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## NORTH OF IRAN OIL AND THE AZERBAIJAN ISSUE

Reza Ebadi\*

Dr. Davoud Esfahanian\*\*

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**Abstract:** *North of Iran oil concession and Azerbaijan issue is a significant adventure and a deep crises in the contemporary history of Iran. Iran's occupation during the World War II and the long-lasting competition of England and Soviet Union states on one hand and the rise of the American strong power on the other hand and competition on the postwar condition to supply its long-term profits, turned the Azerbaijan Democratic Party politically inept in the international balance. The result was that neither the Soviet Union could achieve its goals, nor a pleasant fate was waiting for the actors of Azerbaijan government. But the Cold War had started.*

**Keywords:** *North of Iran oil, Ahmad Qavam, Legislative assembly, Soviet Union, Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, Tudeh Party*

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\*Ph.D. Candidate of History, Islamic Azad University, Shabestar Branch – Iran

\*\*Member to Academic Board, Islamic Azad University, Shabestar Branch – Iran



## **INTRODUCTION**

The history of the North of Iran petroleum goes back the command of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar in February 1896 to Mohammad Vali Khan Tonekabonibased (Sepahdar Azam) on petroleum extraction permit in the triple places of Tonekabon, Kojur, and Kelarestaq of Mazandaran. Mohammad Vali Khan assigned this concession to Khoshtaria from Georgia, national of Tsardom of Russia for 99 years, on Jan. 27, 1916. Although by extinction of the Romanov Dynasty and the fall of Khoshtaria Generalissimo Government he lost his main supporter and sold the concession to the British, because of not being approved by the parliament this concession was never executed.

After a half-century predominance of the British over the Iran great oil resources as a result of Darcy's oil contract in 1901, now it was the Russians' turn to compensate their lag in the field of dominance over the Iran great oil resources.

The petroleum challenges between 1921 and 1924 to decrease the pressures of England and Soviet Union were intensified when the Iran government consciously entered America to the political-economic scene of Iran and stymied the competitions of the American Standard Oil Companies and Sinclair on one hand, objections and competitions of Russia and Britain on the other hand, and Iran's internal events once more dashed the hopes of Iran in bringing the third power –America- to its political-economic scene. Thus the contracts of the North of Iran oil concession were never practically realized.

With the occupation of Iran in August 1941 by the Allies, they undertook to evacuate Iran within six months after the World War II. While the international terrible war ended in September 8 1945, the Red Army still kept its army in Iran's occupied parts and attempted to obtain the concession of North of Iran petroleum. The Fourteenth Assembly of the National Council courageously get one of the most effective laws in the country's fate approved by prohibiting granting any oil concession to foreign countries. This time the Soviets proposed a new subject and it was the issue of Azerbaijan. So, Pischevari declared the Azerbaijan People's Government on December 14, 1945 and coinciding with these conditions Qazi Muhammad established the Republic of Mahabad.



## **NORTH OF IRAN OIL AND THE SOVIET**

During the World War II, in order to establish a balance between the Britain and Soviet powers, the Iranian authorities who were interested in entrance of America to the political-economic scene of Iran as the third power, let the American companies to enter Iran.

“In August 1944 one of the members of Monfaredin fraction (individualists) announced the challenging news that Sa’ed intends to secretly assign the South oil concession to American and British companies. It was also rumored that upon withdrawal of Soviet forces another concession in North will be assigned to Standard Vacuum Oil Company.”<sup>1</sup>

Two months later, the Soviet government requested the North Oil Concession from Iran and on September 16, 1944 the Soviet Delegation headed by Sergey Kavtaradze Soviet Union Foreign Affairs Deputy to National Commissioner had a meeting with the Prime Minister of Iran and proposed the issue of North oil concession. In an interview with Masoudi manager of Ettelaat Newspaper on October 5, 1944 Kavtaradze by explaining the studies and preparing information about natural resources of the North oil resources, declares that:

“Now the delegation that is headed by me has been allowed to offer a suggestion to Iran so that discovery and extraction of oil in Northern regions of Iran is assigned to the Soviet government. The Soviet government attaches great importance to this issue from the viewpoint of strengthening political, economic, and cultural ties and relationships between two friend and neighbor countries.”<sup>2</sup>

On October 8, 1944 Iran’s Prime Minister, Sa’ed, in the Legislative Assembly declared that the cabinet has decided that the issue of granting the Oil Concession is suspended until war termination and determination of global economic condition. On October 8, 1944 Ala’ the Court Minister told the American and British ambassadors in Tehran:

“When Shah was informed that the Russians not only demand the North oil, but also have demanded other natural resources in this region and object participation of any other

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<sup>1</sup> Abrahamian, Yarvand, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, Translated by Kazem Firouzmand, Hassan Shamsavari, Markaz Publications, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed., Tehran, 2003, P. 189, Tousi, D, *Negotiations of the Fourteenth Assembly*, August 10, 1944.

American charged affaires to the state Department April 1944 U foreign relations to the United States (Washington D.C. 1944), v. 446

<sup>2</sup> Zogi, Iraj, *Political-economic Issues of Iran Oil*, Pazhang Publication Company, 1997, Tehran, P. 165.



company and country in this issue, advised Sa'ed to cut off all negotiations related to oil with the representatives of foreign nations.”<sup>1</sup>

By attendance at the Soviet Embassy Sa'ed informed Kavtaradze that the Iran government will not grant any concession to any country until the end of war. Kavtaradze “By declaring the impossibility of cooperation with the government of Sa'ed”<sup>2</sup>, “Considered the decision of the government as an action against Soviet, and the head of the Soviet Delegation described it as a procedure aiming at creating a strained relationship between the two countries.”<sup>3</sup>

After that the Soviet government cut off all relations and negotiations with Iran government in Tehran and limited the relationships to the Iran Embassy in Moscow. In the meantime, some of the Parliament Members and domestic press, especially the newspapers affiliated to the Tudeh Party considered the measures of Sa'ed's government as reactionary and accused him with stealth and jobbery with British and American imperialist companies by the leadership of Seyyed Zia, and supported the granting of oil concession to Soviet, and “the Tudeh Party with the cooperation of United Council of Workers launched a protest against government in the streets of the capital on October 27, 1944.”<sup>4</sup>

This is when the Soviet's armed forces still occupied some parts of the country including Tehran and profited from the support of a number of the Parliament Members and statements of political space of Tudeh Party and the relevant media. In the opinion of Tudeh Party, in order to create a balance the North oil concession had to be granted to the Soviets for the North oil concession that belonged to the British.

On October 29, 1944 Sa'ed the Prime Minister declared the reasons for rejecting Soviet's proposal in a reaction to the attitudes of the deputy of Soviet's foreign minister and internal opponents of the government (Tudehies and press representatives affiliated to Soviet).

“The economic situation of the world is not clear yet, so after the war that it will be clearer, of course we can diagnose how and under which condition we can grant concessions.”<sup>5</sup>

On November 10, 1944, the “Mardom Baraye Roshanfekran” newspaper writes:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid (Telegraph No. 999, dated October 9, 1944, Boulardii to Eden).

<sup>2</sup> Ettelaat Newspaper, October 25, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Sa'ed Maraghei, Muhammad, political Memories of Sa'ed Maragei, by Bager Ageli, Tehran, Namak Publication, 1994, P. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Ageli, Bager, Iran Prime Ministers from Constitutional Revolution to Islamic Revolution, Javidan Publications Organization, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Tehran, 1968, P. 556.

<sup>5</sup> Amouzgar, S. H., Oil and Azerbaijan Events, P. 55 (Boulardii to Eden, Telegraph No. 1168, November 1944).

“By not granting the oil concession the economic influence of the Soviet government is restrained, but the political influence and power of other governments that have old roots and continuous experiences still will remain. For the first and last time, this fact must be realized that the Northern regions of Iran are regarded as the security privacy of the Soviet, and this government will never accept that an extensive adversarial system is formed against it there. As we consider some interests for England in Iran and do not talk about against them, we should admit that the Soviet government has also serious interests from the viewpoint of its security in Iran.”<sup>1</sup>

### **PROTESTS OF TUDEH PARTY IN TABRIZ**

By the instigations of the Soviet government and by staging protests against the government in Tabriz, the Tudeh party requested for granting the North oil concession to the Soviet Government.

“The Tudeh protesters in Tabriz who intended to attack the police and occupy the governmental offices faced with police defense and Iranian soldiers, but by the order of the commander of the Soviet forces the Iranian soldiers were disarmed and expelled the Iranian commander from Tabriz.”<sup>2</sup>

In this protests some people were injured and one was killed.

By intensifying the oppositions of Tudeh Party, Sa’ed issued the order of shutting the Tudeh Party offices and arresting some of the responsible persons of the Tudeh Party by the support of the parliament.

### **RESIGNATION OF SA’ED**

Following the recent and the Soviet government’s multilateral intensifications, the government of Sa’ed faced numerous problems and crises and decided to resign. The resignation of the government of Sa’ed was approved by Shah on November 10, 1944 and the legislative assembly expressed its tendency for Morteza-Qoli Bayat (Saham-ol-Soltan) to become the Prime Minister. Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh, Tehran’s representative in the legislative assembly proposed the plan to embargo granting oil concession on December 2, 1944, by explaining the policy of oil balance against positive balance. However, against the

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<sup>1</sup> Zogi, Iraj, Political-economic Issues of Iran, Pazhang, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., Tehran, 2000, P. 170, “Mardom Baraye Roshanfekran” newspaper, November 10, 1944.

<sup>2</sup> Zogi, Iraj, Political-economic Issue of Iran, Pazhang, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., Tehran, 2000, P. 171.

Boulardii to Eden, Telegraph No. 1125, October 31, 1944, Times, October 30, New York Times.



reasoning of those who consider granting the North oil concession to the Soviets as a counterweight against the Briatrain's concessions Mosaddegh stated that:

"Such an action is similar to the situation that a person has lost one of his hands, and he is advised to cut his other hand." <sup>1</sup>

## **TO EMBARGO THE GRANTING OF OIL CONCESSION IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

The 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly was the struggle scene of the policies of Britain, Soviet, and America, and Seyyed Zia and Mosaddegh were placed against each other, and finally the proposal to embargo the granting of oil concession was approved in this way.

"Article one: Not the Prime Minister, Minister nor any individuals that have any kind of authority are not allowed to have any negotiation or to sign any contract concerning the oil concession with any official or non-official representatives of neighbor governments or anybody else that have legal influences.

Article two: The prime minister and the ministers can have negotiations to sell oil and to deal with the way the Iran government extracts and manages its oil mines, and can also inform the Parliament from the negotiations.

Article three: The violators of the mentioned cases will be sentenced to solitary confinement from three to eight years and permanent dismissal from governmental service.

"To pursuit the violators by the prosecuting attorney of the Supreme Court does not need that the legislative assembly pursuits them and allows this, but the mentioned prosecuting attorney is responsible to pursuit the violators of this law according to the law for ministers trial approved on July 7 and 11, 1928." <sup>2</sup>

Approving this law that was considered as one of the masterworks of the 14<sup>th</sup> period of the assembly made the Russians extremely angry in a way that some days later Kavtaradze left Tehran without leave-taking.

The Tudeh Party and the newspapers and pro-Soviet press that considered Iran's Northern regions as the security privacy of Soviet launched heavy attacks against the government.

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<sup>1</sup> Homayoun Katouzian, Mohammadali, Political-economic from the Constitutionalism until the end of Pahlavi Dynasty, Translated by Mohammadreza Nafisiand Kambiz Azizi, Markaz Publication, 18<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2012, Tehran, Markaz Publication, P. 199.

<sup>2</sup> Madani, Seyyed Jalalaldin, Contemporary political history of Iran, Islamic Publications Office, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 1<sup>st</sup> Vol., 1982, Tehran, P. 144.

The records of the legislative assembly, 14<sup>th</sup> period, 11<sup>th</sup> session, December, 1944.



The “Azhir” left-wing newspaper in its editorial of December 5, 1944, addressing Dr. Mosaddegh and with the responsibility of Seyyed Jafar Pishhevari who had called quashing the North oil concession a great historical movement, wrote as follows:

“Dr. Mosaddegh, you are interested in your properties and assets more than the nation’s interests. You are one of the country’s biggest landlords and most of your submitted bills have focused on protecting the interests of the landlords’ class. If you want to make sacrifice cancel the Darcy’s harmful concession.”<sup>1</sup>

Iran-e-Ma newspaper writes: “The first thing that strikes one after negative understanding of this bill is to protect the interests of the South oil; that is, the plan of Dr. Mosaddegh currently ensures the North oil company that powerful competitors will not enter the oil arena.”<sup>2</sup>

Daad newspaper writes: “In fact, the reason behind this action of Dr. Mosaddegh is to prevent the presence of another oil power against South Oil Company.”<sup>3</sup>

## **DOMESTIC TENSE SITUATION IN IRAN AND THE END OF THE DEVASTATING WORLD WAR**

Iran involved in an unending crisis and the cabinets left one after another. By the fall of the government of Muhammed Sa’ed, the parliament lawyers gave votes of desire to Morteza-Qoli Bayat (Saham-ol-Soltan) on November 20, 1944. The instant government of Bayat overthrew on April 18, 1945 due to numerous problems, domestic tense atmosphere, and failure in improving Iran-Soviet relations, and gave its place to Ebrahim Hakim-ol-Molk. After accepting the statesmanship by Hakimi and the parliament’s not giving the vote of confidence to him, Mohsen Sadr becomes responsible for guiding the rudder of Iran’s turbulent ship.

After the resignation of Sadr, the legislative assembly again gave the desire vote for Hakimi to become the prime minister; and at 23:01 on May 8, 1945 the devastating World War ended with tenth of millions of victims, defeat of the Allies, and surrender of the German Army. But Soviet, Britain and America still occupied Iran.

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<sup>1</sup> Azhir newspaper, December 5, 1944.

<sup>2</sup> Iran-e-Ma newspaper, December 10, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Daad newspaper, December 10, 1944.



## **AZERBAIJANI DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

In order to put pressure the Soviet government oppressed Iran government to obtain the concession of discovery and extraction in the northern lands and refused to evacuate Iran and Seyyed Jafar Pishevari, old journalist and democrat spent 10 years in Reza Shah's prison and released during the amnesty. He was the editor of Azhir newspaper and supporter of Azerbaijan's autonomy. After rejection of his letter of credit in 14<sup>th</sup> assembly with the leadership of Azerbaijan's autonomy, Pishevari declared the Statehouse and autonomous government of Azerbaijan on December 1945 and by disarming the Azerbaijan legion and with the support of the Soviet troops dominated the whole Azerbaijan.

"Second conference of the foreign ministers of three great governments was held in Moscow. The Americans hoped to solve the issue of Iran's evacuation through direct negotiations with Soviet, but they were presented with a fait accompli because Pishevari declared the establishment of Azerbaijan's autonomy in Tabriz on December 14, 1945 and Tabriz garrison surrendered to the democrats." <sup>1</sup>

At the same time, the riot of Komalah Party of Kurdistan with the communist tendencies declared the establishment of Republic of Kurdistan headed by Qazi Muhammad.

Hakimi referred the non-evacuation issue of Iran by Soviet forces and the issue of Azerbaijan to United Nations by the representativeness of Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh. At this time that Iran's complaint was raised in the United Nations, Hakimi, the prime minister, could not bear and resigned due to pressures inside and outside the parliament.

By the resignation of Hakimi on December 24, 1945, Ahmad Qavam received the order of being the prime minister with the title of Jenabe-e-Ashraf from Shah with few votes of the parliament members on January 26, 1946.

## **MOTIVATION OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO OBTAIN THE NORTH OIL CONCESSION**

George Conan the charge d'affaires of the American Embassy in Moscow, in a report to the America Department State in the peak of oil crisis in Iran on November 8, 1944 writes:

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<sup>1</sup> Houshang Mahdavi, Abdolreza, The history of foreign relations of Iran from the beginning of Safavid Dynasty until the end of the World War II, Amirkabir Publications Institute, Tehran 1990, P. 424.





“The main intention of the Soviet’s recent measures in North of Iran is probably not only to obtain oil resources, but the fear and anxiety of foreign forces dominance in North of Iran has been the cause of it.” <sup>1</sup>

In his report, George Conan continues:

“Kremlin believes that any great foreign country must not have even a chance to have a foothold in North of Iran, and considers this issue highly fundamental. It probably seems that to ensure this issue there is no way other than having more control on the political and economic affairs of Iran by the Soviet itself.” <sup>2</sup>

Considering that the Russians possessed the richest oil resources in the world, there was no doubt that their dreadful tendency and insistence for obtaining the oil concession more than need and profit-seeking was followed by terrible long-term incentives.

By approving the law for prohibition of granting concession to the aliens in the National Assembly, basically the Russians should felt safe about encroachment of England, America, or any other powerful country in Iran’s resources especially in North, but, not only this did not happen but also they requested for reconsideration in the law for prohibition of granting concession to the aliens.

“So, there is no doubt that Moscow intended to use the competition of the western countries in the Iran’s oil issue as the best reason and excuse to interfere in Iran’s political affairs. Interference in Iran’s political affairs was based on the general policy of Soviet in Iran, according to which, the economic situations and political policy of Soviet’s adjacent countries must not determined by other powerful countries and guided in a certain direction that is inconsistent with the national interests and Soviet’s security.

It can be concluded that the request of the Soviet government for Iran North oil was in fact a part of the needs of that government and the required agents to have protection and security belt in North of Iran and against its old and traditional enemy, England, and a newcomer such as America.” <sup>3</sup>

“The North of Iran oil was the object of desire of Soviet’s politicians since they wanted to create a dominance balance with the England government by attaining the North oil

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<sup>1</sup> Zogi, Iraj, Political-economic Issues of Iran, Pazhang, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 1997, Tehran, P. 181,

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, P. 182.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, P. 184.



resources. In addition, the North of Iran oil could be an effective and continuous means to apply political lobbying in Iran.”<sup>1</sup>

After the World War II in 1945 the Soviets by complaint against Iran, called Iran’s governing body especially Sadr and Hakimi prime ministers the agents and instruments of the British policy in using Iran as a foothold to advance in Caucasus. Lancelot Paiman the chairman of Iran in Foreign Ministry of England described this issue as follows:

“The Soviets have been anxious and worried by the thought that the American and British could penetrate to North of Iran and use that region as a foothold to carry out anti-soviet operation.”<sup>2</sup>

“Stalin adopted his strategy about calling the Red Army forces from Iran before developments of the Security Council or America’s attitudes, against attaining the North oil with obtaining the Azerbaijan’s autonomy.”<sup>3</sup>

“News comes from London that is not very promising and from which it can be understood that even if the Iran government recognizes the internal independence of Azerbaijan, again the Russian army will not evacuate Iran. The Russians submitted a list of their demands to the Prime minister of Iran that included recognition of internal independency of Azerbaijan and granting the oil concession.”<sup>4</sup>

### **AHMAD QAVAM - DIPLOMACY BATTLE**

The day after introducing his cabinet to legislative assembly, Ahmad Qavam entered Moscow as a head of a board on February 19, 1946. Since months before desire votes of parliament members he had directly and indirectly contacted representatives of the Soviet state and leaders of the Tudeh Party about cooperation and had taken measures to have necessary preparations for creating friendly relationships between Iran and Soviet. During this travel he twice met and negotiated with Stalin and Motolov the prime minister. Mokhber-ol Saltaneh Hedayat writes: The Soviets expressed their requests as follows:

“1. That the Soviet force always remains in some regions of Iran. 2. The Azerbaijan autonomy is recognized. 3. Soviet will accept to forbear the request for the North oil

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<sup>1</sup> Kouhi Kermani, Hossein, From September 1941 until the disaster of Azerbaijan and Zanjan, Mazaheri printing office, Tehran, 1950, P. 567.

<sup>2</sup> Documents of foreign relations of America 1946, Vol. 5, P. 921.

<sup>3</sup> Shokat, Hamid, Political life of Qavam-ol-saltaneh, Akhtaran publication, Tehran, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., 1999, P. 220.

<sup>4</sup> Jafarian, Rasoul, Azerbaijan crisis, The memories of Ayatollah Mirza Abdollah Mojtahedi, Studies Institute of Iran Contemporary History, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., Tehran, 2002, P. 154.



(Khourian) provided that a company is established between Iran and Soviet in which Iran has 49 shares and Soviet has 51 shares (the majority of shares).”<sup>1</sup>

After his second round of negotiations with Stalin, Qavam-ol-Saltaneh hoped the results of the negotiations. Stalin had told to Qavam that if the concession of the North oil is granted to Soviet, it will take back the Red Army forces from Iran.

In a response to Soviet, Qavam proposed the subject of prohibiting any negotiation to assign the oil concession by the parliament. The Soviets insistently requested Qavam to take measures to cancel the mentioned law by breakup the parliament, and Qavam stated that holding parliament elections depended to evacuation of Iran by the Soviet forces. Finally, by emphasizing on following up the negotiations and dispatching new ambassador of Soviet to Tehran, Qavam left Moscow. During Qavam’s staying in Moscow, the complaint of Iran from Soviet with regard to not evacuation of Iran was proposed in United Nations Security Council, and by the approval of the Security Council it was decided that:

Iran and Soviet governments directly negotiate to resolve the issue. In addition, March 3 was determined as the definite date to evacuate Iran by the alien forces, though Britain and America had called back their forces and evacuated Iran before this date (i.e., February 15, 1946).

This was while except for Mashhad, Shahrud, and Semnan the Soviets not only did not evacuate the occupied regions of Iran, but also created horror and terror throughout Iran by entering new forces and equipments. While the 14<sup>th</sup> assembly was spending its last days of legal life, Ahmad Qavam returned Iran as the head of dispatched board on March 7, 1946. In a private meeting, he informed the results of his negotiations with Soviet authorities to the parliament members. He hoped that by the entrance of the new ambassador of Soviet necessary measures will be taken to evacuate Iran from Soviet forces and to provide the land integrity of Iran.

Sadchikov the new ambassador of Soviet entered Tehran on March 20, 1946, and by following up the negotiations about establishing the joint oil company for Iran and Soviet, an agreement between the prime minister of Iran and the Soviet ambassador which

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1 Hedayat, (Mokhber-ol Saltaneh ) Haaj Mehdi Qoli, Memories and risks, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. Zavvar Publications, Tehran, 2006, P. 445.



included the establishment of a stock company with 51 percent Soviet and 49 percent Iran share was signed on April 4, 1946.

1. Some parts of the Red Army evacuate Iran within one month from March 14, 1946.
2. The contract of establishment the joint oil company of Iran and Soviet whose conditions will be proposed for approval to the 15<sup>th</sup> assembly from April 13 for seven months.
3. With regard to Azerbaijan, since it is the internal issue of Iran, peaceful measures will be taken to carry out reforms according to the existing laws and with good intentions regarding Azerbaijani people between the government and Azerbaijan.

Iran's Prime Minister, Ahmad Qavam

Soviet's Ambassador, Sadchikov" <sup>1</sup>

By signing the agreement and proposing the establishment contract of the joint company of Iran and Soviet, the Soviet forces gradually evacuated Iran. After that, Qavam ordered Hossein Ala the Iran's envoy in the United Nations to withdraw the complaint of Iran.

Doubtlessly, intertwining the subject of North oil concession and the issue of Democratic Party of Azerbaijan in this critical juncture of Iran's foreign policy that was completely guided by Ahmad Qavam, made him to adopt a peaceful and wary policy in carrying out his agreement with Soviet in dealing with the Democratic Party and expressing tendency toward left-wing politics that was interesting and pleasant for Soviet.

Subtle diplomacy of Qavam in negotiating with the Russians on one hand and the complaint in the United Nations Security Council on the other hand were led to the exit of the last soldier of the Red Army from Azerbaijan in May 1946. Thus, Soviet had betrayed Pischevari and the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, until when the one-year governance of the Democratic Party in Azerbaijan ended with the attack of Imperial army on December 12, 1946.

Dr. Mohammadali Homayoun Katouzian writes:

"The fact that the Azerbaijani people had spent many years in suffering and injustice is undeniable; however, they probably requested for more participation in managing their affairs. In fact, if their enthusiasm for the autonomy was not ingrained in certain ideology and the policy of the international powers, they may become successful in this case, but the

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<sup>1</sup> Madani, Seyyed Jalal-al-din, Iran Contemporary History, Islamic Publications office, 1<sup>st</sup> Vol., Qom, 2012, P. 311.



Soviet government used this chance to put pressures on Iran to obtain the North oil concession. The unconditional support of the Tudeh Party from all these policies was a big nail that was hammered to the coffin of this movement as a national movement, since this was a national movement that was independent of both authoritarian regime and foreign powers.”<sup>1</sup>

## **APPROACHES OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN THE ISSUE OF NORTH OIL CONCESSION**

“At this time the policy of England was to maintain the independence and territorial integrity of Iran as always in case that they have dominance and control on it; but, if they could not achieve this goal they were ready to agree with the Russians and assign the North of Iran to them provided that there is no damage to their dominance in the southern regions.

For this reason, Bowen the foreign minister of England submitted a proposal with regard to form a three person commission to supervise Iran’s affairs in the conference of foreign ministers of three great countries in Moscow.”<sup>2</sup>

The American government was completely opposed to assigning the oil concession of northern regions of Iran to Soviet, and believed that this issue will cause the dominance of Soviet in Persian Gulf and as a result in all over the Middle East.

The England government did not agree with this opinion of America and also with Iran’s independence being threatened, but to the authorities of the Britain government the main problem was that if Iran refuses to assign the oil concession to Soviet, the Soviet government may plan a revolutionary coup in Iran to control the central government or carry out a military attack or armed intervention. The British government was worried about carrying out each of these tactics by Soviet and regarded them extremely dangerous for Iran’s independence and especially for the interests of England in Iran and the Persian Gulf region.

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<sup>1</sup> Homayoun Katouzian, Mohammadali, Political economy of Iran from Constitution Revolution to Termination of Pahlavi Dynasty, translated by Mohammadreza Nafisi and Kambiz Azizi, Markaz Publication, 18<sup>th</sup> Ed., Tehran, 2012, P. 199.

<sup>2</sup> Houshang Mahdavi, Abdolreza, History of Iran’s foreign relations, Amirkabir Publications Institute, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., Tehran, 1990, P. 432.



The British had concluded that the agreement of the government and Iran parliament with the oil contract of Iran and Soviet and assigning the concession to the Russians would be much better than rejecting it and opposing the Russians. In other words, the results of Iran's refusal from accepting the request of Soviet for oil and disapproval of the contract will be much worse than the obtained results from agreeing with Soviet request and signing and approving the contract.

In one of the documents series of the British foreign affairs ministry that is prepared by one of the senior officers of the Eastern affairs section of the Britain foreign ministry it is written: "Bowen in his private discussion with Stalin has undertaken that he will not take any measure to prevent obtaining the concession of Iran oil by the Soviet government, and will suggest Iran government to offer the mentioned concession to Iran's parliament for being approved."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet ambassador in Tehran insistently requested for approving the Iran and Soviet oil contract in legislative assembly.

### **THE RESULTS OF NORTH OIL ISSUE**

Qavam-ol-Saltaneh by attending the legislative assembly on October 22, 1947 stipulated that:

He agreed with the oil contract of Iran and Soviet to solve the Azerbaijan issue and evacuation of Iran by the Soviet forces, and submitted the oil agreement text of Iran and Soviet to the legislative assembly.

The agreement was proposed in the legislative assembly and the parliament members refused to approve it. So, Dr. Rezazadeh Shafagh, the head of the parliament's foreign commission, offered a single Article to the parliament in order to consider the agreement null and void.

In this single Article, by virtue of discussions and agreement of April 4, 1946 of Qavam and the Soviet party with regard to establishment of the joint company of Iran and Soviet the legislative assembly canceled it because of being contrary to the law of December 2, 1944, and by emphasizing on technical and scientific probing and allowing for further negotiations

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<sup>1</sup> A note prepared by 1. Peyman (expert for the eastern section), September 29, 1947, P. 236, E9466/1/34-F.O.371/6197



with the Soviets, obliged the government to demand the national rights about South oil and stipulated it in the clause (C).

“Assigning any kind of concession for extracting the country’s oil and its derivatives to foreigners and establishing any kind of company for this purpose in which the foreigners have shares in any possible way is definitely forbidden.”<sup>1</sup>

This single Article was approved in the parliament with 102 pros and 2 blackballs on October 22, 1947.

“This decision of the legislative assembly angered the Soviet government, delighted America, and dissatisfied England.”<sup>2</sup>

Then, remonstrant notes by Sadchikov the ambassador of Soviet to Iran government and the responses of Qavam-ol-Saltaneh were exchanged for a while.

The Soviet government accused Iran of commitment to United States of America and threatened Iran with cutting off political relations and occupying Iran. Thereafter it adopted an intense campaign against Iran government by closing the shipping line of Baku-Anzali and decreasing business dealing and collecting the facilities of fisheries in North.

By the policy of focusing on the newborn United Nations and Truman Doctrine the government of America by supporting Iran government in resolving the issue of Azerbaijan and evacuation of Iran prepared a plan to support its recent future interests in Iran and was pleased with its successes as a new power in international politics arena; but the British were extremely worried and afraid of the 5<sup>th</sup> Note of the approval of the parliament to demand the national rights with regard to the South oil.

The concern of the British was not so pointless, because in a short time Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh by leading the oil industry nationalization movement issued an order to the temporary directorate board of Iran national oil company on September 25, 1951 as follows:

“All the English experts who are residing in petrol areas are separately warned to leave Iran during one week that starts from the morning of Thursday the September 27, 1951.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Amouzgar, S. H., Oil and Azerbaijan Events, Historical and extraordinary meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> round of legislation, 3<sup>rd</sup> Section, P. 68-69.

<sup>2</sup> Houshang Mahdavi, Abdolreza, History of Iran’s foreign relations, Amirkabir Publications Institute, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., Tehran, 1990, P. 438.

<sup>3</sup> Houshang Mahdavi, Abdolreza, Scenes from Iran contemporary history, Elmi Publications, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., Tehran, 1998, P. 374.

According to 100 reports from Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh to the government and parliament, P. 750.



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