

# The Iranian Communists and The Soviet Union

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**Abstract:** Iran's relation with one of the largest countries, that is, Russia (The Soviet Union) has under gone many changes. One of the brilliant examples of the changing policies of Russia towards Iran is, no doubt, the years 1941 to 1953. In this period, most of graceful communist parties' rise and fall is making relations between Iran and Russia. Tudeh party, Ferghe Democate Azerbaijan and Ferghe Democate Kurdistan are some of the communist movements in Iran which are noticeable and researchable. However, this essay tries to answer the following questions: 1. was not the Soviet Union policy towards Iran neo-colonialist? 2. To what extent were the relations between Iran and the Soviet Union adjusted in accordance with the communist ideology? 3. were the communist parties of Iran in harmony with the needs of Iranian peasants, workers, or were they the chief protectors of soviet interests? It is remind able that in Iran there have been several powerful levels such as a: Army, b: Majlis, c: Royal Court, d: Political parties, e: People and religious Leaders and f: Foreign Embassies. These levels, sometimes in group of two, Three or more and sometimes in loneliness effected the political Social –Economical, religion, militarily and culturally lives of Iran. In the era of 1949-1953 this is the role of Russian Embassy which brought about many changes.

**Keywords:** Iran, Soviet Union, Communist Parties, Communist ideology

## Introduction

No country in the world can stay isolated from others even if they try to do so. The records of history give us example of a few countries which preferred to stay in solitude but were forced, sooner or later, to give up their solitary condition (e.g. China tried to exist behind the closed doors for about two decades since communist revolution of 1949, and finally eased her relations with the west.). There are some factors influencing international relations. Geography is the most important one. No country enjoys the luxury of selecting their geographical and strategic location.

There are certain other factors such as economic interdependence, political situation and socio-cultural backgrounds that build usually relation between states and make relations between neighboring countries in evitable. Iran had Russia the largest country and one of the great powers in the world as neighbor. Each of these countries, i.e. Iran and Russia have had reasons and interests to establish different forms of relations with the other side. Records of history show that relations between the

two countries have gotten variety of forms in different periods, on different factors.

After the victory of communist Revolution of October 1917 in Russia, ideology of communism became another factor which influenced the relations between Iran and Russia. In this essay effort has been directed toward the ideology of communism in Iran through establishment of parties based of communism ideology. The Tude party, Ferghey Democrat Azerbaijan and Ferghey Democrat Kurdistan are the samples in which by help of Russia were established in Iran and were used as powerful lever against Iran to search and get Russian interests in Iran.

The trend of these events started in August 1941, when Iran was invaded by the Allied Forces (the Russian and the British). There were at least two main reasons behind this invasion. First, the Reza shah's obvious Leaning towards Germany which was considered by the Soviet Union as Iran's disregard of Articles Five and Six of the 1921 Russo–Iranian Friendship Treaty (this has been discussed in the first chapter); and for Britain a predominant power in Iran –it was an act of ba

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lancing the Soviet activities in Iran and a reminder of the 1907 Anglo–Russian convention, in respect of division of Iran. The second reason was the interest of the two great powers in the Iranian oil called black gold.

In the context of economic interest in oil, Britain was more confident than the Soviet Union that the Anglo – Iranian Oil Company had a considerable share of the Iranian oil in the southern parts of Iran. But this was not the case with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union also was trying to have a similar share as possessed by Britain, in the northern provinces of Iran, especially as a powerful neighbor with a long border line in the North of Iran. Therefore, Britain and the Soviet Union were competing to have stronger influence on the internal affairs of Iran via oil shares. Britishers were involved in safeguarding their oil concession in the South and the Soviets, to achieve their goal (an oil concession in North of Iran) had a perfect plan "for a long stay"(Upton,1960: 95) in Iran, since the time they invaded Iran in August 1941.

Hence, the matter of formation of different political parties in Iran, under the support of the Soviet Union became important as a part of internal interferences. These parties, either consciously or unconsciously communists or fellow- travelers of them, were engaged in fulfillment of Soviet requirement in Iran. The first party of this kind which is going to be discussed here is the Tudeh Party of Iran.

### **1. The Tudeh Party of Iran and Its Impact on Iran – Soviet Relations A) Neo realism opinion**

The invasion of Iran by Allied Forces and consequent abdication by Reza Shah in 1941 brought about some freedom in the political scene of Iran. For example, political prisoners, most of whom were Socialists with a Marxist – Leninist ideology, were released. The most famous among these political prisoners were a group of intellectuals known as 'Fifty–Three Persons'. The leader of the fifty – three group in jail was Dr. Tagi Arani who was a veteran Communist.

"Actually, the history of Tudeh Party starts with Tagi Arani"(Abrahamian, 1970:297). Arani was originally an Azerbaijani. At the beginning of the twentieth century he was born in Tabriz, capital of the Azerbaijan Province. He was brought to Tehran in his childhood. After his graduation from the high school he left Tehran for Germany to study

chemistry. It was mainly in Germany that Arani came into contact with the leftist's activities. Meanwhile, he got interested in and actively took part in politics. In 1930 Arani returned to Iran and started popularizing Marxism with the help of his colleagues. In 1931 after ratification of a law by Iranian Majlis which put a ban on the propagation of any socialistic – communistic ideology (Eshtera – kia in Persian literature), Arani, his colleagues and their movement had to function underground. After six years of underground activities of Arani and his group, 1937 the students of Tehran Technical College went on strike.

To quell the strike, police uncovered the underground organization of Arani in connection with the strike. Dr.Arani and fifty – two of his associates were arrested and imprisoned. The term of imprisonment was kept ten years for leaders including Arani, and three to seven years for others. Dr.Arani died in jail only sixteen months after his term, either by Typhous , according to the jail authorities, or he was murdered under the torture in conformity with the statements of his associates.

The remaining small group of leftist intellectuals formed the Tudeh Party on 30 January 1942(Lenczowski, 1947:30). Three days after formation of the Tudeh Party the first demonstration of the Party was held at the grave of Arani, on the day of his death anniversary. On the same day Solayman mohsen Iskandari, a Qajar Prince (belonged to Qajar Dynasty), was introduced as the leader of the Tudeh Party. Solayman mohsen Iskandari, however, personally had no contact with Arani, his nephew, i.e. Iraj Iskandari was one of the fifty – three members of Arani group.

Though there is no formal sign of the Soviet hand in the formation of the Tudeh Party, there is no doubt that presence of the Soviet troops in Iran created a situation that resulted in the releasing of communists from jail and their freely announcing the formation of a political party which was totally against the law in Iran. As mentioned earlier, Reza shah had banned the activities of communists in Iran by a law in 1931 and even ten years later when the Allied Troops invaded Iran and the shah came to power, the law was operative. When shah acquired the throne he was almost a young and nominal king and the real power was exercised by the Soviets and British to which Americans joined a year later.

So shah in spite of his hatred of communists was confronted with a very rapid formation of the

Tudeh Party which even he had no power to prevent. Thus, the Soviet Union succeeded in her policy of having the Tudeh Party in Iran. Ehsan Tabari, one of the eminent members of the Tudeh Party believes that the formation proceed of the Tudeh Party was totally a soviet policy. He said, even the name of Tudeh instead of communist, was the influence of the Soviet Union (Tabari, 1987:43). The reason, in his opinion, was that the Soviet Union wanted to have a coalition Party of communists and Nationalists at the beginning to attract more members and to be acceptable to the people, and then have the communist ruling the Party indirectly. Appointment of Soleyman mohsen Iskandari as the leader of the Party was the fact that proved Tabari's idea.

### **Clabtrity in the Tudeh – Soviet Relations**

About a year later in February 1943, the principal organ of the Party, the daily newspaper, called Rahbar (the Leader) was found. Besides this, there were other journals and newspapers such as Zafar (the Victory), Damavand (name of a mountain in Iran) and mardom (the People) which were published by the Party. The Rahbar in its issue of the last week of June 1943 announced the official programme of the Tudeh Party as follows:

Progressive labour legislation, including social insurance; legislation of trade unions; improved standard of living for the peasantry; strict price controls to curb inflation; free education and general health services ; elimination of reactionary elements from public life and the restitution of democratic practices; equality for minorities; reform of the judicial system ; disarming of the nomadic tribes; national industrialization, friendly relations with all of Iran's neighbors; and elimination of foreign interference (Lenczowski, Op, Cit: 32).

The soviet system of propagation, took the first step to disprove the last demand of Tudeh's programme (i. e. elimination of foreign interference) , by making a coalition of a number of newspapers in Iran during 1943. This was done by a soviet foreign affairs officer named Danil komisarov (Bouscaren Trawick, 1972:272), who was press –attaché in Iran during world war II. About forty newspapers, mostly, either Tudeh owned papers or affiliated to the Party, united in a so – called 'Peace Front'. The peace front and the Soviet Union en-

joyed support of each other. The Soviet Union used to supply them papers, where the peace front used to publish pro–soviet articles and refrained writings of anti–soviet articles. The soviet paper supply, however, ceased after the withdrawal of the soviet Army from Iran by May 1946, but some of the newspapers remained in the same front.

A clear point worth noting here is that out of eleven principles of Tudeh's programme the first nine which are in the form of pure nationalism, socialism and democracy were not much emphasized by the Tudeh party, and the remaining two were self – contradictory. 'Friendly relations with all of Iran's neighbours, and the elimination of foreign interference, could be professed and practiced at the same time and for all countries. But this was not the case. The Tudeh Party nequied that Iranian Government have good relations with the Soviet Union as a neighbor, and to eliminate foreign interferences of Britain and the United States and not the Soviet Union

### **The Tudeh's Activities in Favour of the Soviet Union**

The Tudeh Party did not rely on the propagation policy only and directed itself towards the channel of 'parliamentary coup', after the election to the Fourteenth Majlis with the soviet support, in 1944. The nine Tudeh deputies elected to the National Parliament of Iran were from the soviet occupied zone.

With the exception of Fadakar a deputy from Isfahan. Jafar Pischevari , the deputy from Tabriz could not occupy his seat in the Majlis because his Letter of credit was not ratified. So the remaining eight deputies, according to Gearge Lenczowski, "acted as a bloc" in the Iranian Parliament, and, "as long as they found it expedient, were able to prevent the Government from securing a Parliamentary quorum"(Lenczowski, Op,Cit: 33). The first "historical prophetic mission" of the Tudeh Party towards "serving the aims and desires of Government and communist Party of the soviet Union,"(Mobarezate Karegaran....1980:46) was put into practice, when a soviet mission arrived at Tehran on 17 september 1944, headed by kaftaradze, demanding an oil concession in northern provinces of Iran.

This was a threatening demand with political and military backing of the Soviet Union. This demand put Iran into a dilemma and a serious crisis. The demand was rejected by the Iranian Gov-

ernment on the plea that international economic situation was not clear. Iranian Majlis went further and passed a law, debarring the Government officials from negotiating oil concession with any country unless the war was over and foreign troops were withdrawn from Iran. The approval of this law caused a hidden rift between the Tudeh deputies and the nationalist group under the leadership of Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, in the Iranian Majlis.

In no time, however, the Tudeh Party proved the soviet influence on it, in pressurizing the Government to approve the soviet demand. The Tudeh Party revealed its active support of the soviet demand, by reacting bluntly to the decision of the Persian Government. The Tudeh arranged for a demonstration against the Government, and the Iranian Police were ordered to confront severely with the demonstrators. Suddenly a line of soviet trucks carrying the soviet soldiers were observed, which had come to support the Tudeh demonstrators (Tabari, Op, cit:64). This was the first time that Tudeh – soviet support of each other came into open, and resulted in the resignation of some of the Tudeh members who believed in Party's independent policy.

But the Tudeh Party did not cease its policy and in justifying it, adopted another path. Ehsan Tabari one of the leading cadre of the Tudeh Party, wrote the Tudeh's opinion, in the Mardom (the People), in November 1944:

As such we believe in, Britain having some Interest in Iran and we do not talk against them. We should confess that the Soviet Union also has got some serious interest in Iran. This fact must be realized that the northern parts of Iran is the 'security Limits' of the soviet Union, and idea of the group (the Tudeh Party) which I am a member in, is that the Government should enter immediately the negotiations for giving northern oil concession to the soviets and the oil in south to the American and British companies (Mobarezate Karegaran...Ibid).

Kambakhsh, a Tudeh deputy in the Parliament explicitly pointed out that, so far as the Iranian Government "discriminates one of her neighbors"(Rohani, 1986:9), the soviet forces will not leave Iran. An analysis of the above statements reveals that the Tudeh Party did not consider the national interest of Iran at all. The 'security Limits' of Tabari was approval of the 1907 Anglo – Rus-

sian convention which divided Iran into two spheres of influence: north to the sovies Union and south to Britain. In addition, Tabari's welcome to the United States was undeniable, but only if it went in accordance with the soviet interest in Iran.

The soviet communists, at least, after the October Revolution of 1917, verbally rejected the convention, but the Tudeh Party publicly and officially confirmed it. Kambakhsh's 'discrimination of one of (Iran's) neighbors', also followed the same policy. As he stated, the soviet troops did not leave Iran, and pressurized Iran to provide oil concession. But why the Tudeh Party suggested that the American also should share the southern oil? There are two clear reasons. First, just before the soviet northern oil demand, the U.S. put the same for the southern oil, in front the Iranian Government.

As soon as the soviet demand appeared, the U.S. withdrew her demand and supported Iran, for not granting of a concession to the Soviet Union, found the U.S. as a strong obstruction against the soviet demand. Thus, with a proposal for the Soviet Union sharing oil with the U.S., the Tudeh thought that the soviet demand would be granted. Secondly, the Soviet Union was anxious to break up the monopoly power of Britain in the south of Iran. Therefore, with the U.S. entry into the south of Iran, she had to decide whether to cooperate or compete with Britain both of which could have resulted in reduction of British power. And the Soviet Union would have remained a master in north of Iran, without any threat from the United States.

### **Iran's Policy to Counter the Soviet Desire**

It was a complicated case for Iran created by the soviet demand and Tudeh's support. A decision on the grant of an oil concession to the Soviet Union was not an easy task. The rejection of this demand up to that time had resulted in political problems in the two northern provinces of Azerbaijan and kurdestan. Three States of saed, Bayat and Hakimiy had to resign because of the situation created by the Tudeh's demonstrations. The needs of the time, however, brought once again the old and experienced politician, Ahmad Qavam-ol- Saltaneh, to the office of Premiership in January 1946. Thanks to the charming policies of Qavam "who was more acceptable to the Russians" than before (Marlowe,1963:79). Earlier to that Qavam was considered to be a pro- British. It is worth mentioning here that the principle of ' Balance of Power'

helped Iran in many ways to get rid of the soviet created crisis. The U.S. hopeful to gain a hand in economic and political grounds of Iran, and Britain severely trying to preserve her interest in Iran, provided Iran with a chance to enjoy the two powers' support, either directly or indirectly, internally or internationally, to face the soviet troubles.

As soon as Qavam came to power expressed his willingness to meet Stalin and negotiate about the matter. Qavam went to Moscow on 18th February 1946, and returned 16 days later with no gain. But the Qavam- Stalin talks resulted in the conclusion of an agreement between Qavam and sadchikow, the soviet Ambassador in Iran, on 4th April 1946. This comprehensive agreement contained articles about: (a) evacuation of soviet forces from Iran within six months from march 24, 1946 (b) establishment of an Iran- soviet oil company with 51 per cent of soviet share for the oil exploration of five northern provinces of Iran (this had to be ratified within seven months from march 24, by the Iranian fifteenth Majlis), and (c) the soviet recognition of the status of Azerbaijan as a domestic Iranian matter (a' fair' peaceful arrangement between the Government and the people of Azerbaijan in accordance with existing laws, had agreed upon) (Ibid: 80).

Out of the above – mentioned three articles of the agreement, the first one was fulfilled by the Soviet Union on 9<sup>th</sup> of may 1946. The Soviet Union proved that with a mere promise of Iranian oil, she removed her support from the two puppet Republics of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan and let the Iranian Government to determine their fates (the following sections of the current chapter will deal with the cases of two Republics). The enforcement of second article never took place. As a matter of fact the 15<sup>th</sup> Majlis, with a decisive majority, rejected the agreement on 22 October 1947. The third one was implemented through a political process, tactically.

Qavam adopted the policy of closeness towards the Tudeh Party to convince the soviets about the enforcement of the April Agreement. He formed a coalition cabinet on 1 August 1946, in which three members of the Tudeh were placed in the ministries of Health, Education and Industries. He released Tudeh Party. He arrested some of the Iranian officials, like seyed zia and General Arfa, who were said to be pro-British, and imprisoned them. Qavam's speed in functionalizing of his policy, misguided his friends and enemies, and created some internal and external criticisms.

Britain and the United states reacted immediately to the unacceptable favor shown by Qavam to the Soviet Union. On August 2' 1946, sir Reader Bullard, the British Ambassador, in a letter to London informed that, out of eleven Ministers of the coalition cabinet, eight were either "communists" or "fellow-travelers"(Rohani, 1986:8). The American Ambassador also advised Qavam to with draw the Tudeh members from the cabinet, if he seeks American support to his government. These processes externally and the uprisings from the Qashqai and Bakhtiari Tribes in protest to Qavam's policy internally, made the life of this cabinet very short. The cabinet did not last more than two and a half months, and finally the cabinet resigned on 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1946.

However, after the collapse of Azerbaijan and kurdestan Republics in December 1946 (for details see the following sections), and the rejection by the Iranian Majlis of the establishment of an Iran – soviet oil company in October 1947 (these two events were considered as great defeats to the soviet Union and the Tudeh Party), for about two years the Tudeh Party was in an unstable condition. It was during February 1949 that, the Tudeh took the permission of the Government to celebrate the death anniversary of Arani. A number of about 10,000 Tudeh supporters participated in that ceremony. This coincided with the Foundation Day celebrations of the University of Tehran.

On 4<sup>th</sup> February 1949, when shah attended the celebrations an attempt on his life was made by a journalist belonging to the Parcham –eIslam (Islam Flag) newspaper. The attempt was imputed to the Tudeh and two days later Tudeh was outlawed. Some of the Tudeh members were arrested and imprisoned. A brief look at the formation and activities of the Tudeh Party in Iran in the 1940s, reveals that the Party in spite of the lack of the Iranian people's support, enjoyed the protection of the soviet Union in Iran for its formation, and in return the Tudeh Party served the interests of the soviet Union in Iran rather than following the desires of Iranian masses. The activities of the Tudeh Party mainly as an opposition to the Government of Iran went almost the same way in respect of Iranian People. In spite of hatred of masses to foreign interferences, the Tudeh Party through its active support of the Soviet Union persuaded the Government to seek the help of the United States and Britain, in confrontation with the soviet created crises.

The first political existence of the Tudeh Party was concluded by the end of 1940s. Then the Tu-

deh went underground, and in its new stage, the Party transformed its leadership system from Iran to Moscow (Ibid,9). The second phase of the Tudeh's reappearance will be highlighted in the third chapter under Mossadegh's period.

## 2. Azerbaijan Democratic Party and Its Impact on Iran- Soviet Relations

The Democratic Party and the Republic of Azerbaijan came into existence in 1945. Before investigating the events in Azerbaijan, and the resulted changes in the relations of Iran and the Soviet Union, one should keep in mind some basic points in respect of these events. They may include similarities and contradictions between the Tudeh Party and the Azerbaijan Democratic Party.

The points can be enumerated as: (a) Iranian Azerbaijan is fully bordered with the Soviet Azerbaijan (prior to the nineteenth century both of them belonged to Iran), (b) Azerbaijan was a Soviet occupied zone from August 1941 till May 1946, (c) the Tudeh Party was an organ to follow the Soviet policy in Iran, but when it proved to be weak in fulfilling the Soviet desires, the Soviet Union encouraged Pishavari to form the Azerbaijan Democratic Party (ADP) as a complementary force to the Tudeh Party, (d) Jafar Pishavari, the organizer of the Democratic Party was a sharp-minded and active communist, slightly different from the Tudeh's members, if not in goals but in methods. The Tudeh believed in following a long-term policy through a 'parliamentary coup'. Whereas, Pishavari favoured a short-term policy through an 'armed-struggle'.

Jafar Pishavari, the founder of ADP, was a communist by nature. Pishavari's first political arena was the Committee of Justice (the Justice committee), formed by Turkish speaking Iranians in the Soviet Union. The Justice committee was renamed as the Communist Party of Iran in 1920, and Pishavari was elected as one of the three secretaries of the new Party. Pishavari participated in the 'Jangali movement of Iran' (this has been discussed in the first chapter) during 1920-21. He was one of the leading cadres of the Jangali movement and later on one of the members of the Executive committee of the Jangali Government in Gilan. After the suppression of the Jangali movement by Persian forces, Pishavari escaped to Baku in the Soviet Union. From the Soviet Union he came to Tehran where he was ar-

rested and imprisoned in 1930.

### Pishavari and the Tudeh Party: First Phase

Seven years after Pishavari's term in jail, the famous group of 'fifty – three group' members were brought in. It was at this stage that Pishavari came into contact with the fifty- three group. It seems that Pishavari did not mix up much with the group. The exceptions were Arani, who was considered a true Marxist and some others from caucasia (Abrahamian, Op, Cit: 308). Pishavari's biography shows that, ideologically he was a pro-Soviet communist, socially he was brought up in the Soviet Union and his political activities in the Jangali movement served the interest of the Soviet Union.

Pishavari, along with other prisoners, was released at the end of 1941. The members of the fifty – three group rapidly formed the Tudeh Party. Though, Pishavari was not one of the pioneers of this movement he became a member later on. Differences in his nation with the Tudeh were revealed in May 1943, he established the Azhir (the Alarm) newspaper of his own inside the Tudeh organization. Even during the election to the Fourteenth Majlis in 1943, Azhir did not serve the desires of Tudeh candidates blindly.

Pishavari in an article published on 20th of November 1943, poorly compared the Tudeh candidates with some of the members of opposition parties who had learnt to be pro-British, and wrote: "Although these men (Tudeh candidates) have some faults and shortcomings, at least they are not thieves, traitors and reactionaries like some of their rivals"(Ashir,1943).

While Pishavari himself stood as a candidate to the Tabriz city and needed support of the Tudeh, he went closer to the Tudeh Party by publishing articles appreciating 'fifty– three group'. Pishavari was elected as a deputy to the Majlis, but he could not occupy the seat because his Letter of Credit was not ratified. This made Pishavari to be disappointed with the Tudeh Party which he believed did not support him completely. Bamshad, one of Pishavari's friends disclosed that, Pishavari expressed his disappointment by saying: "I see no future for Tudeh. This is the time to establish a new organization of my own."( Abrahamian, Op, Cit)

## Formation of the ADP Under the Soviet Umbrella

Pishevari left Tehran towards his native place Tabriz. There he met his old comrades. Ali shabestari, Dr. Sallamullah Javid and Jafar keyvan welcomed him to Tabriz. Every they was prepared for the formation of a new party. Finally, in a demonstration on 3rd september 1945, Pishevari declared the formation of Ferghe-e Democate Azerbaijan. Two days later, 'Azerbaijan society ' under the leadership of ali shabestari joined the Ferghe and its' Azerbaijan' newspaper became the official organ of the Ferghe. It was on 7<sup>th</sup> of september that the Local Central Committee of Tudeh Party (with its 4,000 members),(Ivanov, n.p:101) without consent of their leaders in Tehran decided to join the Ferghe.

The Ferghe and its movement grew very fast in a period of about four months. The first month was devoted to the expansion of Ferghe's branches throughout Azerbaijan, and conducting demonstrations. The first congress of the Party was held in the beginning of October. In this congress the members voted for the formation of a militia organ, as per pishevari's suggestion. The militia organ was formed in November, and by that time almost all of Azerbaijan was under the revolt. In the middle of November, when the revolt came to be full blown, the central Government of Iran decided to send army to Azerbaijan for security purposes. But surprisingly, the soviet Red Army stopped the Persian troops at sharifabad near Qazvin, on 21st November 1945(Khakpour,1977:3). This direct interference of the Soviet Union in the matter of Azerbaijan permitted the ADP to announce its demand immediately as follows:

The autonomy and freedom of Azerbaijan in respect of language, culture, and tradition, according to the Atlantic charter, should be respected.

The people of Azerbaijan support, with all their might, democracy, which in Iran takes the form of a constitutional government.

The people of Azerbaijan have no desire to separate themselves from Iran.

The people of Azerbaijan will participate in the central government by sending deputies to the majlis and by contributing their taxes.

The people of Azerbaijan are determined to base their autonomy on the firm foundation of democracy. They, therefore, call for a national congress which will elect the ministers of the autonomous government.

This congress with its seven hundred delegates and 150,000 signatures of support declares it a constituent Assembly and appoints a committee to administer Azerbaijan and implement the above resolutions until the convening of a National majlis(Azarbaijan,1945). In the guise of Democracy, the resolutions of the soviet supported Azerbaijan Democratic Party, played multidimensional functions. In the first place, the resolution had to be democratic outwardly, because the Soviet Union was cautious not to provoke the U.S. and Britain's oppositions. The World War II was over with the Japanese defeat, in September 1945, and the foreign troops had to leave Iran.

The Soviet Union, disappointed by the Tudeh's performance in case of soviet oil demand, had to think of a stronger lever against Iran. Thus, formation of an autonomous state in the guise of democracy provided the Soviet Union a strong foothold in Iran. Secondly, there was the possibility of separation of the autonomous states from Iran. Thirdly, all of provinces of Iran, with the exception of four in centre, are tribes with culture and language of their own. The case of Azerbaijan could stimulate all others to follow the same. That could be a danger to the sovereignty of Iran.

The seriousness of the case however persuaded Iran to hand over a series of complaints to the Soviet Union in November 1945. Iran objected to the Soviets for their 'distribution of arms among the Azerbaijanis'(Economist,1945:785), and in another note the Soviets were questioned for their prevention of food transportation from the North to Tehran. The Soviet Union's direct interferences of the kind, in internal affairs of Iran, were however, rejected.

The efforts of Iranian Government to reduce the tension in Azerbaijan, met with no success and the revolt there continued. The military garrisons of the region were forced to surrender and get disarmed one after the other. Finally, on 12th December 1945, the last official of central Government left Tabriz, and Azerbaijan was declared as an autonomous state. A cabinet of nine ministers was formed and Pishevari was declared as the Prime minister of Azerbaijan. Pishevari thanked the Red Army for overthrowing "the tyrannical regime of Iran"(Lenczowski, Op, Cit: 35).

At this stage the two issues of Azerbaijan got prominence. One is an internal issue and the other one is an international aspect. International side of the matter involved some of the great powers such as Britain and the United states, directly or indi-

rectly. The direct involvement of powers started by communications of the British and American governments with Moscow asking for an explanation of events in the light of the Treaties and Declarations of 1942 and 1943 in respect of the sovereignty and independence of Iran. The United States communication included a reminder that evacuation of all foreign troops from Iran shall take place by 1st January 1946, as originally arranged, and not by March 2<sup>nd</sup> (Economist, Ibid).

The interest of powers in the matter encouraged the Persian Government to take the case to the International Bodies. Hakimi, the Prime minister of Iran, ordered the Iranian representative to address the case to the UN Security Council. Ten days later, on 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1946, Taghizadeh delivered the complaint against the Soviet Union to the Security Council. Vishinski, the soviet representative requested the Security Council, not to take any decision, before direct negotiations are concluded between the two parties. "He was hopeful that the direct negotiations will give good results." (Economist, 1946: 168) His hope was because of a change in the office of The Prime minister in Iran. Hakimi resigned and his successor, Qavam settled the matter through negotiation.

### **The Tudeh and Azerbaijan: Second Phase**

The internal aspect of Azerbaijan problem seemed more obscure than its international aspect. The Tudeh that could not decide the recognition of Azerbaijan Republic was compelled by the soviets to do so. Khalil maleki, an eminent Tudeh member was dead against the recognition of Azerbaijan Republic. But before taking any decision by Tudeh in this regard, the soviet Embassy intervened and "argued that the statement (i.e. Maleki's) should not harm the solidarity of international socialist movement. So the declaration was reluctantly withdrawn and the Tudeh sent its congratulation to the Ferghe- e Democrat." (Abrahamian, Op, Cit: 311).

From this point onwards Tudeh adopted a policy of moral support to the Ferghe. The Tudeh deputies alone in the majlis, protected the Azerbaijan movement. They considered the soviet support of Azerbaijan as a natural affair. Radmanesh, a Tudeh deputy, in justifying the soviet support of Azerbaijan, said: "Any revolutionary movement tries to get the help from conditions of time and place, and use it. The American and French Revolutions, and

even our own constitutional Revolution, are the witnesses of this fact." (Rohani, Op, Cit: 9)

### **Iran's Changing Policy**

As a result of Tudeh's pressure internally, and lack of success in getting rid of the crisis from external support, Iran's policy underwent some changes. Hakimi who was unable to tackle the matter effectively, resigned on 22nd January 1946. The next Prime minister was Qavam, who had a reputation as pro-British, long before these events. But this time he appeared in a different face, showing him as a completely pro-soviet. Qavam did many things to prove his attitude towards the soviet Union, such as signing an agreement with the soviet Union and considering oil concession to them; releasing Tudeh's prisoners from jail; imprisoning those like General Arfa and seyed zia-adin, who were believed to be pro- Britain; appointment of three ministers from Tudeh to the cabinet and so on.

Qavam was so fast and serious regarding his policy (he tried to convince the soviets about enforcement of the Agreement signed on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1946), that the Americans, Britishers and the shah were mistaken about his performance. They all believed, apparently, that Qavam was really a pro-soviet. The British Ambassador was quite sure that, Qavam had certainly sold his country to the soviets.

The American view also did not differ much from that of British. The American Ambassador in a response to Qavam's request for American help said that Qavam had to reduce his friendship with the Soviet Union (Ibid:8). Shah also was of the same opinion as that of British and Americans. He wrote, "He (Qavam) seemed to be under the influence of the Russians." (Pahlavi, 1961:116) It seems that Qavam had deceived both the sides of the case, because the pro-soviets also believe that "he has deceived the soviet Union" (Ivanov, Op, cit: 116-19).

As a result of Qavam's effort, at that time, the Azerbaijan case was cooled down in the United Nations. Qavam even accepted to withdraw the grievance from the agenda of the Security Council. But later on the situation was intensified by Hossein Ala, the Iranian Ambassador to the U.S. and the representative of Iran in the U.N, who saw no proper outcome from direct negotiations. Ala demanded an immediate investigation by the U.N.



into the matter. Soon after this demand, the soviet delegate, Gromyko, announced that his government was going to evacuate from Iran "if no unforeseen circumstances occurred"(Sangvi,1968:112), within six weeks from the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1946.

The evacuation of the soviet forces from Iran was completed by 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1946, and Qavam was satisfied with the implementation of the agreement with the Soviet Union. Then it was Qavam's turn to show his gratitude towards the Soviet Union, in cases of Azerbaijan and oil concession. Qavam went closer to the Tudeh Party and Azerbaijan Democratic Party. He gave some concessions to Azerbaijan, such as the right to appoint their ministers (except ministers of war and foreign affairs), and using the Azeri language as their official one. The result of Qavam's friendly relations with Azerbaijan was revealed when Pishvari in Tabriz Radio announced on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1946, that "we are not going to separate from Persia".

He said: "I told Qavam ol Saltaneh that if a constitutional government was formed, we would dissolve the Tabriz Majlis and forget self-Government"(Economist, 1946:833). Pishvari's anxiety to acquire central Government's friendship, was an indication of his fear of collapse in his efforts because his statement just a week after soviet withdrawal from Iran, showed Pishvari's sense of defenselessness.

Moreover, Pishvari was an expert in soviet politics and he could guess his fate to be like Mirza Kuchik Khan of Jangali movement in 1921. However, further friendship between Pishvari and Qavam led to the signing of an agreement between Azerbaijan and Iranian Government on 13 June 1946. This agreement consisted of 15 articles. Some of the important articles were:

(1) that Azerbaijan shall remain a part of Iran and its national Assembly shall become a Provincial council, (2) that its Governor General shall be selected by Tehran from among nominees proposed by it, (3) that 75 per cent of its revenue will go to provincial funds and the remaining 25 per cent to the national exchequer, (4) that its forces shall become part of the Iranian Army, (5) that its local languages, including Kurdish, shall be taught in its schools, (6) that election to the majlis will be held in the year 1946(Ibid:1003).

As a matter of fact, Qavam's green light to the Azerbaijan Democratic Party by giving concessions was his concern over the last clause of the agreement. He was certainly going to hold the election, and inevitably send the army to the

troubled areas to supervise the election. As soon as the decree for the holding of election was issued by the shah, Tabriz Radio declared that there would be no elections in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. Pishvari threatened that if the Royal Army entered Azerbaijan; it would face resistance of Azerbaijan militia and would be defeated (Sangvi, Op, Cit: 128).

Once again the international face of the Azerbaijan problem came to operation. On October 18, Ala met Acheson, the American secretary of state, and stated that Azerbaijan was completely under the supervision of the soviets and central Government had no power over there. Ala believed that it would be dangerous if Azerbaijanis were left to decide for them, because that would lead to victory for many communist deputies.

On 24<sup>th</sup> November 1946, American Ambassador in Tehran sent a note to the secretary of state, saying that Qavam was certainly going to send military forces to Azerbaijan and if they resist, the case would be taken to the Security Council. Five days later the soviet Ambassador met Qavam and in the name of his Government stated that it was not a good idea to send troops to Azerbaijan as it might create trouble on the Iran – soviet borders(Rohani,Op,Cit:9). Qavam told Sadchikov that he would consult the cabinet and the answer would be given afterwards. Qavam immediately called on American Ambassador and asked him to enquire the opinion of his Government regarding the case. Qavam wanted to ensure that the U.S. would definitely support Iran in the Security Council.

The positive answer came to Qavam on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Consequently Ala gave his statement to the Security Council on 6<sup>th</sup> of December. The next day Sadchikov met Qavam for an answer. After receiving a negative answer which meant the Iranian Government's decision sending the army to Azerbaijan and Kurdistan was negative, Sadchikov threatened Qavam that he would be overthrown. Qavam responded that any other Prime minister would have followed the same policy, because, he pointed out, complaint against the Soviet Union was not his personal desire, but followed the public opinion in Iran.

Sadchikov disappointedly rushed to the shah. In 'threatening tones', he asked the shah as commander-in-chief of Iranian armed forces, to prevent entry of army into Azerbaijan. He believed that any military move in Azerbaijan was 'endangering the peace of the world, where the shah's idea was on the 'contrary', and rejected Sadchikov's

'demand'(Pahlavi,Op,cit:117). Shah knew that the soviet Ambassador did not speak from a strong position, because he had agreed that the Azerbaijan issue had to be considered as an internal affair. Moreover, the American support to Iran could balance the act of the Soviet Union.

However, the decision taken by the shah, the Prime minister, the chief of the staff (General Arfa) and supported by the U.S. was put into practice. They dispatched army from Tehran, attacked Azerbaijan on 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1946, where the army was confronted with minor resistance. Pishvari encouraged more resistance, but it seemed ineffective.

Hence, the one year old Republic of Azerbaijan collapsed on 12th December 1946. Pishvari and some of his colleagues escaped to the Soviet Union. The file of relations between Iran and the United states which was opened for the case of Azerbaijan was closed for the same case, with a telegram from Acheson to Allen (the American Ambassador in Tehran) on 20th December 1946. The American secretary of state ordered Allen to express the hope of The U.S. Government that Qavam should adopt a peaceful policy towards the province, and keep away from any revengeful steps towards the soviets, Azerbaijanis and Kurds.

"The Government of The United States believed that amnesty by limiting punishment to the guilty leaders in accordance with law, brings good opinion to the world. This might disprove the statement of Russians calling Iran as a 'reactionary'."(Rohani,Op,Cit:9)The Azerbaijan crisis was the first case that encouraged the United States to enter the Iranian politics, and broke up the previous balance of power in Iran.

Earlier to this event there had been the partnership policy of the Soviet Union and Britain in Iran for some- time and their competitions in some other times. But the entry of the United States into Iran affair changed the position. The U.S., first as a savior of Iran tried to support Britain against the Soviet Union's policy in Iran, and later on she tried to get rid of Britain too.

### **3. Kurdistan Democratic Party and Its Impact on Iran – soviet Relations**

Although similarities between the Azerbaijan Democratic Party and the kurdestan Democratic Party (KDP) were obvious, some major differences existed concerning the incidents in kurdestan and

Azerbaijan. The basic differences lied in all of them are the leadership character is tics of the two, and the historical background of the movements in the two states. On the one side pishevari a pioneer of communism in Iran, and the founder of Azerbaijan Democratic Party, was a soviet delegate, played by the Soviet Union for the soviet benefic in internal affairs of Iran. On the other side, Qazi mohammad a religious leader and later on the chief of the Democratic Party and Republican Government in kurdestan, was not in favour of seeking support of the soviet Union, or serving interests of the soviets, but he was under the pressure to do so.

#### **The soviet Union and Formation of the KDP**

The background of unstable situation in kurdestan goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century, but our concern is from the time the soviet troops invaded the Northern Provinces of Iran in 1941.

After this invasion, the Kurds who had been disarmed by the late reza shah were armed by conquering the "garrisons of Uremia, mahabad, and sinneh"(Westermann,1946:682). The first advantage, the Kurds gained because of the soviet presence in the region was their rearmament. The next step taken by the soviets was to adopt a closer relationship with the Kurds. The soviets invited a group of influential Kurdish tribal chiefs and other celebrities, to visit the soviet Azerbaijan. These chieftains were received by Baghirov the Prime minister of the soviet Azerbaijan in Baku. Although the details of the conversations there remained secret, the guess is that the soviets suggested "the formation of an independent Kurdish state", and promised "moral and material support"(Arfa, 1966:71) to it.

Apart from the visit and conversations, the secret party of komula in Kurdistan was formed on 16th September 1942(Tulsiram, 1981:104). About a dozen of young Kurds formed the komula – e Zhian – e Kurdistan (committee for the Regeneration of Kurdistan) with a nationalistic motive. The membership was restricted to persons of Kurdish descent on both sides of the family; the only exception was made in the case of those with an A syrian mother. For the sake of secrecy, membership of komula was kept below 100, and they never consulted each other twice in the same place. But this position came to an end when one of the leading members of komula met with a soviet agent named Abdollahov.

He along with one of his colleagues, Hajiov, had come to mahabad, ostensibly to buy horses for the Red Army. The well-dressed Kurdish abdollahov could attract the attention of the young Kurds which led to further friendship and finally, his introducing to other Kurds of nationalist movement.

However, further contacts between the soviets and Kurds changed the nature of komula's secrecy. The Kurds requested the soviets for a place where their meetings could be arranged peacefully and fearlessly. This demand was granted by the help of chief of VOKS (the soviet International Propaganda organization) in Azerbaijan. During those days VOKS was actively engaged in the formation of 'Iran – soviet cultural Relations society ' in all parts of Iran. It was an easy job to have a branch for their cultural society in mahabad. The eagerness of the soviets in this regard went one step forward, and formed the "Kurdistan – soviet cultural Relations society", instead of a branch of "Iran – soviet cultural Relations society"(Roosvelt, 1947:250).

The clubhouse of this society converted soon to a hunt for the members of Komula. This was the stage where the mask was removed from the second face of komula's secrecy. A ceremony was held in the clubhouse with the presence of the soviet consul in Uremia and the chief of VOKS in Azerbaijan as chief guest. In the ceremony an opera was played namely "Daik Nishteman" (mother native land)(Momeni,1979:35), which was severely given attention by the Kurds. In the opera a woman (mother native land) was shown being abused by three ruffians (Iran, Iraq and Turkey), and finally was rescued by her steward sons (Kurds). This opera affected the aloof Kurds and renewed their oath for their cooperation which was needed for the upcoming struggle.

The ceremony was a starting point for the admission of Qazi mohammad to the komula, "to the Gratification of the soviets"(Roosvelt,op,Cit:252). Finally the soviets favored Qazi's leadership of the komula. Who was neither a tribal chief nor a politician but a religious leader. This occurred after the soviet Union's suggestion to the tribal chiefs of mamesh, shikak and Dehbokri, to participate in the leadership of komula, But soviet overtures to each was met with polite evasion. Komula once had refused the admission of Qazi mohammad in 1944, because of the reactionary character of Qazi, but at last, admitted him at soviet insistence.

Afterwards, Qazi mohammad and a group of Kurdish tribal chiefs were taken to Baku by the soviets for the second time on 12th September

1945. This time it was a sort of forceful feast. The Kurds were taken to Baku and were received by Baghirow again. The soviet aim of this meeting was to take the Kurds closer to Azerbaijan movement, which then was growing very fast.

The soviet objective, however, could not be fulfilled, because of a deep hatred that existed between the Kurds and Azerbaijanis. This became obvious when Qazi mohammad refused to be a part of Democratic movement in Azerbaijan. Qazi stated that he was not ready to be under the control of a bigger state.

Qazi also added that the Kurds were going to join the Kurds of Iraq and Turkey to form an independent "Great Kurdistan"(Arfa, Op, Cit: 78). Then the Kurds were asked to form a separate democratic party in Kurdistan. Soon after his return, Qazi and his companion from Baku called a meeting of Kurdish notables to announce the formation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party. In September 1945, Qazi and 105 leading Kurds signed a manifesto, containing the program of the new Kurdistan Democratic Party instead of the komula. "The programme of this party was drawn up according to the directions of the soviet consul in Rezaiye, heshimov."(Ibid:79)

By and large, the program drawn for the Kurdistan Democratic Party was the same as that of Azerbaijan Democratic Party, with the exception of article 6 in the former's constitution. This article not only implied the efforts of Kurdistan to establish unity and fraternity with Azerbaijan, but also indicated the soviet pressure in the party's program. The soviet attempt to make Kurdistan a part of Azerbaijan met with no success, but the Kurds were made fellow – travelers of Azerbaijanis.

### **The Soviet Role in the Kurdistan- Azerbaijan Relations**

From the time KDP was formed, the circumstances were more or less the same in the two provinces of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan. When the fire of revolt thrived in Azerbaijan, the same had procedure to be followed in Kurdistan. On 12th December 1945, three weeks after the prevention of movement of Iranian Army towards Tabriz by the Red Army, the autonomous government of Azerbaijan was proclaimed. Three days later the same was followed in mahabad by Qazi mohammad.

"On December 15, at a meeting in mahabad attended by tribal chiefs, the leaders of the new kur-

dish Democratic Party, mulla Mustafa, and three soviet officers in a jeep armed with tommy-guns, he (Qazi) solemnly inaugurated the Kurdish People's Government and raised the Kurdish flag."(Roosvelt, op, Cit: 257) Soon a national parliament of thirteen members was formed, and finally Qazi mohammad was elected president of the new Republic, on 22 January 1946.

The two Republics of Mahabad and Tabriz were formed, but the racial, linguistic, and cultural and border differences, among the two remained unresolved. This was a kind of responsibility to the Soviet Union to solve some of the problems. Moreover, this settlement should have taken place before the evacuation of soviet troops from Iran by may 1946. In April, Qazi mohammad was summoned to Tabriz by soviet authorities, for negotiations with pishevari.

One of the leading personalities in the negotiations was mirza Ibrahimov, the minister of Education of soviet Azerbaijan. He advised the Kurds to accept an autonomous state inside the Iranian Azerbaijan Republic until the time comes for the creation of "Great Kurdistan".

The Kurds did not accept the advice of Ibrahimov, stating that, "if we must join a larger stage, why not Iran,"(Arfa, Op, Cit: 86) when the soviets realized that they were unable to attach the two Republics, a treaty was concluded between Kurdistan and Azerbaijan on 23 April 1946.

Beside this type of open interference by the soviet, Kurds were said they could have "The promised Planes, Tanks, and heavy weapons but secretly"(Roosvelt, Op, Cit: 260). A group of about 50 young Kurds were taken to Baku for political and military training. However, none of these promises materialized when they were needed by the Kurds. The soviets left Iran in may 1946 and the Kurds were left defenseless. Iranian Army started taking military measures in Kurdistan under the command of General Homayouni. He reinforced the Iranian forces in the regions of saqqiz, Baneh and sardasht.

On the other side, Persian troops were galloping towards Azerbaijan on the plea of supervising elections over there. Tabriz Government collapsed on 12Th of December 1946, and the next day Qazi mohammad's brother, sadr Qazi who had been a deputy in Iranian majlis and then acted as an agent of Qazi mohammad, came to Miandoab.

There he met General Homayouni and gave the message of Qazi mohammad regarding his readiness to receive the Persian Army in mahabad. On

15Th December Iranian Forces entered Mahabad and the one year old Government of the Republic vanished. This was not, however, the end of the matter. On 17th December, Qazi mohammad, sadr Qazi and seif Qazi (mhammad Qazi's cousin) were arrested and imprisoned. After a trial by a military court the three Qazies were sentenced to death. And finally they were hanged in the square of Mahabad, on 13 March 1947(Ibid: 226).

## Conclusion

The Azerbaijan and Kurdistan cases in 1945-46 were copies of the Jungali Republic of 1920-21, in the study of Soviet policy. In 1920 the Soviet troops had supported Mirza Kuchik Khan to form the Republic of Gilan and then took the advantage of having an official foothold in Iran by concluding the 1921 treaty with Iran. Then the Soviets left Iran after their desire for British withdrawal from Iran, was fulfilled. During the 1945 crisis, the Soviet Union asked for a similar share of Iranian oil as possessed by Britain, and then withdrew from Iran. A small Soviet concession in the second case is observed, for which the reason was the cooperation between the United States and Britain in Iran, and the Soviet fear of confrontation with the two powers.

A brief analysis of the period studied in this essay and the trend of events connected with the Soviet invasion of Iran and its coincidence with British invasion of Iran, and the appearance of the Tudeh Party, the Democratic Parties of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan and their activities and interrelationships, proves that the Soviet Union's basic aim from playing all these games was to get Iranian oil. The Soviet Union's clear influence and intervention in respect of formation and activities of the three parties are considered as the Soviet political investment in Iran. This was to serve a dual purpose. On the one hand an economic interest of getting Iranian northern oil, on the other hand to check the British influence in Iran and bring back the Tsarist colonial policy of division of Iran.

Although the Soviet policy and purpose of using the three parties against Iran was one and the same, the performance of these parties differed from each other. The Tudeh was a communist party and it protected the Soviet interest in Iran and against national interest of Iranian people. The Tudeh's relation with the ADP proved to be better

compared with that the KDP. The reason is that Pishvari the leader of Azarbaijan Republic was a communist and apart from his differences with the Tudeh Party, he enjoyed Tudeh's support at the Soviet's mediation. The Tudeh Party in all its defenses of Azarbaijan avoided talking about Kurdistan, though to the Soviet Union, both the Republics were, more or less, of the same use.

The Soviet attempt to make a coalition of Azarbaijan and Kurdistan was merely to have a stronger political lever against Iran. The Soviet Union misused the immediate situation in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan in the 1940s and diverted their movements from their original paths. That was why the Soviet Union did not care about the leadership characteristics of Kurdistan and accepted a religious leader there. Existence of contradictions between the Turks of Azarbaijan and the Kurds, the unsuccessful Soviet attempt to make one state out of the two, and the Soviet restraint in helping the Kurds and Turks militarily after Iran's oil promise to the Soviets and consequent Soviet withdrawal from Iran, prove that there was no question of Soviet ideology in Soviet support of the movements, but priority was given to the Soviet political and economic interests.

Iran-Soviet relations were influenced very much by the strong U.S policy in favour of Iran, internally and internationally. One may think restraint to provide oil to the Soviet Union, could have provoked the latter to reinforce her aggressive policy in Iran to get oil, but why she did not even try to do so? The reason behind this is the Soviet fear of confrontation with the U.S. as the chief protector of Iran, that also the beginning of the Cold war. Thus, one can say that U.S. made Iran-Soviet relations correct if not cordial, because the U.S. had in mind to undermine the Soviet influence from Iran and then promote her own political and economic interests

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