomy and identity. PUCL can not accept that the temporary working group will have a higher power to take group decisions which will automatically be binding on PUCL representative on the excuse of a majority decision of the group (and even if it happens to be against the principles of PUCL). I feel that in such circumstances the only alternative would be for PUCL to withdraw and dissociate – excepting this position - otherwise working with other similar minded organizations on commonly agreed items of programme are totally acceptable. This could be elaborated and discussed.

At the end but not the least let me congratulate you all. Let me especially congratulate Jharkhand unit and its office bearers led by Mr. Bhattacharya who with the untiring energy, have made various arrangements and keeping the channel of communication open so regularly right upto the eve of holding of convention.

I am hoping that in near future I may be able to make up for my present absence by visits to various State units, as and when convenient to you all.

I thank you for your patience and once again my regret at not having been personally present.

Rajindar Sachar

## Report of Delhi PUCL presented at the National Convention, Ranchi, Jharkhand, November 1, 2009

Delhi PUCL covers not only the capital of the country in its activities but also the areas adjoining Delhi, like Gurgaon in Haryana and NOIDA and Ghaziabad in U.P., broadly covered under the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi.

In the process, we intervened in the case of brutal lathi-charge by the Haryana police on the workers of Honda Motorcycle Factory located at Manesar near Gurgaon who were peacefully agitating for their demands. In the lathi-charge hundreds of workers were injured, many of them seriously, with fractured legs and arms and head injuries. A Delhi PUCL team visited the injured in various hospitals, talked to the workers many of whom had been booked under various charges, the police officials and other concerned people and brought out a report. Similarly, Delhi PUCL intervened in the case of attack and arrests of a large number of poor people who were sleeping in a Mosque at Gurgaon at night, and also in the incident of an organised attack by the police on the people in a village in Mewat against which the people of the area organised a big Panchayat. More than ten thousand people attended the Panchayat organised at Mewat College.

Because of our intervention many people detained at Police Stations of Gokalpuri, Sultanpuri and Gulabi Bagh at Delhi without any charges were released.

On the complaint of two Pakistani nationals detained at the Foreigners Detention Camp, Lampur, Delhi, Delhi PUCL conducted an inquiry and sought intervention of the National Human Rights Commission for getting these people, and many more, detained at

the Camp for long periods without any charge against them, released and deported to their respective countries.

In spite of these interventions of Delhi PUCL in cases involving civil liberties, many of our old members were becoming inactive and new volunteers were not coming forth. As such we decided to intervene in matters of water supply, health facilities, condition of schools, problems in getting ration cards, building and repair of roads and streets, cleanliness in residential areas etc. For this, we adopted a large unauthorised colony named Prem Nagar, Nangloi at Delhi. Meetings were organised, signature campaigns were conducted, demonstrations were held at ration card offices, marches were conducted in the area and corner meetings were conducted as a part of our awareness campaign in various blocks of the area.

An eight page Hindi fortnightly newspaper was brought out by the people of the area for reporting the events in the area and to publish the replies received from authorities in reply to the RTI applications on various problems faced by the people. This had a great effect on the authorities and extortions and harassment by police came down considerably. Various civic authorities also became more responsive.

In the meantime, there was a custodial murder of one Hafiz Kamaluddin in the area. PUCL intervened in a big way and organised protest meetings, conducted a Fact Finding Enquiry and prepared a report. The report was released by (Justice) Rajindar Sachar at a meeting organised in the area itself. After various efforts, the case is now in the High Court of Delhi and Sanjay Parikh, Sr. Advocate, Supreme

Court of India is appearing before the Court on behalf of Delhi PUCL. The work done by PUCL in this case brought a large number of Muslims of the area closer to PUCL and they became its members, some of them active volunteers of PUCL.

Because of the interventions of Delhi PUCL in the larger issues of human rights violations and problems faced by people in the area, PUCL became a household name in the area and today more than half the membership of 360 of Delhi PUCL comes from that area alone. The area has also produced some good and active volunteers, and two of them are today members of the National Council of PUCL and they are present in the Convention today. Delhi PUCL has identified two more areas of Delhi and started the work of adoption of these areas on the same pattern. I hope that our experience at Prem Nagar will guide us in working in those new areas in an even better way and PUCL Delhi will have a greater reach among the working class people living in these areas and will be able to improve the quality of their life through its awareness campaigns and interventions in cases of human rights violation by various state agencies. Our experience shows that by not confining ourselves merely to the protection of civil liberties but going beyond them and taking up issues which affect the day-to-day lives of the people, we can muster their support in our movement for the protection of human rights on broader basis, including the rights included in the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in our Constitution.

**Mahi Pal Singh**

General Secretary, PUCL-Delhi

### Report of Jharkhand PUCL presented at the National Convention, Ranchi:

## “Human Rights”

### Present Scenario in Jharkhand

Violations of Human Rights are happening in large scale in various levels in Jharkhand. It is the state, where adivasis are struggling for their

cultural identity & livelihood since centuries. State, according to its nature has continuously tried to suppress this movement by different

means of tortures. For these reasons the women of Jharkhand are continuously being compelled to migrate to different parts of the

country and face numerous inhumane circumstances, environments and incidents. As in the year 2002 after the formation of Jharkhand PUCL, as per its nature and commitment towards the Indian Civil Societies it is continuously working hard, day and night, to fight against these violations and to restore the Human Rights amidst the citizens of India. After the formation of separate state Jharkhand the effect of imperialism is clearly being reflected by the suppressive behaviors of the state powers. We have numerous proof of this. POTA which was enforced in the name of keeping the issue of terrorism in Kashmir in forefront was misused to the greatest extent in Jharkhand. A minor of 12 years to a aged of 40 years were falsely implicated under POTA in Jharkhand. Apart from poor farmers, laborers, cowherd, woodcutter, eminent citizens like journalists, teachers and even advocates were also not spared. The most astonishing part was that under the seizure list even the communist manifesto was also declared as banned books. The first Governor Prabhat Kumar of Jharkhand himself have accepted the fact of misuse of POTA by bringing false charges on some of the accused. Near about four thousand cases were filed against both named and unnamed accused. 600 people got arrested in which about 15 died in prison. It was PUCL who lime lighted this inhuman incident.

Presently about 3000 accused has been arrested in the state under section 17A of Criminal Law Amendment Act (C.L.A. Ref). These arrested people are not presented before the court in time. Making illegal arrests, violation of custodial right killing of people and fake encounters are conducted by Govt. forces with full impunity. These are lack of female police and female lock up in the police stations. There is an open violation of Justice D K Basu guidelines given for the protection of custodial rights for the prisoners and arrested persons. Since long the evil eyes of the international Companies was the state of Jharkhand where minerals and ores are in abundance. Now the state Government has also given a free and open support to these multinationals regarding the

acquisition of land in various villages where thousands of acres of forming land have been provided for acquisition making lacs of people displaced from their ancestral land. The land Acquisition Act and different Laws and Policies framed to provide land to these companies are also openly misused.

We are repeatedly being informed that by giving a very nominal amount the land of the poor farmers and adivasi are being purchased without their free consent. The sponge iron factories in the area of Mohanpur in Girdih have made the life miserable for the people over there. We have been continuously protesting for these matters too.

Apart from these, we have a long list of our struggle, movements and resistance against the violations of human rights. A few selected of them are under mentioned.

1. Investigation of the police firing on peacefully protesting villagers in Katikund, Dumka.
2. Investigation of the Phoolmani Rape case in Bokaro.
3. Investigation of the killing of Lalku Mahto, providing a compensation of rupees two lacs to the widow of the deceased. The process for providing her a Government job is still going on.
4. Investigation of the killing of Binod Oraon by police in Gumla, Bishunpur.
5. Killing of five adivasis by the C.R.P.F. in Badhania, District Latehar. Filing a case against this in Jharkhand High Court.
6. Occupying of more than 40 schools of Jharkhand by the police and para military forces was taken up seriously by filing a P.I.L. in Jharkhand High Court. PUCL Jharkhand has also got full success in evacuating the schools and restart normal education over there for the children.
7. On 9th of October 2007, twenty eight huts of the displaced adivasis were put to fire by the forest officials along with the local criminals in Shivpur, Garhwa. The adivasis were also arrested and physical tortured by the forest officials in their office. PUCL

Jharkhand investigated the matter and after initiating a legal process the arrested were released.

8. On 31st October 2008, four persons were killed in fake encounter in which one was a minor boy by the police in Makhatu district Garhwa. After investigation a case was filed in NHRC which is still under process.
9. Investigation of brutal beating of innocent villagers by a naxalite in village kadwa district Garhwa. An appeal for restoring peace was made.
10. Investigation of fake encounter killing two women Gaya Devi and Maya Devi alleged as naxalite by the police in Sukhnadi village in Garhwa. Later the police changed their statement.
11. Conducting seminar and protest meeting against the issue of displacement.
12. Conducting protests, dharna, rally, and seminar against the arrest of Dr. Binayak Sen.
13. Investigation of the physical torture and sexual harassment of a minor girl in Jamshedpur. The case is pending in Mahila Court, Tis Hazari, New Delhi.
14. Killing of thirteen alleged Maoists in fake encounter by security forces in Bitangu, East Singhbhum. Killing of eleven alleged Maoists in fake encounter in village Lango in district Singhbhum. The killing of Bhola Singh alleged criminal by the police forces in open day light in Jamshedpur. PUCL took up these incidents to court and cases are pending in NHRC.
15. Survey of the condition of primary health centers at district Singhbhum. Survey of the condition of the social security scheme at East Singhbhum, Jharkhand.
16. Killing of four youths alleged criminal in fake encounter in Jamshedpur. A case is filed under section 197 of Cr. P.C. and is held up in Supreme Court.

Subroto Bhattacharjee, President, Jharkhand PUCL; Shashi Bhushan Pathak, Gen. Sec., PUCL Jharkhand

## Report of Uttar Pradesh PUCL presented at the National Convention, Ranchi:

Dear friends,

On behalf of UP PUCL, I welcome all the participants and delegates present here.

Since the foundation of PUCL, for the first time we gather here in the absence of Yashpal Chhibbar, a loving friend and leader for all of us and a beaming light of the organization. Mr. Chhibbar was a warrior and a martyr in the cause of the deprived, marginalized and oppressed people. We fondly remember him and resolve to further his dream that PUCL as a collective effort should be the front runner in the human rights and civil rights movement in India.

UP PUCL has always sought to expand the concept of human rights and maintains that the development question is an integral part of Human Rights. Besides, our effort has been to identify, expose and fight off such enactments of the State as encroach upon the civil liberties of the citizens.

On 1st June 2008, PUCL along with other organizations held a State level conference of lawyers and activists. The conference discussed and protested the attacks on lawyers who were representing the accused persons in the case of serial blasts in different Courts in U.P. False implication of innocent youths and torture of their families were also discussed in the conference. This conference was organized in the campus of Allahabad High Court and presided over by Justice R.B. Mahrotra, the then State President of UP PUCL. Nearly two hundred and seventy five (275) delegates participated in the conference.

On September 3rd 2008, a dharna was organized at the Collectorate in Allahabad to oppose the attacks on Christian minorities in Orissa. Around 50 persons including some freedom fighters, writers and lawyers participated. A memorandum addressed to the President of India was also handed over to the DM.

On 9th December 2008, PUCL organized a large meeting demanding the unconditional release of Binayak Sen and for scrapping the "Chattisgarh Special Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act". Around 100 persons

attended it. It was addressed by our Patron Mr. Ravi Kiran Jain and other eminent personalities.

A Convention was organized in Lucknow by Lucknow PUCL which was addressed by Justice Rajindar Sachar. Ravi Kiran Jain, Sandip Pandey and others.

Again in Allahabad, on the question of independence of judiciary and attempts of the executive to encroach upon it, a Convention was organized with Justice Rajindar Sachar as the main speaker. The Convention was also addressed by Bhagwan J Raiyani from Mumbai. Strategy for action against political and bureaucratic attempts to undermine the judiciary and a demand for ousting the corrupt judges were prominent items in the agenda of the Convention. Nearly one hundred (100) lawyers, and also former judges and senior advocates attended the Convention.

A booklet was also published and released by UP PUCL. It was prepared by Lucknow unit of PUCL in collaboration with the National Alliance for People's Movement (NAPM).

A PIL was filed by the district Banda unit of PUCL against the corruption in the "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan" in which order was passed to inquire into the matter. In Allahabad district, the PUCL remained actively involved with other grass-root organizations to strengthen the Panchayat Raj system and for devolution of power to it under the Constitutional scheme.

Further, UP PUCL also prepared a paper on the concept of 'Decentralization and Development at Panchayat Level'. The same was sent to the Chief Minister of the State.

A Dharna was organized at the Allahabad Collectorate against the proposed UP Control of Organized Crime Bill on the lines of the MACOCA.

Outside of Allahabad, PUCL units in Balia, Ghazipur took initiatives against the forcible land acquisition from farmers by the State for the 'Ganga Express Highway'.

UP PUCL State Conference

The State conference of PUCL was held on July 5th 2009 in which 72

delegates from 8 districts participated. The conference was divided in two sessions.

In the first session, the then General Secretary read the report and thereafter an open discussion was invited on the same. In the discussion several delegates from different districts participated. Ali Manjar (Banda), Rudra Prasad Mishra (Chitrakoot), Dr. Sunil Singh (Allahabad) initiated the discussion. Ram Kumar from Lucknow, spoke about the dalit situation in Uttar Pradesh and specially about increasing atrocities against them and their land rights.

Seema Azad spoke about the overall human rights scenario and the prominent challenges. She also stressed the need of increasing activism compared to the reliance on litigation alone. S.M. Naseem dealt in detail with the nature of police functioning and their attitudes towards the poor and the marginalized people. He lamented the spate of fake encounters and custodial torture and illegal detention going on in Uttar Pradesh.

Ravi Kiran Jain, Advisor UP PUCL, spoke about the Constitutional Provisions and challenges before the human rights activists for achieving the goals of human rights with civil liberties. He further underlined the need for decentralization of power and need for people's participation in the development process.

S R Darapuri and Sabira Habib from Lucknow exchanged their experiences about the plight of women and dalits and poor people in the State.

In the last session, the new executive counsel of the State Chapter was elected, the panel of office bearers announced and their names accepted with applause.

Chitaranjan Singh was elected as the President.

Vandana Misra – the General Secretary; Dr. Wajid (from Bareilly), Khursheed Naqvi, S R Darapuri, Ajeet Singh, S. Ali Manjar, KK Roy and Akhilesh Sinha were elected as Vice-Presidents.

Seema Azad, Tanveer Siddiqui, Naresh Umrao were elected as

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Organising Secretaries; and Shah Nawaz, Rajiv Yadav and Gurinder Singh as Joint Secretaries.

Ram Bhushan Mehrotra, Ravi Kiran Jain, O D Singh and S M Naseem were nominated as advisors. Ram Bhushan Mehrotra as the outgoing President gave the vote of thanks and blessings with the hope to fight against injustice and all kind of discrimination.

Constitution of New Executive and Shifting of the Office to Lucknow

On July 5th 2009, with the formation of the new execution of UP PUCL, the office of the State chapter shifted to Lucknow.

False Implication for burning Congress State President's Residence

The same month, on the 27th of July, we undertook an enquiry into a matter involving the arrest of 5 persons for allegedly burning the house of the State Congress President. PUCL published its findings that these individuals were innocent and had been falsely implicated by the police and we also assisted the media in the generation of public opinion. Following this effort, these persons were released on bail.

Investigation of Police Atrocity in Baliya

In Rasulpur village of Baliya district of U.P., an enquiry team of PUCL consisting of Akhilesh Kumar Sinha, Ranjit Kumar Singh, Amarnath Yadav, Jyoti Swarup Pandey and Arun Kumar Singh investigated the murder of Kalam committed in the presence of police. A detailed enquiry report containing their findings was issued by the team.

Industrial Workers in Kanpur Arrested and Charged under NSA

In September 2009, UP PUCL took up another case of violation of civil liberties, this time of industrial workers in Kanpur. Workers of LML Limited and JK Cotton Mills had been arrested when they were demonstrating peacefully for their rightful demands. Out of the hundred and twenty five (125) workers who were arrested, 13 were not released on bail even two months after the incident. Further, from reliable sources we came to learn that the administration intended to book a few of them under the National Security Act (NSA). On 3rd September 2009, an enquiry team comprising the

State President, two Vice-Presidents and the general secretary met the District Magistrate, the Labour Commissioner and the workers and found out the facts. On the same day, four of the detained workers were booked under NSA. The PUCL team submitted its report to the Special Secretary to the CM. Though the UP administration was apathetic to this assault on the civil liberties of the workers, the home department at the Centre ordered for the charges under the NSA to be dropped.

In another case where a number of workers in Gorakhpur from two plastic bags factories were being harassed, UP PUCL supported their cause and was party to a memorandum given to the UP government about the matter.

Conclusion

Ours is a BIMARU State. We lag severely in economic and social development. But in cases of violation of human rights and extra constitutional killings through fake encounters and custodial deaths, U.P. takes the lead over all other States. In this abyss, much remains to be done.

It has been observed that most activities of the State unit take place wherever the office of the State Chapter of PUCL is located, for instance Allahabad or Lucknow. However, our effort is to take the initiatives of PUCL deeper and further into the State's hinterland. Smaller towns and districts are active theaters of violation of civil rights. Our effort will be to enhance, and where required to establish, a fluid channel of two way communication, reporting and enquiry between the cities and the hinterland. In this initiative teams or representative from the interiors of the State will also be requested to travel though the State for better and long term mobilization of resources. The logistics of this exercise can be worked out over the coming days.

Lastly, on behalf of the UP chapter of the people's Union of Civil Liberties we aim to strengthen the organisation and to focus on better implementation of the strategies for taking on emerging issues in the State. In this endeavor, we shall seek your support and guidance.

Vandana Mishra  
General Secretary, PUCL-UP

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