
1918 Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic



Article One
Article Two
Article Three
Article Four
Article Five
Article Six
Amendments

**Adopted by the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets
July 10, 1918**

The declaration of rights of the labouring and exploited people (approved by the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets in January 1918), together with the Constitution of the Soviet Republic, approved by the fifth congress, constitutes a single fundamental law of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

This fundamental law becomes effective upon the publication of the same in its entirety in the 'Izvestia of the All-Russian General Executive Committee.' It must be published by all organs of the Soviet Government and must be posted in a prominent place in every soviet institution.

The fifth congress instructs the People's Commissariat of Education to introduce in all schools and educational institutions of the Russian Republic the study and explanation of the basic principles of this Constitution.

Article One

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE LABORING AND EXPLOITED PEOPLE

CHAPTER ONE

1. Russia is declared to be a republic of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. All the central and local power belongs to these soviets.

2. The Russian Soviet Republic is organized on the basis of a free union of free nations, as a federation of soviet national republics.

CHAPTER TWO

3. Bearing in mind as its fundamental problem the abolition of the exploitation of men by men, the entire abolition of the division of the people into classes, the suppression of exploiters, the establishment of a socialist society, and the victory of socialism in all lands, the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies further resolves:

(a) For the purpose of attaining the socialization of land, all private property in land is abolished, and the entire land is declared to be national property and is to be apportioned among agriculturists without compensation of the former owners, to the measure of each one's ability to till it.

(b) All forests, treasures of the earth, and waters of general public utility, all equipment whether animate or inanimate, model farms and agricultural enterprises, are declared to be national property.

(c) As a first step toward complete transfer of ownership to the Soviet Republic of all factories, mills, mines, railways, and other means of production and transportation, the soviet law for the control of workmen and the establishment of a Supreme Soviet of National Economy is hereby confirmed so as to insure the power of the workers over the exploiters.

(d) With reference to international banking and finance, the Third Congress of Soviets is discussing the soviet decree regarding the annulment of loans made by the Government of the Czar, by landowners and the bourgeoisie, and it trusts that the Soviet Government will firmly follow this course until the final victory of the international workers' revolt against the oppression of capital.

(e) The transfer of all banks to the ownership of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, as one of the conditions of the liberation of the toiling masses from the yoke of capital, is confirmed.

(f) Universal obligation to work is introduced for the purpose of eliminating the parasitic strata of society and organizing the economic life of the country.

(g) For the purpose of securing the working class in the possession of complete power, and in order to eliminate all possibility of restoring the power of the exploiters, it is decreed that all workers be armed, and that a Socialist Red Army be organized and the propertied class disarmed.

CHAPTER THREE

4. Expressing its fixed resolve to liberate mankind from the grip of capital and imperialism, which flooded the earth with blood in its present most criminal of all wars, the Third Congress of Soviets fully agrees with the Soviet Government in its policy of abrogating secret treaties, of organizing on a wide scale the fraternization of the workers and peasants of the belligerent armies, and of making all efforts to conclude a general democratic peace without annexations or indemnities, upon the basis of the free determination of peoples.

5. It is also to this end that the Third Congress of Soviets insists upon putting an end to the barbarous policy of the bourgeois civilization which enables the exploiters of a few chosen nations to enslave hundreds of millions of the working population of Asia, of the colonies, and of small countries generally.

6. The Third Congress of Soviets hails the policy of the Council of People's Commissars in proclaiming the full independence of Finland, in withdrawing troops from Persia, and in proclaiming the right of Armenia to self-determination.

CHAPTER FOUR

7. The Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies believes that now, during the progress of the decisive battle between the proletariat and its exploiters, the exploiters should not hold a position in any branch of the Soviet Government. The power must belong entirely to the toiling masses and to their plenipotentiary representatives- the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies.

8. In its effort to create a league- free and voluntary, and for that reason all the more complete and secure- of the working classes of all the peoples of Russia, the Third Congress of Soviets merely establishes the fundamental principles of the Federation of Russian Soviet Republics, leaving to the workers and peasants of every people to decide the following question at their plenary sessions of their soviets, namely, whether or not they desire to participate, and on what basis, in the Federal government and other Federal soviet institutions.

Article Two

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIALIST FEDERATED SOVIET REPUBLIC

CHAPTER FIVE

9. The fundamental problem of the constitution of the Russian Socialist federated Soviet Republic involves, in view of the present transition period, the establishment of a dictatorship of the urban and rural proletariat and the poorest peasantry in the form of a powerful All-

Russian soviet authority, for the purpose of abolishing the exploitation of men by men and introduction of socialism, in which there will be neither a division into classes nor a state of autocracy.

10. The Russian Republic is a free socialist society of all the working people of Russia. The entire power, within the boundaries of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, belongs to all the working people of Russia, united in urban and rural soviets.

11. The soviets of those regions which differentiate themselves by a special form of existence and national character may unite in autonomous regional unions, ruled by the local congress of the soviets and their executive organs.

These autonomous regional unions participate in the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic upon a Federal basis.

12. The supreme power of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic belongs to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and, in periods between the convocation of the congress, to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

13. For the purpose of securing to the workers real freedom of conscience, the church is to be separated from the state and the school from the church, and the right of religious and anti-religious propaganda is accorded to every citizen.

14. For the purpose of securing freedom of expression to the toiling masses, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic abolishes all dependence of the Press upon capital, and turns over to the working people and the poorest peasantry all technical and material means for the publication of newspapers, pamphlets, books, etc., and guarantees their free circulation throughout the country.

15. For the purpose of enabling the workers to hold free meetings, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic offers to the working class and to the poorest peasantry furnished halls, and takes care of their heating and lighting appliances.

16. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, having crushed the economic and political power of the propertied classes, and having thus abolished all obstacles which interfered with the freedom of organization and action of the workers and peasants, offers assistance, material and other, to the workers and the poorest peasantry in their effort to unite and organize.

17. For the purpose of guaranteeing to the workers real access to knowledge, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic sets itself the task of furnishing full and general free education to the workers and the poorest peasantry.

18. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic considers work the duty of every citizen of the Republic, and proclaims as its motto: 'He shall not eat who does not work.'

19. For the purpose of defending the victory of the great peasants' and workers' revolution, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic recognizes the duty of all citizens of the Republic to come to the defense of their socialist fatherland, and it therefore introduces universal military training. The honor of defending the revolution with arms is accorded only to the

workers, and the non-working elements are charged with the performance of other military duties.

20. In consequence of the solidarity of the workers of all nations, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic grants all political rights of Russian citizens to foreigners who live in the territory of the Russian Republic and are engaged in work and who belong to the working class. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic also recognizes the right of local soviets to grant citizenship to such foreigners without complicated formality.

21. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic offers shelter to all foreigners who seek refuge from political or religious persecution.

22. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, recognizing the equal rights of all citizens, irrespective of their racial or national connections, proclaims all privileges on this ground, as well as oppression of national minorities, to be contrary to the fundamental laws of the Republic.

23. Being guided by the interests of the working class as a whole, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic deprives all individuals and groups of rights which could be utilized by them to the detriment of the socialist revolution.

Article Three

ORGANIZATION OF THE SOVIET POWER

A. Organization of Central Power

CHAPTER SIX

THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', COSSACKS', AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES

24. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets is the supreme power of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

25. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets is composed of representatives of urban soviets (one delegate for 25,000 voters), and of representatives of the provincial (gubernia) congresses of soviets (one delegate for 125,000 inhabitants).

Note 1: In case the provincial congress is not called before the All-Russian Congress is convoked, delegates for the latter are sent directly from the county (uyezd) congress.

Note 2: In case the regional (oblast) congress is convoked indirectly, previous to the convocation of the All-Russian Congress, delegates for the latter may be sent by the regional congress.

26. The All-Russian Congress is convoked by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee at least twice a year.

27. A special The All-Russian Congress is convoked by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee upon its own initiative, or upon the request of local soviets having not less than one-third of the entire population of the Republic.

28. The All-Russian Congress elects an All-Russian Central Executive Committee of not more than 200 members.

29. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee is entirely responsible to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

30. In the periods between the convocation of the congresses, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee is the supreme power of the Republic.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

31. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee is the supreme legislative, executive and controlling organ of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

32. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee directs in a general way the activity of the Workers' and Peasants' Government and of all organs of the soviet authority in the country, and it coordinates and regulates the operation of the Soviet constitution and of the resolutions of the All-Russian congresses and of the central organs of the soviet power.

33. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee considers and enacts all measures and proposals introduced by the Soviet of People's Commissars or by the various departments, and it also issues its own decrees and regulations.

34. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee convokes the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, at which time the Executive Committee reports on its activity and on general questions.

35. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee forms a Council of People's Commissars for the purpose of general management of the affairs of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, and it also forms departments (People's Commissariats) for the purpose of conducting various branches.

36. The members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee work in the various departments (People's Commissariats) or execute special orders of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

37. The Council of People's Commissars is entrusted with the general management of the affairs of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

38. For the accomplishment of this task the Council of People's Commissars issues decrees, resolutions, orders, and, in general, takes all steps necessary for the proper and rapid conduct of governmental affairs.

39. The Council of People's Commissars notifies immediately the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of all its orders and resolutions.

40. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee has the right to revoke or suspend all orders and resolutions of the Council of People's Commissars.

41. All orders and resolutions of the Council of People's Commissars of great political significance are referred for consideration and final approval to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

Note: Measures requiring immediate execution may be enacted directly by the Council of People's Commissariats.

42. The members of the Council of People's Commissars stand at the head of the various People's Commissariats.

43. There are seventeen [sic] People's Commissars: (a) Foreign Affairs; (b) Army; (c) Navy; (d) Interior; (e) Justice; (f) Labor; (g) Social Welfare; (h) Education; (i) Post and Telegraph; (j) National Affairs; (k) Finances; (l) Ways of Communication; (m) Agriculture; (n) Commerce and Industry; (o) National Supplies; (p) State Control; (q) Supreme Soviet of National Economy; (r) Public Health.

44. Every commissar has a collegium (committee) of which he is the president, and the members of which are appointed by the Council of People's Commissars.

45. A People's Commissar has the individual right to decide on all questions under the jurisdiction of his commissariat, and he is to report on his decision to the collegium. If the collegium does not agree with the commissar on some decisions, the former may, without

stopping the execution of the decision, complain of it to the executive members of the Council of People's Commissars or to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

Individual members of the collegium have this right also.

46. The Council of People's Commissars is entirely responsible to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

47. The People's Commissars and the collegia of the People's Commissariats are entirely responsible to the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

48. The title of People's Commissar belongs only to the members of the Council of People's Commissars, which is in charge of general affairs of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, and it cannot be used by any other representative of the Soviet power, either central or local.

CHAPTER NINE

AFFAIRS IN THE JURISDICTION OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS AND THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

49. The All-Russian Congress and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee deal with the questions of state, such as:

- (a) Ratification and amendment of the Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic;
- (b) General direction of the entire interior and foreign policy of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic;
- (c) Establishing and changing boundaries, also ceding territory belonging to the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic;
- (d) Establishing boundaries for regional soviet unions belonging to the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, also settling disputes among them;
- (e) Admission of new members to the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, and recognition of the secession of any parts of it;
- (f) The general administrative division of the territory of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic and the approval of regional unions;
- (g) Establishing and changing weights, measures, and money denominations in the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic;
- (h) Foreign relations, declaration of war, and ratification of peace treaties;
- (i) Making loans, signing commercial treaties and financial agreements;
- (j) Working out a basis and a general plan for the national economy and for its various branches in the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic;
- (k) Approval of the budget of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic;

- (l) Levying taxes and establishing the duties of citizens to the state;
- (m) Establishing the bases for the organization of armed forces;
- (n) State legislation, judicial organization and procedure, civil and criminal legislation, etc.;
- (o) Appointment and dismissal of the individual People's Commissars or the entire council, also approval of the president of the Council of People's Commissars;
- (p) Granting and cancelling Russian citizenship and fixing rights of foreigners;
- (q) The right to declare individual and general amnesty.

50. Besides the above-mentioned questions, the All-Russian Congress and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee have charge of all other affairs which, according to their decision, require their attention.

51. The following questions are solely under the jurisdiction of the All-Russian Congress:

- (a) Ratification and amendment of the fundamental principles of the Soviet Constitution;
- (b) Ratification of peace treaties.

52. The decision of questions indicated in paragraphs (c) and (h) of Section 49 may be made by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee only in cases it is impossible to convoke the Congress.

B. Organization of Local Soviets

CHAPTER TEN

THE CONGRESSES OF THE SOVIETS

53. Congresses of Soviets are composed as follows:

- (a) Regional: of representatives of the urban and county soviets, one representative for 25,000 inhabitants of the county, and one representative for 5,000 voters of the cities- but not more than 500 representatives for the entire region- or of representatives of the provincial congresses, chosen on the same basis, if such a congress meets before the regional congress.
- (b) Provincial (gubernia): of representatives of urban and rural (volost) soviets, one representative for 10,000 inhabitants from the rural districts, and one representative for 2,000 voters in the city; altogether not more than 200 representatives for the entire province. In case the county congress meets before the provincial, election takes place on the same basis, but by the county congress instead of the rural.
- (c) County: of representatives of rural soviets, one delegate for each 1,000 inhabitants, but not

more than 300 delegates for the entire county.

(d) Rural (volost): of representatives of all village soviets in the volost, one delegate for ten members of the soviet.

Note 1: Representatives of urban soviets which have a population of not more than 10,000 persons participate in the county congress; village soviets of districts of less than 10,000 inhabitants unite for the purpose of electing delegates to the county congress.

Note 2: Rural soviets of less than ten members send one delegate to the rural (volost) congress.

54. Congresses of the soviets are convoked by the respective executive committees upon their own initiative, or upon request of local soviets comprising not less than one-third of the entire population of the given district. In any case they are convoked at least twice a year for regions, every three months for provinces and counties, and once a month for rural districts.

55. Every congress of soviets (regional, provincial, county, or rural) elects its executive organ- an executive committee the membership of which shall not exceed (a) for regions and provinces, twenty-five; (b) for a county, twenty; (c) for a rural district, ten. The executive committee is responsible to the congress which elected it.

56. In the boundaries of the respective territories the congress is the supreme power; during intervals between the convocations of the congress, the executive committee is the supreme power.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE SOVIET DEPUTIES

57. Soviets of Deputies are formed

(a) In cities, one deputy for each 1,000 inhabitants; the total to be not less than fifty and not more than 1,000 members.

(b) All other settlements (towns, villages, hamlets, etc.) of less than 10,000 inhabitants, one deputy for each 100 inhabitants; the total to be not less than three and not more than fifty deputies for each settlement.

Term of the deputy, three months.

Note: In small rural sections, whenever possible, all questions shall be decided at general meeting of voters.

58. The Soviet of Deputies elects an executive committee to deal with current affairs; not more than five members for rural districts, one for every fifty members of the soviets of cities, but not more than fifteen and not less than three in the aggregate (Petrograd and Moscow not more than forty). The executive committee is entirely responsible to the soviet which elected it.

59. The Soviet of Deputies is convoked by the executive committee upon its own initiative, or upon the request of not less than one-half of the membership of the soviet; in any case at least once a week in cities, and twice a week in rural sections.

60. Within its jurisdiction the soviet, and in cases mentioned in Section 57, NOTE, the meeting of the voters is the supreme power in the given district.

CHAPTER TWELVE

JURISDICTION OF THE LOCAL ORGANS OF THE SOVIETS

61. Regional, provincial, county, and rural organs of the soviet power and also the Soviets of Deputies have to perform the following duties:

- (a) Carry out all orders of the respective higher organs of the soviet power;
- (b) Take all steps for raising the cultural and economic standard of the given territory;
- (c) Decide all questions of local importance within their respective territories;
- (d) Coordinate all soviet activity in their respective territories.

62. The congresses of soviets and their executive committees have the right to control the activity of the local soviets (i.e., the regional congress controls all soviets of the respective region; the provincial, of the respective province, with the exception of the urban soviets, etc.); and the regional and provincial congresses and their executive committees have in addition the right to overrule the decisions of the soviets of their districts, giving notice in important cases to the central soviet authority.

63. For the purpose of performing their duties, the local soviets, rural and urban and the executive committees form sections respectively.

Article Four

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

64. The right to vote and to be elected to the soviets is enjoyed by the following citizens of both sexes, irrespective of religion, nationality, domicile, etc., of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, who shall have completed their eighteenth year by the day of election:

- (a) All who have acquired the means of livelihood through labor that is productive and useful to society, and also persons engaged in housekeeping which enables the former to do

productive work, i.e., laborers and employees of all classes who are employed in industry, trade, agriculture, etc., and peasants and Cossack agricultural laborers who employ no help for the purpose of making profits.

(b) Soldiers of the army and navy of the soviets.

(c) Citizens of the two preceding categories who have in any degree lost their capacity to work.

NOTE 1: Local soviets may, upon approval of the central power, lower the age standard mentioned herein.

NOTE 2: Non-citizens mentioned in [Section 20](#) (Article Two, Chapter 5) have the right to vote.

65. The following persons enjoy neither the right to vote nor the right to be voted for, even though they belong to one of the categories enumerated above, namely:

(a) Persons who employ hired labor in order to obtain from it an increase in profits;

(b) Persons who have an income without doing any work, such as interest from capital, receipts from property, etc.;

(c) Private merchants, trade and commercial brokers;

(d) Monks and clergy of all denominations;

(e) Employees and agents of the former police, the gendarme corps, and the Okhrana (Czar's secret service), also members of the former reigning dynasty;

(f) Persons who have in legal form been declared demented or mentally deficient, and also persons under guardianship;

(g) Persons who have been deprived by a soviet of their rights of citizenship because of selfish or dishonorable offenses, for the period fixed by the sentence.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ELECTIONS

66. Elections are conducted according to custom on days fixed by the local soviets.

67. Election takes place in the presence of an election committee and the representation of the local soviet.

68. In case the representative of the soviet cannot for valid causes be present, the chairman of the election committee takes his place, and in case the latter is absent, the chairman of the election meeting replaces him.

69. Minutes of the proceedings and result of elections are to be compiled and signed by the members of the election committee and the representative of the soviet.

70. Detailed instructions regarding the election proceedings and the participation in them of professional and other workers' organizations are to be issued by the local soviets, according to the instructions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE CHECKING AND CANCELLATION OF ELECTIONS AND RECALL OF THE DEPUTISM

71. The respective soviets receive all the records of the proceedings of the election.
72. The soviet appoints a commission to verify the election.
73. This commission reports the results to the soviet.
74. The soviet decides the question when there is doubt as to which candidate or another cannot be determined.
76. If an election was irregularly carried on in its entirety, it may be declared void by a higher soviet authority.
77. The highest authority in relation to questions of elections is the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.
78. Voters who have sent a deputy to the soviet have the right to recall him, and to have a new election, according to general provisions.

Article Five

THE BUDGET

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

79. The financial policy of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic in the present transition period of dictatorship of the proletariat facilitates the fundamental purpose of expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the preparation of conditions necessary for the equality of all citizens of Russia in the production and distribution of wealth. To this end it sets forth as its task the supplying of the organs of the soviet power with all necessary funds for local and state needs of the Soviet Republic, without regard to private property rights.
80. The state expenditure and income of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic are combined in the state budget.
81. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets or the All-Russian Central Executive Committee determine what matters of income and taxation shall go to the state budget and what shall go to the local soviets; they also set the limits of taxes.

82. The soviets levy taxes only for the local needs. The state needs are covered by the funds of the state treasury.

83. No expenditures out of the state treasury not set forth in the budget of income and expense shall be made without a special order of the central power.

84. The local soviets shall receive credits from the proper People's Commissars out of the state treasury, for the purpose of making expenditures for general state needs.

85. All credits allotted to the soviets from the state treasury, and also credits approved for local needs, must be expended according to the estimates, and cannot be used for any other purposes without a special order of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People's Commissars.

86. Local soviets draw up semi-annual and annual estimates of income and expenditure for local needs. The estimates of urban and rural soviets participating in county congresses, and also the estimates of the county organs of the soviet power, are to be approved by provincial and regional congresses or by their executive committees; the estimates of the urban, provincial, and regional organs of the soviets are to be approved by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars.

87. The soviets may ask for additional credits from the respective People's Commissariats for expenditures not set forth in the estimate, or where the allotted sum is insufficient.

88. In case of an insufficiency of local funds for local needs, the necessary subsidy may be obtained from the state treasury by applying to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee or the Council of People's Commissars.

Article Six

THE COAT OF ARMS AND FLAG OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIALIST FEDERATED SOVIET REPUBLIC

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

89. The coat of arms of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic consists of a red background on which a golden scythe and a hammer are placed (crosswise, handles downward) in sun-rays and surrounded by a wreath, inscribed:

Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic
Workers of the World, Unite !



90. The commercial, naval, and army flag of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic consists of a red cloth, in the left corner of which (on top, near the pole) are in golden characters the letters R.S.F.S.R., or the inscription: Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.



Chairman of the fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets and of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee- J. Sverdlov.

Executive Officers, All-Russian Central Executive Committee-T.I. Teodorovitch, F.A. Rosin, A.P. Rosenholx, A.C. Mitrofanov, K.G. Maximov.

Secretary of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee- V.A. Avamessov.

Amendments to the R.S.F.S.R. Constitution of 1918 *

In the period of the Civil War and military intervention of the imperialist states some amendments and addenda to the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. were adopted. For instance, the seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets, held in December 1919, legislatively sanctioned the formation of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, defined its powers and established that the sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee were to be convened every two months.

The Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee directed the sittings of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, supervised the execution of decisions adopted by the latter, guided the activity both of the central and local state organs, exercised the right of pardon, and decided a number of other administrative questions. In the intervals between the sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive committee the Presidium had the right to approve or annul decisions of the Council of People's Commissars, to appoint People's Commissars on the recommendation of the Council of People's Commissars, to decide questions relating to administrative-territorial division and to make preparations for the convocation of the All-Russian congresses of Soviets and sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

According to the decision of the seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the Executive Committees were elected by the gubernia, uyed, and volost congresses of Soviets and were considered the highest organs of Soviet state power within the territories of the gubernias, uyezds and volosts in the intervals between the sessions of the corresponding congresses of Soviets. The gubernia Executive Committees were empowered to supervise and inspect the activity of all governmental institutions on the territories under their jurisdiction (except institutions belonging to the Army in the Field), and were obliged to report back immediately to the respective central organs on the results of such supervision and inspection.

The decision of the eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets 'Concerning Further Development of the Soviets,' adopted on December 29, 1920, extending the powers of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The latter was vested with the authority to annul decisions of the Council of People's commissars, and to adopt necessary administrative decisions on behalf of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; at the same time it was obliged to submit reports on its activity to the regular sessions of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

The eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets also extended the powers of the Council of Peoples' Commissars. The decision of the congress stated that all urgent decrees and measures of nationwide importance, including legislative acts related to military affairs, as well as measures in the sphere of foreign relations which might impose certain commitments upon the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, were to be considered and approved by the Council of Peoples' Commissars. The latter had the right to adopt legislative acts of nationwide importance, along with the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, All-Russian Central Executive Committee and Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The People's Commissariats had the rights to issue decisions and orders only within the limits of their jurisdiction strictly defined in corresponding decrees of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, its Presidium and the Council of People's Commissars.

By a decision of the eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the gubernia executive committees had the right only in extraordinary cases to suspend the execution of certain orders issued by individual People's Commissars.

All the aforementioned amendments in no way affected the fundamental principles of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. as a whole.

* (An excerpt from A. Denisvo and M. Kirichenko, Soviet State Law (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), pp. 50-52.
