



Democratic Centralism during the Cold War, 1943-1991

Collection Summary

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DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM DURING THE COLD WAR, 1943-1991

Modelled on the Soviet Union's Central Committee, the **Executive Committee (EC)** functioned as one of the highest organs of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

In line with the CPGB constitution, the EC met on a bi-monthly to carry out the decisions made by the annual National Congress.

In practice, the EC functioned as a monolithic authority that enforced the rigid tenet of **democratic centralism**. This was a Leninist principle that stated that once a decision had been made collectively, party members were bound to accept and support it.

The **EC often used this tenet, as well as its influential position in appointing committee members, to maintain an iron-clad grip on the CPGB.**

The content featured in this collection, including minutes, handwritten notes, and reports, is drawn from these monthly Executive Committee meetings and largely focuses on the politics of the Cold War and the direction of the party.

As such, the collection offers **a range of communist perspectives** on unfolding events in Britain and abroad, **from flashpoints during the Cold War to contentious issues over internal party discipline.**

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