

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Date of Elections: 4 March 1979

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of the USSR, the Supreme Soviet, consists of the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities.

The Soviet of the Union is composed of 750 members* elected by citizens of the USSR voting by election districts, on the basis of one Deputy for every 350,000 inhabitants.

The Soviet of Nationalities is composed of 750 members elected by citizens of the USSR, voting by Union Republics, Autonomous Republics, Autonomous Regions and Autonomous Areas on the basis of 32 Deputies from each Union Republic, 11 Deputies from each Autonomous Republic, 5 Deputies from each Autonomous Region and one Deputy from each Autonomous Area.

Both Houses are elected for a term of 5 years*.

Electoral System

All Soviet citizens who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote, with the exception of persons who have been legally certified insane.

Electoral registers are drawn up at the level of cities, city districts, townships and villages by the corresponding executive committees of Soviets; they are revised before each election. Voting is not made compulsory by law.

Every elector who has reached the age of 21 * is eligible for candidature to the Supreme Soviet. If elected, he carries on his regular profession.

Candidates may be nominated by social organizations, collectives of working people and staff assemblies of military units. Nomination is marked by a discussion of the ability of the proposed candidates. Pre-election conferences are held in each constituency, at which representatives of the working people and public organizations reach agreement to support a single candidate from amongst those nominated. Candidates who do not get the support of the pre-election constituency conference withdraw their candidatures or have them withdrawn by the organizations that put them forward. The best candidates are thus selected and presented to the electorate by the Communist Party and the organizations working together. In this way, candidates are assured massive popular support.

* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XII (1977-1978)*, pp. 32-33.

Registration of candidates takes place during the period of 25 to 35 days prior to polling day.

Deputies of the Supreme Soviet are elected from single-member constituencies by majority vote. To be elected, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes cast by all of the registered voters of the constituency.

Should a seat of the Supreme Soviet become vacant between general elections, a by-election is held within two months in the constituency concerned.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The 1978 elections were the first to be held under the 1977 Constitution and a new Electoral Law adopted in July 1978*.

A three-stage process—selection of candidates, discussion of their qualifications and abilities, and the voting itself—that commenced in December 1978 characterized the electoral process. One consequence of the new Electoral Law was to extend the duration of the second stage.

The election address of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was issued on 3 February. It stressed the advantages of socialism in overcoming economic difficulties. Reporting on the country's development since the 1974 poll, it pointed out that the citizens' real per capita incomes rose by 20%. Regarding foreign policy, the address noted the strengthening of the positions of world socialism, referring in particular to the victories of the peoples of Viet Nam and Laos. President of the Republic Brezhnev and USSR Foreign Minister Gromyko delivered campaign speeches on 1 March and 26 February, respectively.

On polling day, all candidates were elected. Of these, 425 (28.3%) were non-Party members.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 34.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Supreme Soviet

Number of registered electors. 174,944,173
Voters. 174,920,221 (99.9%)

Soviet of the Union

	Votes obtained by Candidates		Negative Votes	Void Ballot Papers	Number elected
	Numbers	%			
SFSR of Russia	96,666,821	99.85	148,901		405
SSR of Ukraine	35,447,562	99.97	10,086		144
SSR of Byelorussia	6,631,321	99.96	2,484		28
SSR of Uzbek	7,191,112	99.97	2,155		39
SSR of Kazakh	8,472,239	99.89	9,299		41
SSR of Georgia	3,148,797	99.99	235		14
SSR of Azerbaijan	3,032,954	99.99	154		15
SSR of Lithuania	2,263,933	99.97	743		9
SSR of Moldavia	2,544,851	99.94	1,453		11
SSR of Latvia	1,807,230	99.89	2,051		7
SSR of Kirghiz	1,793,826	99.90	1,819		9
SSR of Tajik	1,763,032	99.97	588		9
SSR of Armenia	1,619,393	99.99	148		8
SSR of Turkmen	1,309,469	99.95	670		7
SSR of Estonia	1,041,919	99.56	4,636	13	4
USSR	174,734,459	99.89	185,422	32	750

Soviet of Nationalities

	Votes obtained by Candidates		Negative Votes	Void Ballot Papers	Number elected
	Numbers	" "			
15 Union Republics	174,770,398	99.91	149,581	4(1)	480
20 Autonomous Republics	13,482,659	99.83	23,388	2	220
8 Autonomous Regions	1,286,385	99.89	1,458		40
10 Autonomous Areas	880,034	99.87	1,173		1(1)

Communist Party of the Soviet Union.	1,075
Non-party.	425
	1,500

2. Distribution of Members of the Supreme Soviet according to Professional Category

Workers.	522
Party officials.	249
Collective farmers.	244
Public officials.	209
Intellectuals.	136
Directors of enterprises and specialists	66
Military.	55
Trade union and Communist youth organization (<i>Komsomol</i>) officials.	19
	1,500

3. Distribution of Members of the Supreme Soviet according to Sex

Men.	1,013
Women.	487
	1,500

4. Distribution of Members of the Supreme Soviet by Age Group

Under 30 years.	317
31-40.	224
41-50.	380
51-60.	321
61 and over.	258
	1,500