

May 8, 1946

Letter, I. V. Stalin to Cde. Pischevari

Citation:

"Letter, I. V. Stalin to Cde. Pischevari", May 8, 1946, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 317, ll. 0069-0072. Translated by Gary Goldberg.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/209093>

Summary:

In a letter intended to be read, but not handed, to President of the People's Government of Azerbaijan Ja'far Pischevari, Stalin notes the lack of a deep revolutionary crisis in Iran, emphasizing the need to gain concessions from the Qavam government and work with Qavam to combat Anglophile influences in Iran. He argues that the Soviets have not betrayed the Azerbaijani cause, but rather given Pischevari the leverage he needs to demand concessions.

Credits:

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Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

NKID
10TH DEPARTMENT
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Outgoing N° 8924
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Received at 0450,
8 May 1946
TOP SECRET □□□
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Sent at 0850,
8 May 1946□
Spets. N° 484-487 □□ □□

CABLE

to where TEHRAN□ to whom□TO SADCHIKOV □□□Copy N° 1
□□□□□

FLASH PRECEDENCE

Read my following letter to Cde. Pishevari but do not hand it to him, referring to the fact that you do not yet have instructions for this.

"Cde. Pishevari!

It seems to me that you are incorrectly assessing the situation which has been created both inside Iran as well as in the international context.

First. You want to seek the accomplishment of all the revolutionary demands of Azerbaijan right now. But the current situation excludes the possibility of accomplishing such a program. Lenin promoted fundamental revolutionary demands as practical demands; I stress, as practical demands, only with the existence of a severe revolutionary crisis inside the country deepened by an unsuccessful war with a foreign enemy. So it was in 1905 during the unsuccessful war with Japan. So it was in 1917 during the unsuccessful war with Germany. You want to imitate Lenin in this case. This is very good and commendable. But the situation in Iran now is completely different. There is no deep revolutionary crisis in Iran now. There are few workers in Iran and they are poorly organized. The Iranian peasantry are not yet displaying serious activity. Iran is not engaged in a war with a foreign enemy right now which could weaken the reactionary circles of Iran on account of failures in war. Accordingly, there is no such situation in Iran which would allow pursuing Lenin's tactics in 1905 and 1917.

Second. Of course you can count on success in the matter of fighting for the revolutionary demands of the Azerbaijani people if Soviet troops continue to remain in Iran. But we cannot leave them longer in Iran, mainly because the presence of Soviet troop in Iran undermined the principles of our liberation policy in Europe and

Asia. The British and the Americans told us that if the Soviet troops can stay in Iran, then why can the British troops not remain in Egypt, Syria, Indonesia, and Greece, and the American troops [remain] in China, Iceland, and Denmark. Therefore we have decided to withdraw our troops from Iran and China in order to take this weapon out of the hands of the British and the Americans, unleash a liberation movement in the colonies, and thereby make our own liberation policy more justified and effective. As a revolutionary, you will of course understand that we not could act otherwise.

Third. Considering the foregoing one can come to the following conclusion about the situation in Iran. There is no deep revolutionary crisis in Iran. There is no state of war with foreign enemies in Iran, accordingly there are also no failures in war which would weaken the reactionaries and aggravate a crisis. As long as Soviet troops remained in Iran you had the ability to unleash a struggle in Azerbaijan and organize a broad democratic movement with far-reaching demands. But our troops had to leave and have left Iran. What do we now have in Iran? We have a conflict of Qavam's government between the Anglophile circles in Iran representing the most reactionary elements of Iran. However reactionary Qavam was in the past he is now forced in the interests of self-defense and the defense of his government to engage in some democratic reforms, and to seek support among the democratic elements of Iran. What should our tactics be in these conditions? I think that we should use this conflict to extract concessions from Qavam, give him support, isolate the Anglophiles, and thereby create some basis for the further democratization of Iran. All our advice to you flows from this position. Of course, another tactic can be adopted: spit on everything, break with Qavam, and thereby ensure the victory of the Anglophile reactionaries. But this would not be a tactic, but stupidity. This would in essence be a betrayal of the cause of the Azerbaijani people and Iranian democracy.

Fourth. It appears you are saying that at first we praised you to the heavens, and then threw [you] into the abyss and discredited you. If this is true then this causes us surprise. What in fact happened? We used the usual revolutionary means here known to every revolutionary. In order to ensure oneself the gain of a certain minimum of demands of the movement in such a situation, like the situation in Iran, it is necessary for the movement to speed forward, to go further than the minimum demands, to create a threat to the government, and to create the possibility of concessions from the government. Without running far forward, you won't have the opportunity in the current situation of Iran to achieve such demands which Qavam's government is now forced to meet. Such is the law of the revolutionary movement. It's out of the question that there is any shame to you. It is very strange if you think that we would let you come to shame. On the contrary, if you behave yourself reasonably and achieve with our moral support those demands which basically legalize the current actual situation of Azerbaijan, then both the Azerbaijanis and Iran will bless you as a pioneer of the progressive democratic movement in the Middle East.

I. STALIN"

3 copies Is
8 May 1946

Copies [to]: [] Cdes. Vyshinsky, Dekanozov, Silin, and Sychev have
[] been familiarized [with this cable]

1. Cde. Stalin
2. Cde. Molotov
3. 10th department

[handwritten:

[[illegible letters]]

5156/[[illegible letters]]