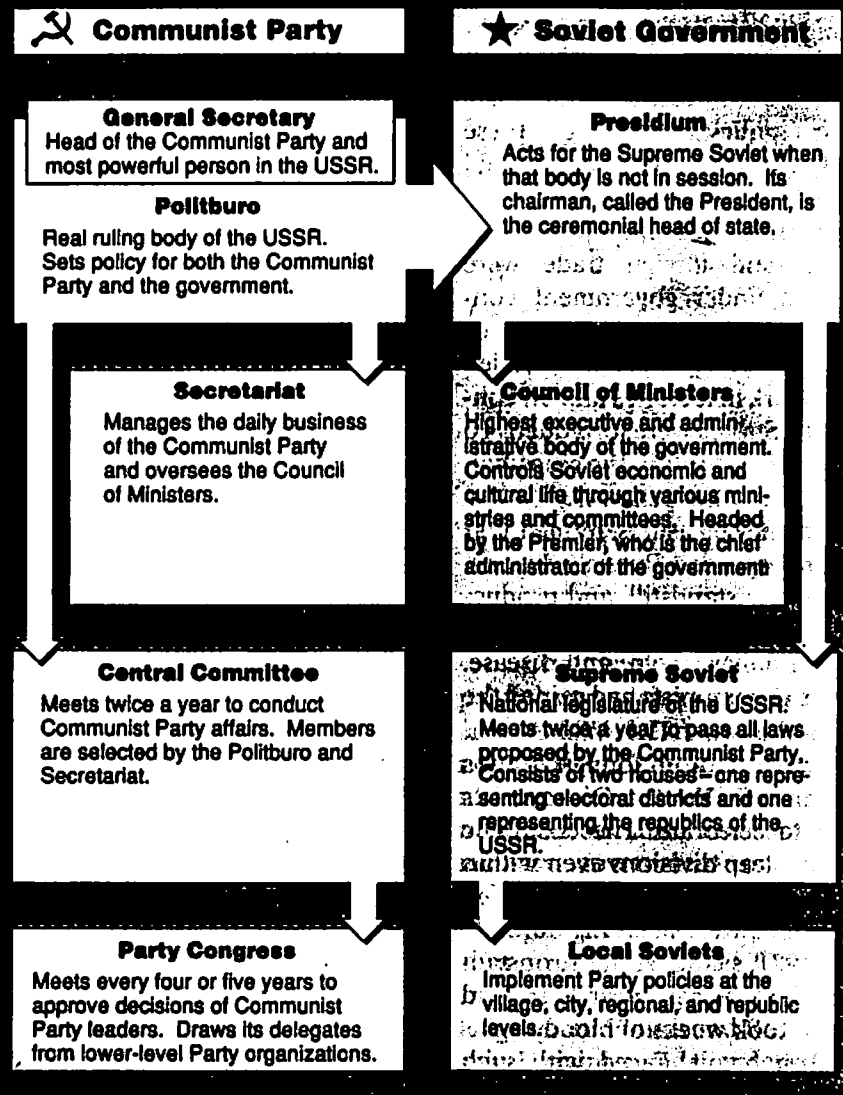


## The Soviet Political System



The Soviet political system operated under the structure shown above until the Gorbachev reforms of the late 1980's. Arrows indicate the direction of control within the Party and the government. Which was more powerful—the Politburo or the Supreme Soviet? How can you tell?

Though separate in organization, the state and the Communist Party were closely linked. (See the chart on this page.) Lenin made the soviets part of the government structure. Local government was run by soviets that were elected locally but guided by the

Party. Above them were soviets at the district, regional, and republic level. The highest government authority in the country was called the Supreme Soviet. Its Council of Ministers, staffed with top Party members, formed the executive branch of the government.