

# CONSTITUTION OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

**Adopted at the Seventh (Special) Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Ninth Convocation,**

**On October 7, 1977**

Novosti Press Agency Publishing House  
Moscow, 1985

## **Preamble**

The Great October Socialist Revolution, made by the workers and peasants of Russia under the leadership of the Communist Party headed by Lenin, overthrew capitalist and landowner rule, broke the fetters of oppression, established the dictatorship of the proletariat, and created the Soviet state, a new type of state, the basic instrument for defending the gains of the revolution and for building socialism and communism. Humanity thereby began the epoch-making turn from capitalist to socialism.

After achieving victory in the Civil War and repulsing imperialist intervention, the Soviet government carried through far-reaching social and economic transformations, and put an end once and for all to exploitation of man by man, antagonisms between classes, and strife between nationalities. The unification of the Soviet Republics in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics multiplied the forces and opportunities of the peoples of the country in the building of socialism. Social ownership of the means of production and genuine democracy for the working masses were established. For the first time in the history of mankind a socialist society was created.

The strength of socialism was vividly demonstrated by the immortal feat of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces in achieving their historic victory in the Great Patriotic War. This victory consolidated the influence and international standing of the Soviet Union and created new opportunities for growth of the forces of socialism, national liberation, democracy, and peace throughout the world.

Continuing their creative endeavours, the working people of the Soviet Union have ensured rapid, all-round development of the country and steady improvement of the socialist system. They have consolidated the alliance of the working class, collective-farm peasantry, and people's intelligentsia, and friendship of the nations and nationalities of the USSR. Socio-political and ideological unity of Soviet society, in which the working class is the leading force, has been achieved. The aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat having been fulfilled, the Soviet state has become a state of the whole

people. The leading role of the Communist Party, the vanguard of all the people, has grown.

In the USSR a developed socialist society has been built. At this stage, when socialism is developing on its own foundations, the creative forces of the new system and the advantages of the socialist way of life are becoming increasingly evident, and the working people are more and more widely enjoying the fruits of their great revolutionary gains.

It is a society in which powerful productive forces and progressive science and culture have been created, in which the well-being of the people is constantly rising, and more and more favourable conditions are being provided for the all-round development of the individual.

It is a society of mature socialist social relations, in which, on the basis of the drawing together of all classes and social strata and of the juridical and factual equality of all its nations and nationalities and their fraternal cooperation, a new historical community of people has been formed -- the Soviet people.

It is a society of high organizational capacity, ideological commitment, and consciousness of the working people, who are patriots and internationalists. It is a society in which the law of life is concern of all for the good of each and concern of each for the good of all.

It is a society of true democracy, the political system of which ensures effective management of all public affairs, ever more active participation of the working people in running the state, and the combining of citizen's real rights and freedoms with their obligations and responsibility to society.

Developed socialist society is a natural, logical stage on the road to communism. The supreme goal of the Soviet state is the building of a classless communist society in which there will be public, communist self-government. The main aims of the people's socialist state are: to lay the material and technical foundation of communism, to perfect socialist social relations and transform them into communist relations, to mould the citizen of communist society, to raise the people's living and cultural standards, to safeguard the country's security, and to further the consolidation of peace and development of international cooperation.

The Soviet people, guided by the ideas of scientific communism and true to their revolutionary traditions, relying on the great social, economic, and political gains of socialism, striving for the further **development of socialist democracy**, taking into account the international position of the USSR as part of the world system of socialism, and conscious of their internationalist responsibility, preserving continuity of the ideas and principles of the first Soviet Constitution of 1918, the 1924 Constitution of the USSR and the 1936 Constitution of the USSR, hereby affirm the principle so the social structure and policy of the USSR, and define the rights, freedoms and obligations of citizens, and the principles of the organization of

the socialist state of the whole people, and its aims, and proclaim these in this Constitution.

## **Part I Principles of Social Structure and Policy**

### **Chapter 1 Political System**

#### **Article 1**

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist state of the whole people, expressing the will and interests of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia, the working people of all the nations and nationalities of the country.

#### **Article 2**

- (1) All power in the USSR belongs to the people.
- (2) The people exercise state power through Soviets of People's Deputies, which constitute the political foundation of the USSR.
- (3) All other state bodies are under the control of, and accountable to, the Soviets of People's Deputies.

#### **Article 3**

The Soviet state is organized and functions on the principle of **democratic centralism**, namely the electiveness of all bodies of state authority from the lowest to the highest, their accountability to the people, and the obligation of lower bodies to observe the decisions of higher ones. **Democratic centralism** combines central leadership with local initiative and creative activity and with the responsibility of the each state body and official for the work entrusted to them.

#### **Article 4**

- (1) The Soviet state and all its bodies function on the basis of socialist law, ensure the maintenance of law and order, and safeguard the interests of society and the rights and freedoms of **citizens**.
- (2) State organizations, public organizations and officials shall observe the Constitution of the USSR and Soviet laws.

#### **Article 5**

Major matters of state shall be submitted to nationwide discussion and put to a popular vote (referendum).

#### **Article 6**

- (1) The leading and guiding force of the Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and public organizations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU exists for the people and serves the people.
- (2) The Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society and the course of the home and foreign policy of the USSR, directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people, and

imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of communism.

(3) All party organizations shall function within the framework of the Constitution of the USSR.

#### **Article 7**

Trade unions, the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League cooperatives, and other public organizations, participate, in accordance with the aims laid down in their rules, in managing state and public affairs, and in deciding political, economic, and social and cultural matters.

#### **Article 8**

(1) Work collectives take part in discussing and deciding state and public affairs, in planning production and social development, in training and placing personnel, and in discussing and deciding matters pertaining to the management of enterprises and institutions, and the use of funds allocated both for developing production and for social and cultural purposes and financial incentives.

(2) Work collectives promote socialist emulation, the spread of progressive methods of work, and the strengthening of production discipline, educate their members in the spirit of communist morality, and strive to enhance their political consciousness and raise their cultural level and skills and qualifications.

#### **Article 9**

The principal direction in the development of the political system of Soviet society is the extension of socialist democracy, namely ever broader participation of citizens in managing the affairs of society and the state, continuous improvement of the machinery of state, heightening of the activity of public organizations, strengthening of the system of people's control, consolidation of the legal foundations of the functioning of the state and of public life, greater openness and publicity, and constant responsiveness to public opinion.

## **Chapter 2 Economic System**

#### **Article 10 [Socialist Ownership]**

(1) The foundation of the economic system of the USSR is socialist ownership of the means of production in the form of state property, and collective cooperative property.

(2) Socialist ownership also embraces the property of trade unions and other public organizations which they require to carry out their purposes under these rules.

(3) The state protects socialist property and provides conditions for its growth.

(4) No one has the right to use socialist property for personal gain or other selfish ends.

#### **Article 11 [State Property]**

(1) State property, i.e. the common property of the Soviet people, is the principal form of socialist property.

(2) The land, its minerals, waters, and forests are the exclusive property of the state.

The state owns the basic means of production in industry, construction, and agriculture; means of transport and communication; the banks; the property of state-run trade organizations and public utilities, and other state-run undertakings; most urban housing; and other property necessary for state purposes.

### **Article 12 [Cooperative Property]**

- (1) The property of collective farms and other cooperative organizations, and of their joint undertakings, comprises the means of production and other assets which they require for the purposes laid down in their rules.
- (2) The land held by collective farms is secured to them for their free use in perpetuity.
- (3) The state promotes development of collective cooperative property and its approximation to state property.
- (4) Collective farms, like other land users, are obliged to make effective and thrifty use of the land and to increase its fertility.

### **Article 13 [Personal Property]**

- (1) Earned income forms the basis of the personal property of Soviet citizens. The personal property of citizens of the USSR may include articles of everyday use, personal consumption and convenience, the implements and other objects of a small-holding, a house, and earned savings. The personal property of citizens and the right to inherit it are protected by the state.
- (2) Citizens may be granted the use of plots of land, in the manner prescribed by law, for a subsidiary small-holding (including the keeping of livestock and poultry), for fruit and vegetable growing or for building an individual dwelling. Citizens are required to make rational use of the land allotted to them. The state, and collective farms provide assistance to citizens in working their small-holdings.
- (3) Property owned or used by citizens shall not serve as a means of deriving unearned income or be employed to the detriment of the interests of society.

### **Article 14**

- (1) The source of the growth of social wealth and of the well-being of the people, and of each individual, is the labor, free from exploitation, of Soviet people.
- (2) The state exercises control over the measure of labor and of consumption in accordance with the principle of socialism: *"From each according to his ability, to each according to his work"*. It fixes the rate of taxation on taxable income.
- (3) Socially useful work and its results determine a person's status in society. By combining material and moral incentives and encouraging innovation and a creative attitude to work, the state helps transform labor into the prime vital need of every Soviet citizen.

### **Article 15**

- (1) The supreme goal of social production under socialism is the fullest possible satisfaction of the people's growing material, and cultural and intellectual requirements.
- (2) Relying on the creative initiative of the working people, socialist emulation, and scientific and technological progress, and by improving the forms and methods of economic management, the state ensures growth of the productivity of labor, raising of

the efficiency of production and of the quality of work, and dynamic, planned, proportionate development of the economy.

#### **Article 16**

(1) The economy of the USSR is an integral economic complex comprising all the elements of social production, distribution, and exchange on its territory.

(2) The economy is managed on the basis of state plans for economic and social development, with due account of the sectoral and territorial principles, and by combining centralized direction with the managerial independence and initiative of individual and amalgamated enterprises and other organizations, for which active use is made of management accounting, profit, cost, and other economic levers and incentives.

#### **Article 17**

In the USSR, the law permits individual labour in handicrafts, farming, the provision of services for the public, and other forms of activity based exclusively on the personal work of individual citizens and members of their families. The state makes regulations for such work to ensure that it serves the interest of society.

#### **Article 18**

In the interests of the present and future generations, the necessary steps are taken in the USSR to protect and make scientific, rational use of the land and its mineral and water resources, and the plant and animal kingdoms, to preserve the purity of air and water, ensure reproduction of natural wealth, and improve the human environment.

### **Chapter 3 Social Development, Culture**

#### **Article 19**

(1) The social basis of the USSR is the unbreakable alliance of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia.

(2) The state helps enhance the social homogeneity of society, namely the elimination of class differences and of the essential distinctions between town and country and between mental and physical labour, and the all-round development and drawing together of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR.

#### **Article 20**

In accordance with the communist ideal -- *"The free development of each is the condition of the free development of all"* -- the state pursues the aim of giving citizens more and more real opportunities to apply their creative energies, abilities, and talents, and to develop their personalities in every way.

#### **Article 21**

The state concerns itself with improving working conditions, safety and labor protection and the scientific organization of work, and with reducing and ultimately eliminating all arduous physical labour through comprehensive mechanization and automation of

production processes in all branches of the economy.

#### **Article 22**

A program is being consistently implemented in the USSR to convert agricultural work into a variety of industrial work, to extend the network of educational, cultural, and medical institutions, and of trade, public catering, service and public utility facilities in rural localities, and transform hamlets and villages into well-planned and well-appointed settlements.

#### **Article 23**

(1) The state pursues a steady policy of raising people's pay levels and real incomes through increase in productivity.

(2) In order to satisfy the needs of Soviet people more fully social consumption funds are created. The state, with the broad participation of public organizations and work collectives, ensures the growth and just distribution of these funds.

#### **Article 24**

(1) In the USSR, state systems of health protection, **social security**, trade and public catering, communal services and amenities, and public utilities, operate and are being extended.

(2) The state encourages cooperatives and other public organizations to provide all types of services for the population. It encourages the development of mass physical culture and sport.

#### **Article 25**

In the USSR there is a uniform system of public education, which is being constantly improved, that provides general education and vocational training for citizens, serves the communist education and intellectual and physical development of the youth, and trains them for work and social activity.

#### **Article 26**

In accordance with society's needs, the state provides for planned development of science and the training of scientific personnel and organizes introduction of the results of research in the economy and other spheres of life.

#### **Article 27**

(1) The state concerns itself with protecting, augmenting and making extensive use of society's cultural wealth for the moral and aesthetic education of the Soviet people, for raising their cultural level.

(2) In the USSR development of the professional, amateur and folk arts is encouraged in every way.

## **Chapter 4 Foreign Policy**

### **Article 28**

(1) The USSR steadfastly pursues a Leninist policy of peace and stands for strengthening of the security of nations and broad international cooperation.

(2) The foreign policy of the USSR is aimed at ensuring international conditions favorable for building communism in the USSR, safeguarding the state interests of the Soviet Union, consolidating the positions of world socialism, supporting the struggle of peoples for national liberation and social progress, preventing wars of aggression, achieving universal and complete disarmament, and consistently implementing the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

(3) In the USSR war propaganda is banned.

### **Article 29**

The USSR's relations with other states are based on observance of the following principles:

- sovereign equality;
- mutual renunciation of the use or threat of force;
- inviolability of frontiers;
- territorial integrity of states;
- peaceful settlement of disputes;
- non-intervention in internal affairs;
- respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- the equal rights of peoples and their right to decide their own destiny;
- cooperation among states; and
- fulfillment in good faith of obligations arising from the generally recognized principles and rules of international law, and from the international treaties signed by the USSR.

### **Article 30**

The USSR, as part of the world system of socialism and of the socialist community, promotes and strengthens friendship, cooperation, and comradely mutual assistance with other socialist countries on the basis of the principle of socialist internationalism, and takes an active part in socialist economic integration and the socialist international division of labour.

## **Chapter 5 Defence**

### **Article 31**

(1) Defence of the Socialist Motherland is one of the most important functions of the state, and is the concern of the whole people.

(2) In order to defend the gains of socialism, the peaceful labour of the Soviet people, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, the USSR maintains armed forces and has instituted universal military service.

(3) The duty of the Armed Forces of the USSR to the people is to provide reliable defence of the socialist Motherland and to be in constant combat readiness, guaranteeing that any aggressor is instantly repulsed.



### **Article 32**

- (1) The state ensures the security and defence capability of the country, and supplies the Armed Forces of the USSR with everything necessary for that purpose.
- (2) The duties of state bodies, public organizations, officials, and citizens in regard to safeguarding the country's security and strengthening its defence capacity are defined by the legislation of the USSR.

## **Part II State and Individual**

### **Chapter 6 Citizenship, Equality**

#### **Article 33 [Citizenship]**

- (1) Uniform federal citizenship is established for the USSR. Every citizen of a Union Republic is a citizen of the USSR.
- (2) The grounds and procedure for acquiring or forfeiting Soviet citizenship are defined by the Law on Citizenship of the USSR.
- (3) When abroad, citizens of the USSR enjoy the protection and assistance of the Soviet state.

#### **Article 34 [Equality]**

- (1) Citizens of the USSR are equal before the law, without distinction of origin, social or property status, race or nationality, sex, education, language, attitude to religion, type and nature of occupation, domicile, or other status.
- (2) The equal rights of citizens of the USSR are guaranteed in all fields of economic, political, social, and cultural life.

#### **Article 35**

- (1) Women and men have equal rights in the USSR.
- (2) Exercise of these rights is ensured by according women equal access with men to education and vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration, and promotion, and in social and political, and cultural activity, and by special labor and health protection measures for women; by providing conditions enabling mothers to work; by legal protection, and material and moral support for mothers and children, including paid leaves and other benefits for expectant mothers and mothers, and gradual reduction of working time for mothers with small children.

#### **Article 36**

- (1) Citizens of the USSR of different races and nationalities have equal rights.
- (2) Exercise of these rights is ensured by a policy of all-round development and drawing together of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR, by educating citizens in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism, and by the possibility to use their native language and the languages of other peoples in the USSR.
- (3) Any direct or indirect limitation of the rights of citizens or establishment of direct or indirect privileges on grounds of race or nationality, and any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness, hostility, or contempt, are punishable by law.

### **Article 37**

(1) Citizens of other countries and stateless persons in the USSR are guaranteed the rights and freedoms provided by law, including the right to apply to a court and other state bodies for the protection of their personal, property, family, and other rights.

(2) Citizens of other countries and stateless persons, when in the USSR, are obliged to respect the Constitution of the USSR and observe Soviet laws.

### **Article 38**

The USSR grants the right of asylum to foreigners persecuted for defending the interests of the working people and the cause of peace, or for participation in the revolutionary and national-liberation movement, or for progressive social and political, scientific, or other creative activity

## **Chapter 7 Basic Rights, Freedoms, Duties**

### **Article 39 [Freedom]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR enjoy in full the social, economic, political and personal rights and freedoms proclaimed and guaranteed by the Constitution of the USSR and by Soviet laws. The socialist system ensures enlargement of the rights and freedoms of citizens and continuous improvement of their living standards as social, economic, and cultural development programs are fulfilled.

(2) Enjoyment by citizens of their rights and freedoms must not be to the detriment of the interests of society or the state, or infringe the rights of other citizens.

### **Article 40 [Work]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR have **the right to work** (that is, to guaranteed employment and pay in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work, and not below the **state-established minimum**), including the right to choose their trade or profession, type of job and work in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, training and education, with due account of the needs of society.

(2) This right is ensured by the socialist economic system, steady growth of the productive forces, **free vocational and professional training**, improvement of skills, training in new trades or professions, and development of the systems of vocational guidance and job placement.

### **Article 41 [Rest]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR have the **right to rest and leisure**.

(2) This right is ensured by the establishment of a working week not exceeding 41 hours, for workers and other employees, a shorter working day in a number of trades and industries, and shorter hours for night work; by the provision of paid annual holidays, weekly days of rest, extension of the network of cultural, educational, and health-building institutions, and the development on a mass scale of sport, physical culture, and camping and tourism; by the provision of neighborhood recreational facilities, and of other opportunities for rational use of free time.

(3) The length of collective farmers' working and leisure time is established by their collective farms.

#### **Article 42 [Health]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR have the **right to health protection**.

(2) This right is ensured by free, qualified medical care provided by state health institutions; by extension of the network of therapeutic and health-building institutions; by the development and improvement of safety and hygiene in industry; by carrying out broad prophylactic measures; by measures to improve the environment; by special care for the health of the rising generation, including prohibition of child labour, excluding the work done by children as part of the school curriculum; and by developing research to prevent and reduce the incidence of disease and ensure citizens a long and active life.

#### **Article 43 [Welfare]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR have the **right to maintenance in old age**, in sickness, and in the event of complete or partial disability or loss of the breadwinner.

(2) The right is guaranteed by social insurance of workers and other employees and collective farmers; by allowances for temporary disability; by the provision by the state or by collective farms of retirement pensions, disability pensions, and pensions for loss of the breadwinner; by providing employment for the partially disabled; by care for the elderly and the disabled; and by other forms of social security.

#### **Article 44 [Housing]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR have the **rights to housing**.

(2) This right is ensured by the development and upkeep of state and socially-owned housing; by assistance for cooperative and individual house building; by fair distribution, under public control, of the housing that becomes available through fulfillment of the program of building well-appointed dwellings, and by low rents and low charges for utility services. Citizens of the USSR shall take good care of the housing allocated to them.

#### **Article 45 [Education]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR have the **right to education**.

(2) This right is ensured by free provision of all forms of education, by the institution of universal, compulsory secondary education, and broad development of vocational, specialized secondary, and higher education, in which instruction is oriented toward practical activity and production; by the development of extramural, correspondence and evening courses, by the provision of state scholarships and grants and privileges for students; by the free issue of school textbooks; by the opportunity to attend a school where teaching is in the native language; and by the provision of facilities for self-education.

#### **Article 46 [Culture]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR have the **right to enjoy cultural benefits**.

(2) This rights is ensured by broad access to the cultural treasures of their own land and

of the world that are preserved in state and other public collections; by the development and fair distribution of cultural and educational institutions throughout the country; by developing television and radio broadcasting and the publishing of books, newspapers and periodicals, and by extending the free library service; and by expanding cultural exchanges with other countries.

#### **Article 47 [Research]**

- (1) Citizens of the USSR, in accordance with the aims of building communism, are guaranteed freedom of scientific, technical, and artistic work. This freedom is ensured by broadening scientific research, encouraging invention and innovation, and developing literature and the arts. The state provides the necessary material conditions for this and support for voluntary societies and unions of workers in the arts, organizes introduction of inventions and innovations in production and other spheres of activity.
- (2) The rights of authors, inventors and innovators are protected by the state.

#### **Article 48 [Public Affairs]**

- (1) Citizens of the USSR have the **right to take part in the management and administration of state and public affairs** and in the discussion and adoption of laws and measures of All-Union and local significance.
- (2) This **right** is ensured by the opportunity to vote and to be elected to Soviets of People's Deputies and other elective state bodies, to take part in nationwide discussions and referendums, in people's control, in the work of state bodies, public organizations, and local community groups, and in meetings at places of work or residence.

#### **Article 49 [Proposals]**

- (1) Every citizen of the USSR has the **right to submit proposals** to state bodies and public organizations for improving their activity, and to criticize shortcomings in their work.
- (2) Officials are obliged, within established time-limits, to examine citizens' proposals and requests, to reply to them, and to take appropriate action.
- (3) Persecution for criticism is prohibited. Persons guilty of such persecution shall be called to account.

#### **Article 50 [Expression]**

- (1) In accordance with the interests of the people and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system, **citizens** of the USSR are **guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstrations**.
- (2) Exercise of these political freedoms is ensured by putting public buildings, streets, and squares at the disposal of the working people and their organizations, by broad dissemination of information, and by the opportunity to use the press, television, and radio.

#### **Article 51 [Association]**

- (1) In accordance with the aims of building communism, **citizens** of the USSR have the **right to associate in public organizations** that promote their political activity and

initiative and satisfaction of their various interests.

(2) Public organizations are guaranteed conditions for successfully performing the functions defined in their rules.

### **Article 52 [Religion]**

(1) **Citizens** of the USSR are **guaranteed freedom of conscience**, that is, the right to profess or not to profess any religion, and to conduct religious worship or atheistic propaganda. Incitement of hostility or hatred on religious grounds is prohibited.

(2) In the USSR, the church is separated from the state, and the school from the church.

### **Article 53 [Family, Marriage]**

(1) **The family enjoys the protection of the state.**

(2) Marriage is based on the free consent of the woman and the man; the spouses are completely equal in their family relations.

(3) The state helps the family by providing and developing a broad system of child-care institutions, by organizing and improving communal services and public catering, by paying grants on the birth of a child, by providing children's allowances and benefits for large families, and other forms of family allowances and assistance.

### **Article 54 [Personal Freedom]**

**Citizens** of the USSR are guaranteed inviolability of the **person**. No one may be arrested except by a court decision or on the warrant of a procurator.

### **Article 55 [Home]**

**Citizens** of the USSR are guaranteed inviolability of the home. No one may, without lawful grounds, enter a home against the will of those residing in it.

### **Article 56 [Privacy]**

The privacy of **citizens**, and of their correspondence, telephone conversations, and telegraphic communications is protected by law.

### **Article 57 [Legal Remedies]**

(1) Respect for the individual and protection of the rights and freedoms of **citizens** are the duty of all state bodies, public organizations, and officials.

(2) **Citizens** of the USSR have the **right to protection** by the courts against encroachments on their honour and reputation, life and health, and personal freedom and property.

### **Article 58 [Complaint]**

(1) **Citizens** of the USSR have the **right to lodge a complaint** against the actions of officials, state bodies and public bodies. Complaints shall be examined according to the procedure and within the time-limit established by law.

(2) Actions by officials that contravene the law or exceed their powers, and infringe the rights of **citizens**, may be appealed against in a court in the manner prescribed by law.

(3) **Citizens** of the USSR have the right to compensation for damage resulting from unlawful actions by state organizations and public organizations, or by officials in the

performance of their duties.

### **Article 59 [General]**

(1) **Citizens'** exercise of their rights and freedoms is inseparable from the performance of **their duties and obligations**.

(2) **Citizens** of the USSR are obliged to observe the Constitution of the USSR and Soviet laws, comply with the standards of socialist conduct, and uphold the honour and dignity of **Soviet citizenship**.

### **Article 60 [Duty to Work]**

It is the duty of, and matter of honour for, every able-bodied citizen of the USSR to work conscientiously in his chosen, socially useful occupation, and strictly to observe labour discipline. Evasion of socially useful work is incompatible with the principles of socialist society.

### **Article 61 [Socialist Property]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR are obliged to preserve and protect socialist property. It is the duty of a citizen of the USSR to combat misappropriation and squandering of state and socially-owned property and to make thrifty use of the people's wealth.

(2) Persons encroaching in any way on socialist property shall be punished according to the law.

### **Article 62 [Interest of State]**

(1) Citizens of the USSR are obliged to safeguard the interests of the Soviet state, and to enhance its power and prestige.

(2) Defence of the Socialist Motherland is the sacred duty of every citizen of the USSR.

(3) Betrayal of the Motherland is the gravest of crimes against the people.

### **Article 63 [Military Service]**

Military service in the ranks of the Armed Forces of the USSR is an honorable duty of Soviet citizens.

### **Article 64 [Peacekeeping Duty]**

It is the duty of every citizen of the USSR to respect the national dignity of other citizens, and to strengthen friendship of the nations and nationalities of the multinational Soviet state.

### **Article 65 [Social Behavior]**

A citizen of the USSR is obliged to respect the rights and lawful interests of other persons, to be uncompromising toward anti-social behavior, and to help maintain public order.

### **Article 66 [Childcare]**

Citizens of the USSR are obliged to concern themselves with the upbringing of children, to train them for socially useful work, and to raise them as worthy members of socialist society. Children are obliged to care for their parents and help them.

**Article 67 [Protection of Nature]**

Citizens of the USSR are obliged to protect nature and conserve its riches.

**Article 68 [Preservation of Culture]**

Concern for the preservation of historical monuments and other cultural values is a duty and obligation of citizens of the USSR.

**Article 69 [Internationalist Duties]**

It is the internationalist duty of citizens of the USSR to promote friendship and cooperation with peoples of other lands and help maintain and strengthen world peace.

**Part III State Structure****Chapter 8 Federal State****Article 70**

(1) The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is an integral, federal, multinational state formed on the principle of socialist federalism as a result of the free self-determination of nations and the voluntary association of equal Soviet Socialist Republics.

(2) The USSR embodies the state unity of the Soviet people and draws all its nations and nationalities together for the purpose of jointly building communism.

**Article 71**

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics unites:

- the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic,
- the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic,
- the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic, and
- the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic.

**Article 72**

Each Union Republic shall retain the right freely to secede from the USSR.

### **Article 73**

The jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as represented by its highest bodies of state authority and administration, shall cover:

1. the admission of new republics to the USSR; endorsement of the formation of new autonomous republics and autonomous regions within Union Republics;
2. determination of the state boundaries of the USSR and approval of changes in the boundaries between Union Republics;
3. establishment of the general principles for the organization and functioning of republican and local bodies of state authority and administration;
4. the ensurance of uniformity of legislative norms throughout the USSR and establishment of the fundamentals of the legislation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Union Republics;
5. pursuance of a uniform social and economic policy; direction of the country's economy; determination of the main lines of scientific and technological progress and the general measures for rational exploitation and conservation of natural resources; the drafting and approval of state plans for the economic and social development of the USSR, and endorsement of reports on their fulfillment;
6. the drafting and approval of the consolidated Budget of the USSR, and endorsement of the report on its execution; management of a single monetary and credit system; determination of the taxes and revenues forming the Budget of the USSR; and the formulation of prices and wages policy;
7. direction of the sectors of the economy, and of enterprises and amalgamations under Union jurisdiction, and general direction of industries under Union-Republican jurisdiction;
8. issues of war and peace, defence of the sovereignty of the USSR and safeguarding of its frontiers and territory, and organization of defence; direction of the Armed Forces of the USSR;
9. state security;
10. representation of the USSR in international relations; the USSR's relations with other states and with international organizations; establishment of the general procedure for, and co-ordination of, the relations of Union Republics with other states and with international organizations; foreign trade and other forms of external economic activity on the basis of state monopoly;
11. control over observance of the Constitution of the USSR, and ensurance of conformity of the Constitutions of Union Republics to the Constitution of the USSR;
12. and settlement of other matters of All-Union importance.

### **Article 74**

The laws of the USSR shall have the same force in all Union Republics. In the event of a discrepancy between a Union Republic law and an All-Union law, the law of the USSR shall prevail.

### **Article 75**

(1) The territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a single entity and



comprises the territories of the Union Republics.

(2) The sovereignty of the USSR extends throughout its territory.

## **Chapter 9 Union Republics**

### **Article 76**

(1) A Union Republic is a sovereign Soviet socialist state that has united with other Soviet Republics in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

(2) Outside the spheres listed in Article [73](#) of the Constitution of the USSR, a Union Republic exercises independent authority on its territory.

(3) A Union Republic shall have its own Constitution conforming to the Constitution of the USSR with the specific features of the Republic being taken into account.

### **Article 77**

(1) Union Republics take part in decision-making in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Government of the USSR, and other bodies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

(2) A Union Republic shall ensure comprehensive economic and social development on its territory, facilitate exercise of the powers of the USSR on its territory, and implement the decisions of the highest bodies of state authority and administration of the USSR.

(3) In matters that come within its jurisdiction, a Union Republic shall co-ordinate and control the activity of enterprises, institutions, and organizations subordinate to the Union.

### **Article 78**

The territory of a Union Republic may not be altered without its consent. The boundaries between Union Republics may be altered by mutual agreement of the Republics concerned, subject to ratification by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

### **Article 79**

A Union Republic shall determine its division into territories, regions, areas, and districts, and decide other matters relating to its administrative and territorial structure.

### **Article 80**

A Union Republic has the right to enter into relations with other states, conclude treaties with them, exchange diplomatic and consular representatives, and take part in the work of international organizations.

### **Article 81**

The sovereign rights of Union Republics shall be safeguarded by the USSR.

## **Chapter 10 Autonomous Republics**

### **Article 82**

- (1) An Autonomous Republic is a constituent part of a Union Republic.
- (2) In spheres not within the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Union Republic, an Autonomous Republic shall deal independently with matters within its jurisdiction.
- (3) An autonomous Republic shall have its own Constitution conforming to the Constitutions of the USSR and the Union Republic with the specific features of the Autonomous Republic being taken into account.

### **Article 83**

- (1) An Autonomous Republic takes part in decision-making through the highest bodies of state authority and administration of the USSR and of the Union Republic respectively, in matters that come within the jurisdiction of the USSR and the Union Republic.
- (2) An Autonomous Republic shall ensure comprehensive economic and social development on its territory, facilitate exercise of the powers of the USSR and the Union Republic on its territory, and implement decisions of the highest bodies of state authority and administration of the USSR and the Union Republic.
- (3) In matters within its jurisdiction, an Autonomous Republic shall co-ordinate and control the activity of enterprises, institutions, and organizations subordinate to the Union or the Union Republic.

### **Article 84**

The territory of an Autonomous Republic may not be altered without its consent.

### **Article 85**

- (1) The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic includes the Bashkir, Buryat, Daghestan, Kabardin-Balkar, Kalmyk, Karelian, Komi, Mari, Mordovian, North Ossetian, Tatar, Tuva, Udmurt, Chechen-Ingush, Chuvash, and Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics.
- (2) The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic includes the Kara-Kalpak Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.
- (3) The Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic includes the Abkhasian and Adzhar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics.
- (4) The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic include the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

## **Chapter 11 Autonomous Regions and Areas**

### **Article 86**

An Autonomous Region is a constituent part of a Union Republic or Territory. The Law on an Autonomous Region, upon submission by the Soviet of People's Deputies of the Autonomous Region concerned, shall be adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republic.

### **Article 87**

- (1) The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic includes the Adygei, Gorno-Altai, Jewish, Karachai-Circassian, and Khakass Autonomous Regions.
- (2) The Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic includes the South Ossetian Autonomous Region.
- (3) The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic include the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region.
- (4) The Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic includes the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region.

### **Article 88**

An autonomous Area is a constituent part of a Territory or Region. The Law on an Autonomous Area shall be adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republic concerned.

## **Part IV Deputies, Election**

### **Chapter 12 System of Deputies**

#### **Article 89**

The Soviets of People's Deputies, i.e. the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Supreme Soviets of Union Republics, the Supreme Soviets of Autonomous Republics, the Soviets of People's Deputies of Territories and Regions, the Soviets of People's Deputies of Autonomous Regions and Autonomous Areas, and the Soviets of People's Deputies of districts, cities, city districts, settlements and villages shall constitute a single system of bodies of state authority.

#### **Article 90**

- (1) The term of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Supreme Soviets of Union Republics, and the Supreme Soviets of Autonomous Republics shall be five years.
- (2) The term of local Soviets of People's Deputies shall be two and a half years.
- (3) Elections to Soviets of People's Deputies shall be called not later than two months before the expiry of the term of the Soviet concerned.

#### **Article 91**

- (1) The most important matters within the jurisdiction of the respective Soviets of People's Deputies shall be considered and settled at their sessions.
- (2) Soviets of People's Deputies shall elect standing commissions and form executive-administrative, and other bodies accountable to them.

#### **Article 92**

- (1) Soviets of People's Deputies shall form people's control bodies combining state control with control by the working people at enterprises, collective farms, institutions, and organizations.

(2) People's control bodies shall check on the fulfillment of state plans and assignments, combat breaches of state discipline, localist tendencies, narrow departmental attitudes, mismanagement, extravagance and waste, red tape and bureaucracy, and help improve the working of the state machinery.

### **Article 93**

Soviets of People's Deputies shall direct all sectors of state economic, and social and cultural development, either directly or through bodies instituted by them, take decisions and ensure their execution, and verify their implementation.

### **Article 94**

Soviets of People's Deputies shall function publicly on the basis of collective, free, constructive discussion and decision-making, of systematic reporting back to them and the people by their executive-administrative and other bodies, and of involving citizens on a broad scale in their work.

## **Chapter 13 Electoral System**

### **Article 95**

Deputies to all Soviets shall be elected on the basis of universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot.

### **Article 96**

(1) Elections shall be universal: all citizens of the USSR who have reached the age of 18 shall have the right to vote and to be elected, with the exception of persons who have been certified insane.

(2) To be eligible for election to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR a citizen of the USSR must have reached the age of 21.

### **Article 97**

Elections shall be equal: each citizen shall have one vote; all voters shall exercise the franchise on an equal footing.

### **Article 98**

Elections shall be direct: deputies to all Soviets of People's Deputies shall be elected by direct vote.

### **Article 99**

Voting at elections shall be secret: control over voters' exercise of the franchise is inadmissible.

### **Article 100**

(1) The following shall have the right to nominate candidates: branches and organizations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, trade unions, and the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League; cooperatives and other public organizations;

work collectives, and meetings of servicemen in their military units.

(2) Citizens of the USSR and public organizations are guaranteed the right to free and all-round discussion of the political and personal qualities and competence of candidates, and the right to campaign for them at meetings, in the press, and on television and radio.

(3) The expenses involved in holding elections to Soviets of People's Deputies shall be met by the state.

#### **Article 101**

(1) Deputies to Soviets of People's Deputies shall be elected by constituencies.

(2) A citizen of the USSR may not, as a rule, be elected to more than two Soviets of People's Deputies.

(3) Elections to the Soviets shall be conducted by electoral commissions consisting of representatives, and of meetings of servicemen in military units.

(4) The procedure for holding elections to Soviets of People's Deputies shall be defined by the laws of the USSR, and of Union and Autonomous Republics.

#### **Article 102**

(1) Electors give mandates to their Deputies.

(2) The appropriate Soviets of People's Deputies shall examine electors' mandates, take them into account in drafting economic and social development plans and in drawing up the budget, organize implementation of the mandates, and inform citizens about it.

### **Chapter 14 Deputies**

#### **Article 103**

(1) Deputies are the plenipotentiary representatives of the people in the Soviets of People's Deputies.

(2) In the Soviets, Deputies deal with matters relating to state, economic, and social and cultural development, organize implementation of the decisions of the Soviets, and exercise control over the work of state bodies, enterprises, institutions and organizations.

(3) Deputies shall be guided in their activities by the interests of the state, and shall take the needs of their constituents into account and work to implement their electors' mandates.

#### **Article 104**

(1) Deputies shall exercise their powers without discontinuing their regular employment or duties.

(2) During sessions of the Soviet, and so as to exercise their deputy's powers in other cases stipulated by law, Deputies shall be released from their regular employment or duties, with retention of their average earnings at their permanent place of work.

#### **Article 105**

(1) A Deputy has the right to address inquiries to the appropriate state bodies and officials, who are obliged to reply to them at a session of the Soviet.

(2) Deputies have the right to approach any state or public body, enterprise, institution, or organization on matters arising from their work as Deputies and to take part in considering the questions raised by them. The heads of the state or public bodies, enterprises, institutions or organizations concerned are obliged to receive Deputies without delay and to consider their proposals within the time-limit established by law.

#### **Article 106**

(1) Deputies shall be ensured conditions for the unhampered and effective exercise of their rights and duties.

(2) The immunity of Deputies, and other guarantees of their activity as Deputies, are defined in the Law on the Status of Deputies and other legislative acts of the USSR and of Union and Autonomous Republics.

#### **Article 107**

(1) Deputies shall report on their work and on that of the Soviet to their constituents, and to the work collectives and public organizations that nominated them.

(2) Deputies who have not justified the confidence of their constituents may be recalled at any time by decision of a majority of the electors in accordance with the procedure established by law.

### **Part V State Authority and Administration**

#### **Chapter 15 Supreme Soviet**

##### **Article 108 [Supreme Soviet]**

(1) The highest body of state authority of the USSR shall be the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

(2) The Supreme Soviet of the USSR is empowered to deal with all matters within the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as defined by this Constitution.

(3) The adoption and amendment of the Constitution of the USSR; admission of new Republics to the USSR; endorsement of the formation of new Autonomous Republics and Autonomous Regions; approval of the state plans for economic and social development, of the Budget of the USSR, and of reports on their execution; and the institution of bodies of the USSR accountable to it, are the exclusive prerogative of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

(4) Laws of the USSR shall be enacted by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or by a nationwide vote (referendum) held by decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

##### **Article 109 [Two Chambers]**

(1) The Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall consist of two chambers: the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities.

(2) The two chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall have equal rights.

#### **Article 110 [Elections]**

(1) The Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities shall have equal numbers of deputies.

(2) The Soviet of the Union shall be elected by constituencies with equal populations.

(3) The Soviet of Nationalities shall be elected on the basis of the following representation: 32 deputies from each Union Republic, 11 deputies from each Autonomous Republic, five deputies from each Autonomous Region, and one deputy from each Autonomous Area.

(4) The Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities, upon submission by the credentials commissions elected by them, shall decide on the validity of Deputies' credentials, and, in cases in which the election law has been violated, shall declare the election of the Deputies concerned null and void.

#### **Article 111 [Chairmen]**

(1) Each chamber of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall elect a Chairman and four Vice-Chairmen.

(2) The Chairmen of the Soviet of the Union and of the Soviet of Nationalities shall preside over the sittings of the respective chambers and conduct their affairs.

(3) Joint sittings of the chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be presided over alternately by the Chairman of the Soviet of the Union and the Chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities.

#### **Article 112 [Sessions]**

(1) Sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be convened twice a year.

(2) Special sessions shall be convened by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR at its discretion or on the proposal of a Union Republic, or of not less than one-third of the Deputies of one of the chambers.

(3) A session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall consist of separate and joint sittings of the chambers, and of meetings of the standing commissions of the chambers or commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR held between the sittings of the chambers. A session may be opened and closed at either separate or joint sittings of the chambers.

#### **Article 113 [Initiative]**

The right to initiate legislation in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR is vested in the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Union Republics through their highest bodies of state authority, commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and standing commissions of its chambers, Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Supreme Court of the USSR, and the Procurator-General of the USSR.

(4) The right to initiate legislation is also vested in public organizations through their All-Union bodies.

#### **Article 114 [Debate]**

(1) Bills and other matters submitted to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be debated by its chambers at separate or joint sittings. Where necessary, a bill or other matter may be referred to one or more commissions for preliminary or additional consideration.

(2) A law of the USSR shall be deemed adopted when it has been passed in each chamber of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR by a majority of the total number of its Deputies. Decisions and other acts of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR are adopted by a majority of the total number of Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

(3) Bills and other very important matters of state may be submitted for nationwide discussion by a decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or its Presidium taken on their own initiative or on the proposal of a Union Republic.

#### **Article 115 [Conciliation Commission]**

In the event of a disagreement between the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities, the matter at issue shall be referred for settlement to a conciliation commission formed by the chambers on a parity basis, after which it shall be considered for a second time by the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities at a joint sitting. If agreement is again not reached, the matter shall be postponed for debate at the next session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or submitted by the Supreme Soviet to a nationwide vote (referendum)

#### **Article 116 [Publication]**

Laws of the USSR and decisions and other acts of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be published in the languages of the Union Republics over the signatures of the Chairman and Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

#### **Article 117 [Inquiries]**

Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR has the right to address inquiries to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, and to Ministers and the heads of other bodies formed by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The Council of Ministers of the USSR, or the official to whom the inquiry is addressed, is obliged to give a verbal or written reply within three days at the given session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

#### **Article 118 [Immunity]**

A Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR may not be prosecuted, or arrested, or incur a court-imposed penalty, without the sanction of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or, between its sessions, of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

#### **Article 119**

The Supreme Soviet of the USSR, at a joint sitting of its chambers, shall elect a Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which shall be a standing body of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, accountable to it for all its work and exercising the functions of the highest body of state authority of the USSR between sessions of the Supreme Soviet, within the limits prescribed by the Constitution.

#### **Article 120**



The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be elected from among the Deputies and shall consist of a Chairman, First Vice-Chairman, 15 Vice-Chairmen (one from each Union Republic), a Secretary, and 21 members.

#### **Article 121**

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall:

1. name the date of elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR;
2. convene sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR;
3. co-ordinate the work of the standing commissions of the chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR;
4. ensure observance of the Constitution of the USSR and conformity of the Constitutions and laws of Union Republics to the Constitution and laws of the USSR;
5. interpret the laws of the USSR;
6. ratify and denounce international treaties of the USSR;
7. revoke decisions and ordinances of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and of the Councils of Ministers of Union Republics should they fail to conform to the law;
8. institute military and diplomatic ranks and other special titles; and confer the highest military and diplomatic ranks and other special titles;
9. institute orders and medals of the USSR, and honorific titles of the USSR; award orders and medals of the USSR; and confer honorific titles of the USSR.
10. grant citizenship of the USSR, and rule on matters of the renunciation or deprivation of citizenship of the USSR and of granting asylum;
11. issue All-Union acts of amnesty and exercise the right of pardon;
12. appoint and recall diplomatic representatives of the USSR to other countries and to international organizations;
13. receive the letters of credence and recall of the diplomatic representatives of foreign states accredited to it;
14. form the Council of Defence of the USSR and confirm its composition; appoint and dismiss the high command of the Armed Forces of the USSR;
15. proclaim martial law in particular localities or throughout the country in the interests of defence of the USSR;
16. order general or partial mobilization;
17. between sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, proclaim a state of war in the event of an armed attack on the USSR, or when it is necessary to meet international treaty obligations relating to mutual defence against aggression;
18. and exercise other powers vested in it by the Constitution and laws of the USSR.

#### **Article 122**

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, between sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and subject to submission for its confirmation at the next session, shall:

1. amend existing legislative acts of the USSR when necessary;
2. approve changes in the boundaries between Union Republics;
3. form and abolish Ministries and State Committees of the USSR on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers of the USSR;
4. relieve individual members of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of their

responsibilities and appoint persons to the Council of Ministers on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

#### **Article 123**

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR promulgates decrees and adopts decisions.

#### **Article 124**

(1) On expiry of the term of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall retain its powers until the newly elected Supreme Soviet of the USSR has elected a new Presidium.

(2) The newly elected Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall be convened by the outgoing Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR within two months of the elections.

#### **Article 125**

(1) The Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities shall elect standing commissions from among the Deputies to make a preliminary review of matters coming within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, to promote execution of the laws of the USSR and other acts of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and its Presidium, and to check on the work of state bodies and organizations. The chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR may also set up joint commissions on a parity basis.

(2) When it deems necessary, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR sets up commissions of inquiry and audit, and commissions on any other matter.

(3) All state and public bodies, organizations and officials are obliged to meet the requests of the commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and of its chambers, and submit the requisite materials and documents to them.

(4) The commissions' recommendations shall be subject to consideration by state and public bodies, institutions and organizations. The commissions shall be informed, within the prescribed time-limit, of the results of such consideration or of the action taken.

#### **Article 126**

(1) The Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall supervise the work of all state bodies accountable to it.

(2) The Supreme Soviet of the USSR shall form a Committee of People's Control of the USSR to head the system of people's control.

(3) The organization and procedure of people's control bodies are defined by the Law on People's Control in the USSR.

#### **Article 127**

The procedure of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and of its bodies shall be defined in the Rules and Regulations of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and other laws of the USSR enacted on the basis of the Constitution of the USSR.

### **Chapter 16 Council of Ministers**

### **Article 128**

The Council of Ministers of the USSR, i.e. the Government of the USSR, is the highest executive and administrative body of state authority of the USSR.

### **Article 129**

(1) The Council of Ministers of the USSR shall be formed by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR at a joint sitting of the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities, and shall consist of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, First Vice Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, Ministers of the USSR, and Chairmen of State Committees of the USSR.

(2) The Chairmen of the Councils of Ministers of Union Republics shall be *ex officio* members of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

(3) The Supreme Soviet of the USSR, on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, may include in the Government of the USSR the heads of other bodies and organizations of the USSR.

(4) The Council of Ministers of the USSR shall tender its resignation to a newly elected Supreme Soviet of the USSR at its first session.

### **Article 130**

(1) The Council of Minister of the USSR shall be responsible and accountable to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and, between sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

(2) The Council of Ministers of the USSR shall report regularly on its work of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

### **Article 131**

(1) The Council of Ministers of the USSR is empowered to deal with all matters of state administration within the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics insofar as, under the Constitution, they do not come within the competence of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

(2) Within its powers the Council of Ministers of the USSR shall:

1. ensure direction of economic, social and cultural development; draft and implement measures to promote the well-being and cultural development of the people, to develop science and engineering, to ensure rational exploitation and conservation of natural resources, to consolidate the monetary and credit system, to pursue a uniform prices, wages, and social security policy, and to organize state insurance and a uniform system of accounting and statistics; and organize the management of industrial, constructional, and agricultural enterprises and amalgamations, transport and communications undertakings, banks, and other organizations and institutions of All-Union subordination;
2. draft current and long-term state plans for the economic and social development of the USSR and the Budget of the USSR, and submit them to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; take measures to execute the state plans and Budget; and report to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the implementation of the plans and Budget;
3. implement measures to defend the interests of the state, protect socialist property and maintain public order, and guarantee and protect citizens' rights and freedoms;

4. take measures to ensure state security;
5. exercise general direction of the development of the Armed Forces of the USSR, and determine the annual contingent of citizens to be called up for active military service;
6. provide general direction in regard to relations with other states, foreign trade, and economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation of the USSR with other countries; take measures to ensure fulfillment of the USSR's international treaties; and ratify and denounce intergovernmental international agreements;
7. and when necessary, form committees, central boards and other departments under the Council of Ministers of the USSR to deal with matters of economic, social and cultural development, and defence.

#### **Article 132**

A Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, consisting of the Chairman, the First Vice-Chairmen, and Vice-Chairmen of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, shall function as a standing body of the Council of Ministers of the USSR to deal with questions relating to guidance of the economy, and with other matters of state administration.

#### **Article 133**

The Council of Ministers of the USSR, on the basis of, and in pursuance of, the laws of the USSR and other decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and its Presidium, shall issue decisions and ordinances and verify their execution. The decisions and ordinances of the Council of Ministers of the USSR shall be binding throughout the USSR.

#### **Article 134**

The Council of Ministers of the USSR has the right, in matters within the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to suspend execution of decisions and ordinances of the Councils of Ministers of Union Republics, and to rescind acts of ministries and state committees of the USSR, and of the other bodies subordinate to it.

#### **Article 135**

(1) The Council of Ministers of the USSR shall co-ordinate and direct the work of All-Union and Union-Republican ministries, state committees of the USSR, and other bodies subordinate to it.

(2) All-Union ministries and state committees of the USSR shall direct the work of the branches of administration entrusted to them, or exercise inter-branch administration, throughout the territory of the USSR directly or through bodies set up by them.

(3) Union-Republican ministries and state committees of the USSR direct the work of the branches of administration entrusted to them, or exercise inter-branch administration, as a rule, through the corresponding ministries and state committees, and other bodies of Union Republics, and directly administer individual enterprises and amalgamations of Union subordination. The procedure for transferring enterprises and amalgamations from Republic or local subordination to Union subordination shall be defined by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

(4) Ministries and state committees of the USSR shall be responsible for the condition

and development of the spheres of administration entrusted to them; within their competence, they issue orders and other acts on the basis of, and in execution of, the laws of the USSR and other decisions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and its Presidium, and of decisions and ordinances of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, and organize and verify their implementation.

#### **Article 136**

The competence of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and its Presidium, the procedure for their work, relationships between the Council of Ministers and other state bodies, and the list of All-Union and Union-Republican ministries and state committees of the USSR are defined, on the basis of the Constitution, in the Law on the Council of Minister of the USSR.

### **Part VI Structure of Administration**

#### **Chapter 17 Higher Bodies of State Authority**

##### **Article 137**

(1) The highest body of state authority of a Union Republic shall be the Supreme Soviet of that Republic.

(2) The Supreme Soviet of a Union Republic is empowered to deal with all matters within the jurisdiction of the Republic under the Constitutions of the USSR and the Republic.

(3) Adoption and amendment of the Constitution of a Union Republic; endorsement of state plans for economic and social development, of the Republic's Budget, and of reports on their fulfillment; and the formation of bodies accountable to the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republic are the exclusive prerogative of that Supreme Soviet.

(4) Laws of a Union Republic shall be enacted by the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republic or by a popular vote (referendum) held by decision of the Republic's Supreme Soviet.

##### **Article 138**

The Supreme Soviet of a Union Republic shall elect a Presidium, which is a standing body of that Supreme Soviet and accountable to it for all its work. The composition and powers of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of a Union Republic shall be defined in the Constitution of the Union Republic.

##### **Article 139**

(1) The Supreme Soviet of a Union Republic shall form a Council of Ministers of the Union Republic, i.e. the Government of that Republic, which shall be the highest executive and administrative body of state authority in the Republic.

(2) The Council of Ministers of a Union Republic shall be responsible and accountable to the Supreme Soviet of that Republic or, between sessions of the Supreme Soviet, to

its Presidium.

#### **Article 140**

The Council of Ministers of a Union Republic issues decisions and ordinances on the basis of, and in pursuance of, the legislative acts of the USSR and of the Union Republic, and of decisions and ordinances of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, and shall organize and verify their execution.

#### **Article 141**

The Council of Ministers of a Union Republic has the right to suspend the execution of decisions and ordinances of the Councils of Ministers of Autonomous Republics, to rescind the decisions and orders of the Executive Committees of Soviets of People's Deputies of Territories, Regions, and cities (i.e. cities under Republic jurisdiction) and of Autonomous Regions, and in Union Republics not divided into regions, of the Executive Committees of district and corresponding city Soviets of People's Deputies.

#### **Article 142**

(1) The Council of Ministers of a Union Republic shall co-ordinate and direct the work of the Union-Republican and Republican ministries and of state committees of the Union Republic, and other bodies under its jurisdiction.

(2) The Union-Republican ministries and state committees of a Union Republic shall direct the branches of administration entrusted to them, or exercise inter-branch control and shall be subordinate to both the Council of Ministers of the Union Republic and the corresponding Union-Republican ministry or state committee of the USSR.

(3) Republican ministries and state committees shall direct the branches of administration entrusted to them, or exercise inter-branch control, and shall be subordinate to the Council of Ministers of the Union Republic.

### **Chapter 18 Higher Bodies of Autonomous Republics**

#### **Article 143**

(1) The highest body of state authority of an Autonomous Republic shall be the Supreme Soviet of that Republic.

(2) Adoption and amendment of the Constitution of an Autonomous Republic; endorsement of state plans for economic and social development, and of the Republic's Budget; and the formation of bodies accountable to the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republic are the exclusive prerogative of that Supreme Soviet.

(3) Laws of an Autonomous Republic shall be enacted by the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republic.

#### **Article 144**

The Supreme Soviet of an Autonomous Republic shall elect a Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republic and shall form a Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic, i.e. the Government of that Republic.

## **Chapter 19 Local Bodies**

### **Article 145**

The bodies of state authority in Territories, Regions, Autonomous Areas, districts, cities, city districts, settlements, and rural communities shall be the corresponding Soviets of People's Deputies.

### **Article 146**

(1) Local Soviets of People's Deputies shall deal with all matters of local significance in accordance with the interest of the whole state and of the citizens residing in the area under their jurisdiction, implement decisions of higher bodies of state authority, guide the work of lower Soviets of People's Deputies, take part in the discussion of matters of Republican and All-Union significance, and submit their proposals concerning them.

(2) Local Soviets of People's Deputies shall direct state, economic, social and cultural development within their territory; endorse plans for economic and social development and the local budget; exercise general guidance over state bodies, enterprises, institutions and organizations subordinate to them; ensure observance of the laws, maintenance of law and order; and protection of citizens' rights; and help strengthen the country's defence capacity.

### **Article 147**

Within their powers, local Soviets of People's Deputies shall ensure the comprehensive, all-round economic and social development of their area; exercise control over the observance of legislation by enterprises, institutions and organizations subordinate to higher authorities and located in their area; and co-ordinate and supervise their activity as regards land use, nature conservation, building, employment of manpower, production of consumer goods, and social, cultural, communal and other services and amenities for the public.

### **Article 148**

Local Soviets of People's Deputies shall decide matters within the powers accorded them by the legislation of the USSR and of the appropriate Union Republic and Autonomous Republic. Their decisions shall be binding on all enterprises, institutions, and organizations located in their area and on officials and citizens.

### **Article 149**

(1) The executive-administrative bodies of local Soviets shall be the Executive Committees elected by them from among their deputies.

(2) Executive Committees shall report on their work at least once a year to the Soviets that elected them and to meetings of citizens at their places of work or residence.

### **Article 150**

Executive Committees of local Soviets of People's Deputies shall be directly accountable both to the Soviet that elected them and to the higher executive and administrative body.

## **Part VII Justice**

### **Chapter 20 Courts and Arbitration**

#### **Article 151**

(1) In the USSR justice is administered only by the courts.

(2) In the USSR there are the following courts: the Supreme Court of the USSR, the Supreme Courts of Union Republics, the Supreme Courts of Autonomous Republics, Territorial, Regional, and city courts, courts of Autonomous Regions, courts of Autonomous Areas, district (city) people's courts, and military tribunals in the Armed Forces.

#### **Article 152**

(1) All courts in the USSR shall be formed on the principle of the electiveness of judges and people's assessors.

(2) People's judges of district (city) people's courts shall be elected for a term of five years by the citizens of the district (city) on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. People's assessors of district (city) people's courts shall be elected for a term of two and a half years at meetings of citizens at their places of work or residence by a show of hands.

(3) Higher courts shall be elected for a term of five years by the corresponding Soviet of People's Deputies.

(4) The judges of military tribunals shall be elected for a term of five years by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and by people's assessors for a term of two and a half years by meetings of servicemen.

(5) Judges and people's assessors are responsible and accountable to their electors or the bodies that elected them, shall report to them, and may be recalled by them in the manner prescribed by law.

#### **Article 153**

(1) The Supreme Court of the USSR is the highest judicial body in the USSR and supervises the administration of justice by the courts of the USSR and Union Republics within the limits established by law.

(2) The Supreme Court of the USSR shall be elected by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, members, and people's assessors. The Chairmen of the Supreme Courts of Union Republics are *ex officio* members of the Supreme Court of the USSR.

(3) The organization and procedure of the Supreme Court of the USSR are defined in the Law on the Supreme Court of the USSR.

#### **Article 154**

The hearing of civil and criminal cases in all courts is collegial; in courts of first instance cases are heard with the participation of people's assessors. In the administration of



justice people's assessors have all the rights of a judge.

**Article 155**

Judges and people's assessors are independent and subject only to the law.

**Article 156**

Justice is administered in the USSR on the principle of the equality of citizens before the law and the court.

**Article 157**

Proceedings in all courts shall be open to the public. Hearings *in camera* are only allowed in cases provided for by law, with observance of all the rule of judicial procedure.

**Article 158**

A defendant in a criminal action is guaranteed the right to legal assistance.

**Article 159**

Judicial proceedings shall be conducted in the language of the Union Republic, Autonomous Republic, Autonomous Region, or Autonomous Area, or in the language spoken by the majority of the people in the locality. Persons participating in court proceedings, who do not know the language in which they are being conducted, shall be ensured the right to become fully acquainted with the materials in the case; the services of an interpreter during the proceedings; and the right to address the court in their own language.

**Article 160**

No one may be adjudged guilty of a crime and subjected to punishment as a criminal except by the sentence of a court and in conformity with the law.

**Article 161**

(1) Colleges of advocates are available to give legal assistance to citizens and organizations. In cases provided for by legislation citizens shall be given legal assistance free of charge.

(2) The organization and procedure of the bar are determined by legislation of the USSR and Union Republics.

**Article 162**

Representatives of public organizations and of work collectives may take part in civil and criminal proceedings.

**Article 163**

(1) Economic disputes between enterprises, institutions, and organizations are settled by state arbitration bodies within the limits of their jurisdiction.

(2) The organizations and manner of functioning of state arbitration bodies are defined in the Law on State Arbitration in the USSR.

## **Chapter 21 Procurator**

### **Article 164**

Supreme power of supervision over the strict and uniform observance of laws by all ministries, state committees and departments, enterprises, institutions and organizations, executive-administrative bodies of local Soviets of People's Deputies, collective farms, cooperatives and other public organizations, officials and citizens is vested in the Procurator-General of the USSR and procurators subordinate to him.

### **Article 165**

The Procurator-General of the USSR is appointed by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and is responsible and accountable to it and, between sessions of the Supreme Soviet, to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

### **Article 166**

The procurators of Union Republics, Autonomous Republics, Territories, Regions and Autonomous Regions are appointed by the Procurator-General of the USSR. The procurators of Autonomous Areas and district and city procurators are appointed by the Procurators of Union Republics, subject to confirmation by the Procurator-General of the USSR.

### **Article 167**

The term of office of the Procurator-General of the USSR and all lower-ranking procurators shall be five years.

### **Article 168**

(1) The agencies of the Procurator's Office exercise their powers independently of any local bodies whatsoever, and are subordinate solely to the Procurator-General of the USSR.

(2) The organization and procedure of the agencies of the Procurator's Office are defined in the Law on the Procurator's Office of the USSR.

## **Part VIII Emblem, Flag, Anthem, Capital**

### **Article 169**

The State Emblem of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a hammer and sickle on a globe depicted in the rays of the sun and framed by ears of wheat, with the inscription "*Workers of All Countries, Unite!*" in the languages of the Union Republics. At the top of the Emblem is a five-pointed star.

### **Article 170**

The State Flag of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a rectangle of red cloth with a hammer and sickle depicted in gold in the upper corner next to the staff and with a five-pointed red star edged in gold above them. The ratio of the width of the flag to its

length is 1:2

**Article 171**

The State Anthem of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is confirmed by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

**Article 172**

The Capital of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the city of Moscow.

**Part IX Legal Force and Amendments**

**Article 173**

The Constitution of the USSR shall have supreme legal force. All laws and other acts of state bodies shall be promulgated on the basis of and in conformity with it.

**Article 174**

The Constitution of the USSR may be amended by a decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the total number of Deputies of each of its chambers.