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Electoral Reform and the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR

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I Electoral Reform

The extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, held from November 30 to December 1, 1988, adopted the "Law on changes in and additions to the Constitution of the USSR" and the "Law on the election of People's Deputies of the USSR," drafts of which had been published only about a month before. As a result, the election of People's Deputies of the USSR took place on March 26, 1989.

A. Changes in and additions to the Constitution of the USSR

The main contents of "Law on changes in and additions to the Constitution of the USSR" in regard to the system of Soviets and its elections are as follows.

1) The election of People's Deputies shall be conducted in single- or multi-seated constituencies. One third of the People's of the USSR, and of the Union and Autonomous Republics shall be elected from public organizations : the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, trade unions, co-operatives, the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, women's associations, war and labor veterans', and scientific workers' associations, creative unions and other organizations, which were established in accordance with law and have an all-union or republican organ. Elections of the People's Deputies from public organizations shall be conducted at the congresses, conferences, or plenums of their all-union or republican organs (Article 95).

2) Ministers of the USSR and of the Union and Autonomous Republics (except for the Chairman of the Council of Ministers), members of the executive committee of local Soviets (except for the chairman of the executive committee), the heads of agencies, departments and administrations of the executive committee of local Soviets, judges, and state arbitrators may not be a Deputy of the Soviet by which they are appointed or elected (Article 96).

3) The right to nominate candidates in constituencies is also given to residential electorate meetings in addition to work collectives, public organizations and meetings of servicemen in their military units. The number of candidates in a constituency is not restricted and any number of candidates can be included on a ballot paper (Article 100).

4) The Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR consist of 2,250 Deputies : 750 Deputies from territorial constituencies (these constituencies shall be set so that each constituency has equal electors all over the country) ; 750 Deputies from national-territorial constituencies (32 Deputies from each Union Republic, 11 Deputies from each Autonomous Republic, 5 Deputies from each Autonomous Region, and one Deputy from each Autonomous District) ; and 750 Deputies from public organizations (100 Deputies each from the CPSU, trade unions, and co-operatives, 75 Deputies each from the YCL, women's associations, war and labor veterans' associations, scientific worker's associations, and creative unions, and 75 Deputies from other organizations) (Article 109 of the Constitution and Article 18 of "Law on the elections of People's Deputies of the USSR" only in regard to the number of the Deputies from each public organization).

5) Members of the new permanent Supreme Soviet of the USSR are elected from People's Deputies of the USSR by the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. Furthermore, one fifth of the members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be renewed every year (Article 111). In the same way the Supreme Soviets of Union and Autonomous Republics are also now permanent bodies (Articles 138 and 144).

6) Chairmen of standing commissions and committees of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR are also newly added to members of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (Article 118).

7) The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, a newly established post, is the "highest official" of the Soviet Government. The Chairman represents the USSR domestically and in international relations, and is elected from among People's Deputies of the USSR by the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR through a secret ballot for a five-year term office, and may not serve more than two terms in succession (Article 120). The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR signs the laws and acts adopted by the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, advances the proposals on the appointments of the First deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviets of the USSR, members of the Committee of constitutional supervision of the USSR, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Chairman of the Committee of People's Control of the USSR, the Chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR, the Procurator-General of the USSR, and the Chief State Arbitrator of the USSR. The Chairman is also at the head of the Council of Defence of the USSR (Article 121).

8) The People's Deputies of the USSR elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be released from their regular employment or duties during their terms of office in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (Article 124).

I would like to add to the above-mentioned brief explanations.

One of main points of the last constitutional amendment is, above all, that the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, and Congresses of People's Deputies of Union and Autonomous Republics are newly established. What is the meaning of a three tiered structure ? Why was the Congress of People's Deputies newly established below the Supreme Soviet on which the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet stands ? The meaning seems to be as follows . The Congress of People's Deputies, which consists of non-full-time Deputies and the session of which is relatively short, was newly established in order to inherit an idea originating from the "Commune of Paris" : a political organ composed not of professional politicians but ordinary working people. On the other hand, the Supreme Soviet, which had been confined to do relatively formal and meaningless activities and had never fulfilled a substantial function, has changed into a permanent working organ and, at the same time, the members have changed into full-time ones, in order to fulfill their substantial functions and to concentrate on their political activities, as mentioned in 5) and 8).

Therefore, a change of functions of the Supreme Soviet is the main reason for the new established Congress of People's Deputies. But the institutional function itself of the Congress of People's Deputies is chiefly no more than electing the Chairman and members of the Supreme Soviet, although the election itself to the Congress of People's Deputies has a very important meaning.

Another one of main points of the constitutional amendment is the newly established system electing the Deputies from public organizations. What is aim of this system ? In his report at the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU on June 28, 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, explained as follows : in order that

“representation of the working people in the top echelon of government [may] be extended considerably, …… direct representation of the public organizations incorporated into our political system should be added to the currently existing territorial representation of the entire population on the Soviet of the Union and the representation of our nations and nationalities [*natsii i narodnosti*] on the Soviet of Nationalities.”¹ Of course, this explanation is right and reasonable in its own way. But, since the election of the Deputies from public organizations is not the direct election by all members of each public organization, but is conducted at the congresses, conferences, or plenums of their all-union or republican organs, then the following problem arises : opinions of all members of a public organization are not always equally reflected to the election, rather, intentions of the leaders of the public organization are apt to have a decisive influence over the election.²

Therefore, there seems to be another meaning as regards creating the new system electing Deputies from public organizations. The meaning is probably that the new system electing Deputies from public organizations is created in order to relieve the leaders at the center and the intelligentsia, because they work without connections to a certain locality and will find it hard to win an election as a result of introducing the multi-candidate system. In fact, a Soviet scholar has argued such a view.³ To be sure, many of the leaders and the intelligentsia whose activities are centered in Moscow would have encountered great difficulty in being elected a Deputy without the system of electing Deputies from public organizations. Hence, this system seems to be rational in its own way because the Deputies who are representatives of local interests and the Deputies who are leaders at the center or representatives of certain functional groups are separately elected in this system.

Formerly, only the following organizations had the right to nominate candidates ; branches and organizations of the CPSU, trade unions, the YCL, co-operatives and other public organizations, work collectives, and meetings of servicemen in their military units. But, since representatives of local inhabitants are hard to be elected in such system, the right to nominate candidates in constituencies is also given to residential electorate meetings, as mentioned in 3). Further, the phrase that “any number of candidates can be included on a ballot paper” was added to the above provision (Article 100), but this “any number” naturally includes the number “one.” Thus, in fact there were no less than 399 among 1,500 constituencies where there was only one candidate in the last election of People’s Deputies of the USSR. There was some doubt that this was contrary to the aims of the constitutional amendment and the new law concerning the election of People’s Deputies of the USSR, because the aim was to begin with to get multiple candidates contesting a seat and to get electors to be able to make a true choice. Accordingly, it is said that there were a lot of nonvotings or votes of no-confidence in constituencies with a single candidate regardless of his or her character.

B. Enacting the new law on the election of the People’s Deputies of the USSR

Here, in the new law on the election of People’s Deputies, I want to refer to the articles which seem to be important in the light of the last election of People’s Deputies of the USSR, comparing the new law with the former on elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

1) “The residential electorate meeting to nominate candidates for People’s Deputies of the USSR …… is competent when more than 500 electors who live in the territory of a constituency concerned are present at the meeting.” “The candidate is regarded as a nominee when more than half of the participants in the meeting vote for him or her” (Article 37). Therefore, a person cannot become a candidate unless he or she has at the least 250 supporters in his or her constituencies (ibid.).

Further, "as a rule, the candidate for People's Deputies of the USSR must live in or work in the constituency concerned in the case of candidates from territorial constituencies, or Union Republics, Autonomous Republics, Autonomous Regions and Autonomous Districts in the case of candidates from national-territorial constituencies" (ibid.). Strange to say, hitherto it was not rare in the Soviet Union that Deputies neither lived in, nor worked in the constituencies where they were elected.⁴ The reason is also as follows: they were compelled to be elected in their old home or, in rare cases, even the territory with which they were not connected at all because all of the leaders and the famous intelligentsia who are in full activities at the center cannot be elected from the center. Such cases, however, should decrease now that the system electing Deputies from public organizations was newly created.

2) "A sufficient number of booths or small rooms for the secret ballot must be provided" in a polling place (Article 52). Hitherto most of voters simply cast the unmarked ballot paper into the box, therefore it was often sufficient that there be only a single booth or room. The words "sufficient number" was not included in article 52 of the law on the election of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which is a similar article to the above article 52. There were the polling places where the cabin or the booth was so few that a line was formed since all voters who wanted to cast a valid ballot had to write in a ballot paper in the experimental constituencies where a contested election was conducted in the election to local Soviets in 1987. Thus, it seems that such words were added to the article. Further, "A ballot box is set so that voter never fail to pass through the booth or the small room for the secret ballot" (ibid.). There were not such phrase in the law on the election of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, either. Because the booth or the small room was scarcely used, hitherto.

3) "The candidate for the People's Deputies of the USSR who is regarded as a successful candidate is those who was obtained in the election more than half of the votes of the electors to have taken part in voting" (Article 55). The phrase of "the electors to have taken part in voting" in this article was "all electors in a constituency" in the similar article 56 of the law on the election of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. This change is a very right and realistic change because it is unrealistic to only regard one who has obtained more than half of the votes of all electors, whether or not they voted, as a successful candidate. Besides, the provision that "an election is considered void when less than half of registered electors are voted" (ibid.) succeeds the provision of the article 56 of the law on the election of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. This shows that they are still strict about the turnout figures although they got to distinguish between "elector" and "voter" and to acknowledge an abstention from voting.

4) In the case that none of candidates for Deputies win the election in the constituency where the number of candidates was more than three, a second ballot shall be taken on two candidates who obtained greater number of votes (Article 60). There was not a provision for the second ballot, i. e. a run-off election in the law on the election of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. But, the decisive ballot on two of higher rank is rational if those who couldn't obtain more than half of the votes are not regarded as successful candidates, as above. And such a system is not particularly unusual. Besides, in the second ballot those who obtain the greatest number of votes are regarded as a successful candidate (ibid.).

5) In the case of none of candidates for Deputies winning the election in the constituency where the number of candidates was less than three, or the election in a constituency miscarried or was void, or after a second ballot could not decide on a successful candidate, a second election shall be conducted within two months from the first voting day (Article 61). The second election means that the election redone. Article 59 of the law on the election of

the Supreme Soviet of the USSR included the provision on the second election, but the law didn't include the provision on the second ballot. Thus, it did not distinguish between the second ballot and the second election; this second election shall be conducted within a month from the first voting day. Such a point shows that the provision on the second election was nothing but a formal one, too.

II The Election to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in the Spring of 1989

A. Conducting of the election

The main schedule for conducting of the election to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR was as follows. On December 1, 1988, it was decided in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR that the election for People's Deputies of the USSR should be taken place on March 26, 1989 (Sunday) and a territorial constituency should be established per 257, 300 electors.

On December 8, 1988, 750 territorial and 750 national-territorial, total 1500 constituencies were announced on the base of the above decision and the articles 15 and 16 of the law on the election of People's Deputies of the USSR.

By December 15, 1988, the electoral commission of a constituency was set in each constituency and a electoral commission for each public organization was set up to send deputies to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

By January 24, 1989, polling districts were organized.

By February 8, 1988, the electoral commissions of each polling district were set up.

The period between December 26, 1988, and January 24, 1989, was reserved for the candidate nominations, and then pre-election meetings in constituencies all over the country.

By February 22, 1989, the registrations of the candidates from constituencies were completed.

Until March 26, 1989, voting day, the meetings with the candidates and the electors went on. Of course, until the election, the Deputies from constituencies had not been elected, but most of the Deputies from public organizations had. Concerning the registrations of the candidates from constituencies, it was worth while noting whether plural candidates were practically registered in each constituency, or not. According to an announcement, plural candidates were not registered in all constituencies (Table 1). The constituencies with a single candidate made up 27 percent of all constituencies. The figure seems to be rather large considering that the aim of amending the constitution and of enacting the new electoral law was the introduction of an electoral system with competing candidates. This election, however, still seems to have been epoch-making considering that all constituencies hitherto had been constituencies with a single candidate. The constituencies with more than three candidates were on more than about 10 percent. But, if such constituencies increase in the future, the whole circumstances of the election of People's Deputies will be different from the former one.

It is said that many of local party leaders ran for office without competitors. For instance, 191 first and second secretaries of union republic, *krai*, and region party committees, ran for office, but those who had competitors were no more than 34 percent, in other words, 65 persons. However, as is generally known, there were cases of influential leaders of local organs losing their election (Table 2). It is especially worth while noting that among the 77 first secretaries of *krai* and region party committees in the Russian Federation (except for the first secretary of Moscow city party committee), 32 percent, or 25 persons lost their election. Further, the crushing defeats in Leningrad was a great shock because Iurii Solov'ev, the

Table 1. Number of constituencies by the number of candidates in the election for the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

Number of Candidates	Number of constituencies		Territorial		National-Territorial			
1	(384	25.6%)	399	26.6%	196	26.1%	203	27.1%
2	(953	63.5%)	952	63.5%	473	63.1%	479	63.9%
3	(109	7.3%)	149	9.9%	81	10.8%	68	9.1%
4	(27	1.8%)						
5	(12	0.8%)						
6	(7	0.5%)						
7	(4	0.3%)						
8	(1	0.1%)						
9	(1	0.1%)						
11	(1	0.1%)						
12	(1	0.1%)						
Total	(1500	100%)	1500	100%	750	100%	750	100%

Source : *Izvestiia*, 1989. 4. 5. and *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 12(March 25 - 31, 1989), p. 1 (only the figures in parentheses.)

Table 2. Unsuccessful candidates in the election for the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR among secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Parties of the Union Republics and the provincial [*krai*] and regional Party committees

First secretary of regional or provincial Party committee	
Arkhangel'sk	P. M. Telepnev
Vladimir	R. S. Bobovikov
Voroshilovgrad	I. A. Liakhov
Gomel'	A. S. Kamai
Zakarpai	G. I. Bandrovskii
Jewish Autonomous	B. L. Korsunskii
Ivanovo	M. A. Kniaziuk
Kaluga	G. I. Ulanov
Kamchatka	P. P. Zinov'ev
Kareliia	V. S. Stepanov
Kemerovo	A. G. Mel'nikov
Kirov	S. A. Osminin
Kostroma	V. I. Toropov
Leningrad	Iu. F. Solov'ev
L'vov	Ia. P. Pogrebniak
Mogilev	V. S. Leonov

Table 2. Continued

First secretary of regional or provincial Party committee	
Murmansk	A. K. Balagurov
Novgorod	I. I. Nikulin
Orenburg	A. N. Balandin
Perm'	E. N. Chernyshov
Sakhalin	V. S. Bondarchuk
Sverdlovsk	L. F. Bobykin
Tomsk	V. I. Zorkal'tsev
Tiumen'	G. P. Bogomiakov
Cheliabinsk	N. D. Shvyrev
Chernigov	L. I. Parazhchenko
Chita	N. I. Mal'kov
Littoral Province	A. A. Volyntsev
Khabarovsk Province	V. S. Pasternak
Second secretary of Republic and regional Party committee	
CC of Estonian CP	G. V. Aleshin
Leningrad region	A. M. Fateev
Olenburg region	A. F. Kolinichenko
Secretary of the Republic Central Committee	
CC of Ukrainian CP	B. V. Kachura
CC of Lithuanian CP	S. A. Gedraitis
CC of Lithuanian CP	B. A. Zaikauskas
Secretary of the regional Party committee	
Grodno	V. M. Semenov
Komi	N. V. Gusiatsnikov
L'vov	M. G. Vasyliv

Source : *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 21 (May 27 - June 2, 1989), p. 8.

Table 3. Number of the constituencies where the second ballot and the second election was held in the election for the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR

	Territorial constituency	National-territorial constituency	Total
Second ballot	46	30	76
Second election	114	84	198
Turnout figure less than 50%	(1)	(2)	(3)
Total	160	114	274

Source : *Izvestiia*, 1989, 4, 5.

Table 4. Turnout figures by the Union Republic in the Election for the 11th Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR

	1984. 3. 4	1989. 3. 26
Russian Federation	99.98%	87.0%
UKrainian Republic	99.99%	93.4%
Byelorussian Republic	99.99%	92.4%
Uzbek Republic	99.99%	95.8%
Kazakh Republic	99.99%	93.7%
Georgan Republic	99.99%	97.0%
Azebaidzhan Republic	99.99%	98.5%
Lithuanian Republic	99.99%	82.5%
Moldavian Republic	99.99%	90.5%
Latvian Republic	99.99%	86.9%
Kirghz Republic	99.99%	97.0%
Tajik Republic	99.99%	93.9%
Armenian Republic	99.99%	71.9%
Turkmen Republic	99.99%	96.1%
Estonian Republic	99.99%	87.1%

Source : *Pravda*, 1984. 3. 7 and *Izvestiia*, 1989. 4. 5.

candidate member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU CC, was included in the list of unsuccessful candidates.

According to the April 5th *Izvestiia*, there were 274 constituencies where a successful candidate could not be decided on in the voting on the 26th of March. In other words, on that day 1,226 successful candidates were decided on but 274 seats among those 1,500 from constituencies were not. The second ballot was held (on 2th and 9th April) in 46 territorial constituencies and in 30 national-territorial constituencies, on the other hand the second election was held in 114 territorial constituencies (one of them was the constituency which was void because the turnout figure was less than 50 percent) and in 84 national-territorial constituencies (two of them were the constituency which was void because the turnout figures was less than 50 percent), among 750 territorial constituencies and 750 national-territorial constituencies (Table 3).

At the same time in the *Izvestiia* dated the 5th of April the turnout figures of each union republic were announced. I show them and, for reference, figures of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR elections held in March 1984 (Table 4). At first sight, it is very striking that the turnout figure in recent elections of the Armenian Republic was low. Of course, it is quite thinkable that the earthquake in Armenia in December 1988 had some influence on these figures. At the same time, it is also possible that the Armenians were expressing their dissatisfaction with the Supreme Soviet of the USSR's decision refusing their request for altering the jurisdiction over the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region from the Azerbaidzhan to the Armenian Republic. Among others the union republics whose turnout figure could not reach 90 percent are Russian Federation and the Baltic States, namely, the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Republics. It is common knowledge that the political organizations of "Popular

Front" were organized in 1988, national movements have been uplifted, and centrifugal tendencies have been developed in these Baltic States. It seems that the figures express the facts.

B. The social composition of Deputies of the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR

How has change the social composition of the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR elected in the new electoral system changed in comparison with that of the former Supreme Soviet of the USSR ? (Table 5 and 6)

1) **Sex** : The proportion of women among Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had kept a level of 30 percent in recent years. This has been thought to be done in order to display alleged equal rights for both sexes and that the same possibility as men have are given to women in general and professional education, occupation, remuneration for work, promotion in a place of work, socio-political and cultural activities, and by taking special measures in regards to women's labor and protection for their health. It is probable that adjustment of the candidates had been done so that women could get a certain number of seats in the Soviets since most of the candidates would win the election without fail in the former system. But, in general it is not easy for women or youths to run as a candidate in a "free" electoral system. Therefore, unfortunately the proportion of women Deputies falls to 15.7 percent in the results of the election for the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. But, conversely, it is not too much to say that the women who won the election are not any

Table 5. Social composition of the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republics and Local Soviets

	women	non-party members	YCL members	workers	colle-ctive farmers	under 30 year old	rate of renewal
A	15.7%	13.0%	5.9%	18.6%* ¹	11.2%* ¹	8.3%	88.1%* ²
B	15.5%	14.7%	3.4%	25.2%	12.0%	—	—
C	32.8%	28.6%	15.0%	35.2%	16.1%	22.1%	58.9%
D	36.2%	32.9%	15.0%	33.8%	16.8%	20.3%	62.6%
E	40.3%	37.0%	16.8%	38.4%	12.2%	23.6%	64.7%
F	49.4%	56.7%	20.7%	42.1%	24.2%	32.4%	54.7%

Notes : A) The 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

B) Candidate of the election for the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

C) The Supreme Soviet of the USSR (Election 1984. 3. 4).

D) Supreme Soviet of the Union Republics (Election 1985. 2. 24).

E) Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republics (Election 1985. 2. 24).

F) Local Soviets (Election 1987. 6. 21).

*1) Data on 1,958 Deputies who win a election on March 26, 1989.

*2) Rate of those who had never been a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Source : A) *Izvestiia*, 1989. 4. 5 ; B) *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 12 (March 25-31, 1989), p. 1 ; C) *Pravda*, 1984. 3. 7 ; D) *Pravda*, 1985. 3. 2 ; E) *Pravda*, 1985. 3. 2 ; F) *Pravda*, 1987. 6. 27

Table 6. Social composition of the 9th, 10th and 11th Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR

	9th 1974—79	10th 1979—84	11th 1984—89	1st 1989—94
Number of Nationalities	61	—	—	65
Total Deputies	1517	1500	1499	2249* ¹
Women	31.3%	32.5%	32.8%	15.7%
Occupation				
Workers of industries, constructions, transportations and communications	—	—	—	24.8%
Leaders of industrial associations and enterprises	—	—	—	6.8%
Agricultural workers	—	—	—	18.9%
Leaders of collective farms, state farms, agricultural industrial complexes	—	—	—	8.5%
Workers and general collective farmers	—	—	—	23.7%
Workers	□ 50.7%	34.8%	35.2%	—
Collective farmers		□ 16.3%	□ 16.1%	—
Chiefs of enterprises and specialists of economic sectors	5.1%	4.4%	—	—
Scientific, higher education and education workers	⌈	⌈	⌈	14.1%
Public health workers				4.3%
Cultural workers and artists	⌋ 9.3%	⌋ 9.1%	⌋ 9.3%	6.5%
Mass medium workers				2.6%
Employees of soviets' and state organs	14.2%	13.9%	13.2%	—

Table 6. Continued

Employees of party organs	15.9%]	17.9%]	17.9%	10.5%
Employees of trade unions and YCL organs	1.1%					
Servicemen	3.7%		3.7%		3.7%	3.6%
Priests	0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0.3%
Party members and candidate party members	72.2%		71.7%		71.4%	87.0%
Non-party members	27.8%		28.3%		28.6%	13.0%
YCL members	11.5%		—		15.0%	5.9%
Age						
21	—		—		—	0.4%
under 30	18.4%		21.1%		22.1%	8.3%
30—39	18.5%		14.9%]	34.7%]
40—49	28.1%		25.4%			
50—59	21.8%		21.4%	27.5%		
over 60	13.2%		17.2%		15.7%	11.4%
Rate of renewal	55.8%		56.7%		58.9%	88.1%* ²

Notes : *¹ A Deputy was undecided yet on May 26th, 1989.

*² Rate of those who had never been a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Source : *Pravda*, 1979. 7. 26 ; *Pravda*, 1979. 4. 19 ; *Pravda* 1984. 4. 12 ; *Izvestiia*, 1989. 5. 26.

longer so-called “tail members” that have symbolically existed so as to keep a level of 30 percent but able persons as People’s Deputies in a true sense.

2) **Age** : The proportion of the Deputies under thirty years of age of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR has hovered around 20 percent in recent years, but that of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR remarkably falls to 8.3 percent for similar reasons to the decreasing of the proportion of women Deputies. Aged Deputies, however, have not always increased since the proportion of the Deputies over sixty years old decreases at the same time. Rather, the number of the Deputies who have status as well as ability and are in the prime of life is increasing.

3) **The proportion of renewal** : The proportion of the new Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR has been under 60 percent in recent years, but that of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR rose by 88.1 percent. This is reflected the rapid personnel changes which are a general tendency under the Gorbachev administration.

4) **Occupation** : It seems that among Deputies of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR the proportion of the employees of party organs who formed the core of

so-called “ex-officio members” considerably decreases. The proportion of “employees of the organs, of the Party, trade unions and the YCL,” namely, *apparatchiki*, among Deputies of the 11th Supreme Soviet of the USSR was 17.9 percent, but among Deputies of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR this figure considerably decreases to 10.5 percent. Further, most of “employees of the organs, of the Party, trade unions and the YCL” in Deputies of the 10th and 11th Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR are the employees of party organs because “employees of the organs, of trade unions and the YCL” is much fewer than “employees of party organs” as the social composition of the 9th Supreme Soviet of the USSR proves. Therefore, it is not too much to say that the proportion of the employees of party organs considerably decreased. This seems to be affected by the fact that many local party secretaries who are ex-officio members lost the election as mentioned above. It is particularly worthy of note that, on the one hand, the proportion of party members and candidate members among Deputies of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR increased to 87.0 percent, on the other hand, the employees of party organs decreased. Those who raised the percentage of full and candidate members of the Party are not the employees of party organs who are the core of ex-officio members, but the ordinary members who work in various occupations.

To put it in the concrete, according to Table 6, the proportion of “scientific workers, higher education workers, education workers,” “public health workers,” “cultural workers and artists” and “mass medium workers” obviously rises. In the Supreme Soviet of the USSR hitherto the proportion of the Deputies of these categories was about 13 or 14 percent, in the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR that doubles to 27.5 percent. Further, according to Table 7, the proportion of “lower echelon managerial personnel” rises from 6.6 to 25.3 percent and that of “highly professional intellectuals” rises from 6.0 to 10.2 percent. What is the proportions of workers and collective farmers? The proportions of workers and collective farmers must be taken into account if the tradition that the Soviets were born and developed as workers’, soldiers’ and peasants’ Soviets is respected although the first Soviet was a workers’ Soviet in Ivanovo-Voznesensk in June of 1905. Therefore, in fact the proportion of workers and collective farmers was over 50 percent in any Soviet. However, the proportion of “workers and general collective farmers” of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR is no more than 23.7 percent. Nevertheless, these “workers and general collective farmers” are not the same as the former “workers” and “collective farmers”. The reason is not only that the word “general” is added before “collective farmers.” This is clear because, on the one hand, the total proportion of “workers” and “collective farmers” of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR in Table 5 is 29.8 percent, hence, the number of them is 583 ($= 1,958 \times 0.298$), on the other hand, the number of “workers and general collective farmers” in Table 6 is 532. Therefore, comparing the proportions of workers and collective farmers of the former Supreme Soviet of the USSR with that of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR, it is not appropriate to use the proportion of “workers and general collective farmers” of the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR. Comparing the 11th Supreme Soviet of the USSR with the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR, the proportion of “workers, collective farmers, non-professional office employees” decreases from 45.9 to 22.1 percent. At any rate, it is certain that the proportion of workers and collective farmers considerably increases in the 1st Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR in comparison with that of the former Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

But, the proportion which decreases is not only that of “the employees of the organs, of the Party, trade unions and the YCL,” and “workers” and “collective farmers.” It seems that

Table 7. Social composition of the 11th Supreme Soviet of the USSR(1984), the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR(1989) and the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR(1989)

	Supreme Soviet 1984	Congress 1989	Supreme Soviet 1989
Top political leadership	1.5%	0.7%	0.2%
Top and middle-level managerial personnel* ¹	40.0%	39.8%	32.8%
Lower echelon managerial personnel* ²	6.6%	25.3%	35.3%
Workers, collective farmers, non-professional office employees	45.9%	22.1%	18.3%
Highly professional intellectuals	6.0%	10.2%	12.5%
Priests	—	0.3%	—
Pensioners	—	1.6%	0.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Notes : *¹) Party leaders of the republican, regional and territorial level, responsible employees of the CPSU Central Committee, leaders of the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and Union Republics, government ministries, top military leaders, directors of research educational institutions, etc.

*²) Chiefs of workshops, departments, work teams, laboratories, collective and state farms, etc.

Source : *Moscow News*, No. 24(June 11, 1989), p. 8.

the proportion of "employees of Soviets' and state organs" also decreases a little although there is no data for the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in Table 6. Because the following provision was newly established by constitutional amendment in 1988 : Ministers of the USSR and of Union and Autonomous Republics (except for the Chairman of the Council of Ministers), members of the executive committee of local Soviets (except for the chairman of the executive committee), the heads of agencies, departments and administrations of the executive committee of local Soviets, judges, and state arbitrators must not be a Deputy of the Soviet by which they are appointed or elected, as above mentioned.

III Conclusion

Thus, the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR is not the formal, empty and meaningless assembly which consists of ex-officio member and tail member. But it is the active assembly which consists of able employees of party organs and Soviet and state organs who can now prove worthy of voters' trust, workers and collective farmers who are not any longer tail members, and managerial personnel and specialists in enterprises and farms, scho-

lars and journalists, i. e. intelligentsia who can come to grips with political, economic and cultural problems with professional know-how and intellect, etc. In fact, the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR is so substantial and active that political leaders are outspokenly and unsparingly criticized. It fulfills the function appropriate to the highest body of state authority. And it is very different from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in the period before *perestroika* which unanimously passed bills again and again, fulfilling only a rubber stamp function.

It, however, is somewhat difficult for the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR to exhaustively discuss matters it has a large number of members, i. e., 2,250 Deputies. The main function of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR is to elect the Chairman and members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from its own members and to check the activities of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Therefore, it is an important question what function the Supreme Soviet of the USSR will fulfill. But it is too early to form a conclusion now. Although the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR which just now started begins to show what differences from the former one. For instance, the screening of each candidate to Ministries, suggested by Nikolai Ryzhkov who was appointed the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR again, was held and some of them were denied. Such a situation has probably never been occurred before. The new Supreme Soviet of the USSR seems to be fulfilling the function appropriate of a legislature.

What is the social composition of the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR? If it considerably differs from that of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR and if the proportions of "the employees of party organs" and "employees of Soviets' and state organs" is very high, that is a serious problem. But, according to Table 7, the social composition of the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR is similar to that of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. And the direction of the change of the social composition from the 11th Supreme Soviet of the USSR to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR gets more conspicuous in the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR. It is surprising that only Vitali Vorotnikov, the member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU CC, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, among the highest political leaders was elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. On the other side, strange to say, Mikhail Gorbachev, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and Anatoli Lukyanov, the first deputy Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, are not the members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.⁵ Therefore, the function or *raison d'être* of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR is different from that of the former one. However, one can point out that, because one fifth of the members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be renewed every year as mentioned above, those who keep its membership for five years are leading members but those who are relieved are somewhat similar to the former tail members. But considering whether the former distinction between ex-officio members and tail members is meaningful in the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR elected under the new electoral system or not, it seems that such distinction is no longer significant.

Finally, I want to state the significance of the election to the 1st Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. That the election with multi-candidate system was held on the all-union scale for the first time in Soviet history means that the Soviet Union is beginning to move toward democratization really and truly. Social changes of Soviet society in the 1960s and 1970s formed the background for *perestroika* although it began in the second half of 1980s under the Gorbachev administration. Nevertheless, *perestroika* assumed the character of the "revolution from above" in its first stage. But it seems that *perestroika* has now reached the

stage of a "revolution from below" taking advantage of the election to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR as well as the various movements at the center or the outskirts after the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU. In this respect, the election to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR has a profound significance.

It is true that various undemocratic activities were found in the process of the election. For instance, it is said that a candidate, factory manager, mobilized the workers of his factory, filled the hall where the pre-election meeting in the constituency was held with his workers, and prevented the supporters of his competitors from entering the hall.⁶ But there are a lot of solutions to such a problem and the electoral law will also be improved gradually. Judging to what extent elections have been conducted democratically in Japan, I cannot help but say that Japan is also far from the democracy which the law intends to realize. But, as long as the Japanese does not neglect making efforts to realize the democracy which we idealize through the system we have formed in our history, Japan can be a democratic state. Similarly, Soviet citizens begin to create the democracy which they idealize through the system of the Soviet type (or of Armenian type, Estonian type, Georgian type, Russian type, etc., if they exist, and probably exist). In this respect, it may safely be said that the Soviet union is taking the first steps toward democracy, although the road is not easy.

NOTES

1 *Pravda*, 1989. 6. 29.

2 e. g., see Andrei Sakharov's case in the USSR Academy of Science, *Moscow News*, No. 7 (February 12, 1989), p. 14.

3 e. g., see V. Strashun, "Kak nam vybirat'", *Izvestiia*, 1987. 1. 30.

4 G. V. Varabashev, "Izbitatel'naia kompaniia : tseli i sredstva," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 4 (April 1987), p. 8.

5 *Pravda*, 1989. 6. 1.

6 *Moscow News*, No. 6 (February 5, 1989), pp. 8-9.