

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Date of Elections: 4 March 1984

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 360,000 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 election 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who do not get the support of the pre-election constituency conference withdraw their candidatures or have them withdrawn by the organizations that put them forward.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.

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 voters cast by all of the registered voters of the constituency.

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

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The election date was announced on 17 December 1983.

Under the Constitution, the right to nominate candidates belongs to branches and organizations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, trade unions, and the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League; co-operatives and other public organizations; work collectives, and meetings of servicemen in their military units. There is ultimately one candidate for each one of the Supreme Soviet's 1,500 seats.

In the 1984 elections, 22% of the candidates were reportedly less than 30 years of age. According to final polling results announced on 6 March, 769 of the candidates elected were workers and farmers, 428 non-party members and 492 women.