

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU

Johanna Granville

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The Central Committee was one of the central institutions in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), along with the Politburo, Secretariat, party congress, Central Auditing Commission, and Party Control Committee. Given the political system's centralist, monolithic aspirations, these central institutions bore heavy responsibilities. One of the Central Committee's main functions was to elect all Party leaders including members of the Politburo and Secretaries of the Central Committee. The Committee – whose members included powerful people in the Communist Party -- met every six months in plenary session to approve decisions by the top levels of the party.

The Central Committee was also considered to be the highest organ of the party between congresses (the period known as the *sozyv*). According to the party rules (*Ustav*), the Central Committee was supposed to “direct all the activities of the party and the local party organs, carry out the recruitment and the assignment of leading cadres, direct the work of the central governmental and social organizations of the workers, create various organs, institutions, and enterprises of the party and supervise their activities, name the editorial staff of central newspapers and journals

working under its auspices, disburse funds of the party budget and verify their accounting.”

However, the Central Committee was large; in 1989, for example, it consisted of over 300 members. In actuality then, there were two Central Committees. One of them was the body of elected representatives of the Communist Party. The other was the name used in documents produced for and by any number of smaller Central Committee bodies, from the Politburo to the temporary commissions. Thus, the decrees of the Central Committee were seldom prepared by that body. Instead, the Politburo often initiated, discussed, and finalized them.

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