

**LETTER FROM L.D. TROTSKY
TO MEMBERS OF THE CC AND CCC,
OCTOBER 4, 1923**

To all members of the CC and CCC¹—

The resolution of the Plenum dated September 25 states:

The CC notes that Comrade Trotsky, by leaving the Plenum meeting in connection with Comrade Komarov's² speech—in which the CC sees nothing offensive (!) to Comrade Trotsky—thereby placed the CC in a awkward (*zatrudnitel'nyi*) position.

This statement is based on a clear misunderstanding: I said nothing about the “offensive” nature of Comrade Komarov's speech, nor would I have walked out of a Plenum meeting for such a reason. I explained my departure in approximately the following words:

I advanced the following arguments against the proposed expansion of the RVSR [Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic]:

1) In the coming months, the center of preparatory work will lie not in the RVSR but in the military industry, where personnel need to be assigned;

2) The creation of a new, large RVSR would be interpreted worldwide as the beginning of an aggressive policy on our part;

3) Day-to-day work within the collegium presupposes a uniformity of working methods; in this instance, that is lacking, and I personally, based on my past experience, could not bear responsibility before the Party for

¹ The Central Control Commission (CCC)—the Party's highest control body from 1920 to 1934. It was established at the initiative of V.I. Lenin as an institution “responsible only to the Party Congress” (V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 45, p. 200). However, during the course of the intra-Party struggle, the CCC—led at the time by V.V. Kuibyshev and E.M. Yaroslavsky—adopted a stance of active support for the ruling “troika” in the name of preserving the Party's directive “monolithic unity,” effectively becoming an instrument of the Central Committee Secretariat in the fight against the opposition. —V.P. Vilkova

² N.P. Komarov (F.E. Sobinov) (1886–1937) was a member of the RSDLP from 1909. In 1923 he was secretary of the Petrograd guberniia executive committee of Soviets and the Central Committee. He died in the Terror. —t.d.

the direction of military work within the scope of the responsibility that falls upon me as Chairman of the RVSR.

The proposal for a new collegium is dictated by very specific inner-party maneuvers, as is obvious to everyone at this meeting.

These inner-party “maneuvers”—which are occupying an increasingly large place in the policy of the CC’s leading core—threaten, in this instance, to have extremely harmful consequences for military work; and there are already quite a few harmful consequences in other areas. Comrade Komarov had just responded to my specific arguments with bureaucratic platitudes, citing reasons that were demonstrably not the ones that had actually prompted the proposal regarding the Revolutionary Military Council. I consider it beneath us to conduct a debate on that level. At the very least, within the Central Committee, one ought to have stated openly that the issue was the continuation of an inner-party struggle being waged systematically from above, behind the back of the party.

I am not quoting my speech verbatim here, since no record of it exists, but that was precisely its gist. When Comrades Kuibyshev and Piatakov came to see me on the instructions of the Central Committee,³ I pointed out to Comrade Kuibyshev the utter unacceptability of a policy wherein appointments, dismissals, reassignments, and the like are made based on very specific inner-party considerations, to the direct detriment of the work itself, while being officially justified to the party by entirely different reasons. After Comrade Piatakov had left, Comrade Kuibyshev replied to me in these exact words: “You must understand the difficulty of the situation; we cannot declare you an enemy, yet we deem it necessary, in the interests of the party, to fight against you—and that is from where the need arises for such methods.”

³ After L.D. Trotsky walked out of the Central Committee Plenum meeting on October 25, V.V. Kuibyshev and G.L. were sent to see him. Piatakov was sent with the mission of “persuading Comrade Trotsky to return.” Trotsky refused, setting out the reasons for his position in the letter cited above. —V.P. Vilкова

Since the Central Committee Plenum deemed it necessary to record this entire episode in a special resolution—which was circulated in dozens of copies⁴ and became widely known that same day—I, for my part, consider it necessary to circulate this clarification. Should any points in this letter meet with objections, I am prepared to provide the necessary factual explanations, fully precise and concrete, whether oral or written, before any Party body.

It is time to put an end to the current regime of “double Party bookkeeping”—a practice that has already caused immense harm and is fraught with even greater dangers. The recent Plenum took stock of six months of work,⁵ briefly characterized above, and the results proved negative.

L. Trotsky.

4/X.23.

Certified correct: *Tovstukha*.⁶

Certified typewritten copy.

RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 685, ll. 48–49.

O.V. Volobuev, et al. (eds.), *VKP(b) Vnutripartiinaia bor'ba v dvadtsatye gody: Domumenty i materialy 1923 g.* Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004; pp. 149–151.

⁴ Resolutions of the Central Committee Plenums—along with confidential informational and circular letters bearing specific classification codes (indicating varying degrees of secrecy)—were distributed to full and candidate members of the Central Committee; members of the Central Control Commission and the Auditing Commission; heads of Central Committee departments; secretaries of the Central Committees of the Union Republic Communist Parties; secretaries of regional, district, and provincial party committees; the district committees of Moscow and Petrograd; editors of central newspapers; and various other recipients. —V.P. Vilkova

⁵ In addition to the composition of the Revolutionary Military Council and the internal party situation, the September Central Committee Plenum discussed the development of the cooperative movement and policies regarding workers' wages. —V.P. Vilkova

⁶ I.P. Tovstukha (1889–1935), a member of the RSDLP from 1913, was Iosef Stalin's personal secretary from 1918 until his death from tuberculosis in 1935. —t.d.