

## **Geopolitical analysis of Azerbaijan local government reforms (in 1945-46)**

**Najleh Khandagh\***- Assistant Professor of Political Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Received: 09/08/2014

Accepted: 18/11/2014

### **Abstract**

When the Local Government of Azerbaijan was established under the Firqa-yi Democrat. Its main aim was directed towards a comprehensive reform of all Azerbaijan, since the province had for the past 20 years during the rule of Reza Shah, been totally ignored and neglected, as we have attempted to show in this article. The reforms enacted in the single year that the Local Government survived exceeded all those introduced throughout the previous 20 years. They included land reform, division of land among the peasants, re-opening factories or building new ones, generally reducing unemployment, reconstruction of cities, resurfacing of roads, creating Fida I groups, establishing the local Army of Azerbaijan, improving education, introducing a national health service, reducing the crime rate, lowering of inflation, prohibition of profiteering and the black market, and ending the coupon system. Law was made equal for all Azerbaijani citizens, the local language was made the official one even in government documents. A theatre holding 800, and 50 general hospitals, with 700 beds were built. The author has tried to answer this question to what extent the local government of Azerbaijan was successful in its objectives or reforms.

**Keywords:** Firqa-yi Democrat, Local government, Azerbaijan, Reform, Local army, Land reforms, Labor movement.

---

\* E-mail: najlekhkhandagh@gmail.com

### **Introduction**

The Firqa yi Democrat was created in order to full fill what it saw as the wished of the people of Azerbaijan , and to take the destiny of Azerbaijan into their hands in order to defend the territory from the conservative and arbitrary central government rule (KHandagh , N ,2009)<sup>1</sup>. One of their goals was to use their income to affect the necessary reforms that were long – overdue. Pishavari declared: ”We are not against capitalism. On the contrary, we can use capital to reform Azerbaijan. We are trying to make Azerbaijan a wealthy province. Therefore, our wealthy people are not detrimental to us but rather, can benefit us all. We take advantage of their work to use it for the benefit of Iran. We do not have class conflict: we want democracy for all Iranians “. He thus encouraged both public and private enterprise.

The reforms of the Firqa –yi Democrat were achieved in such a short period of time primarily due to the support given both to the party and to its program throughout Azerbaijan. According to the newspaper Dad, in support of eyewitness accounts , the workers were willing to do whatever needed to be done whenever it was required, and tried to match the rapidity of the reforms with the speed of their own labor. The party quickly reached a position of power, and acquired much popular support, since the Azerbaijan recognized the oppressive and inefficient nature of the central government,s dealings with Azerbaijan. They resented the apparent disparagement of Azerbaijan made by local government officials: and the peasants, who were subject to harsh treatment at the hands of local landowners , backed by the gendarmerie , decided to turn to the Fiqa yi Democrat as being what they saw as the only viable alterative . Thus young and old, peasants and landowners, workers and employers alike gave their support to the party.

The establishment of the Democrat party of Azerbaijan has been traditionally interpreted by both Western and Persian scholars as nothing but a soviet creation. It is an approach characterized by the importance given to the role of the Soviet Union within the province of Azerbaijan: the presence of this Communist regime has been assumed to have been such a powerful factor

that the establishment of a party with so marked an affinity with socialist ideas could not have come about except under its direction and aegis. This is an answer, however, which fits the facts too neatly, a trap of which we must beware, since it conveniently hides much more complicated motivations and tensions.

### **Research Methodology**

This research has been conducted thoroughly on the question at Firque – Yi Democrat Azerbaijan the (Local Government of Azerbaijan) was able to introduce many reforms within a year(12th December 1945-1946 ) Azerbaijan . Through this brief comparison, the amount and quality of the reforms instituted by the Firqa – yi Democrat. This is particularly important to Azerbaijan, since during the Pahlavi period many scholars believe that Azerbaijan had consistently been neglected as a consequence of the Azerbaijanis political consciousness.

In this research, I tried to use published books and scholar's articles in different scientific journals, mainly I have used newspapers of the period between 1945-46, also public record office papers.

### **Theoretical Basic**

This research has been conducted thoroughly on the question weather Local Government of Azerbaijan managed to for fill the needs of Azerbaijan people and able to implement the necessary reforms in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has always been a revolutionary province . She has always suffered from neglect and discrimination and remained sadly under-developed despite enjoying rich natural resources.

Northern Iran formed the centre of the national and democratic awakening of modern Iran: it was from (Iranian)Azerbaijan that this movement spread outwards to other parts of Iran. The formation of the Democrat Party should be seen as the result of an inner logic within the historical development of Azerbaijan. The root conditions for it reside in the strong sense national and

cultural pride held by the people of Azerbaijan. Characteristic of such feeling were revolutionary and democratic fervor. Combined with a passionate espousal of social and political justice: and prior to the accession of Reza Shah, Azerbaijan had traditionally received special attention and respect . Just these elements, however, were seen by Reza Shah to represent a real threat to exercise of his dictatorship, and he embarked upon a program of discrimination against Azerbaijan, which took the form of the elimination of a specific Azerbaijan character and culture and the concomitant movement for democracy . Further tension was aroused by the activities of the central government towards Azerbaijan following the abdication of Reza Shah, which deepened the Azerbaijanis grievances and sense of national humiliation while at the same time sharpening their frustration, resentment and anger against reactionary rule.

However my efforts to study this problem more deeply were made more difficult by the paucity of materials and contradictory ideas, utterly out of proportion to the complexity and importance of the subject.

### **Research findings**

#### **The Labor Movement and Industrial Reform**

A labor movement had existed in Azerbaijan since the formation of the Tudeh Party in 1941. The Tudeh had encouraged the labor movement throughout Iran (Zafar, 21<sup>st</sup> November , 1946,<sup>2</sup> , and a Trades Union movement had been eagerly established in Azerbaijan by the local democratic elements . It had faced fierce opposition from the aristocracy of Azerbaijan , who were pro-Western and anti - Communist. This group had seen a threat to their interests in the formation of trades unions, and had joined force with the reactionary elements in Tabriz to help the central government harass and terrorize the labor movement(Rahbar, 29th March, 1946 –Zafar, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1946 -Rahbar, 15<sup>th</sup> -20th August -Rahbar, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1945)<sup>3</sup>. The previous existing order was for the notables a natural one: any discontent was seen as interference by foreign agitators in the almost divinely-constituted social order that made work the appointed duty of the peasant (Eveling. S.G. 1944)<sup>4</sup>.

With the creation of the Firqa-yi Democrat, a powerful representative voice was given to the trade unions and the labor movement, so that although neither had previously had much chance to develop in Azerbaijan, they now entered upon a new era. The Tudeh in Azerbaijan, led by Padagan, and the trades unions, led by Biriya, at this point, declared their international of cooperation with the Firqa-yi Democrat (Khandagh, 2014).<sup>5</sup>

The Azerbaijan workers were organized in 11 unions, including Clerks, Transport Workers, Weavers, and Chemical Workers Unions, each representing a distinct section of industrial manufacture.

The Central Council of the movement was in Tabriz, and to it were affiliated the individual union of each factory. The Trade union Congress maintained close ties with the Central Council of Trades Union in Tehran, and through the latter, with the World Syndicate of Trades Unions.

The situation obtaining in Azerbaijan was described by Pishavari in Azhir, during 1944 (Everling S.G. 1944)<sup>6</sup>. The Pashmina and Parchabafi factories had closed, with the loss of 800 and 400 jobs respectively. Twelve year old children were earning 2 rials a day instead of attending schools (which were themselves very short-staffed): this situation was, in fact, merely the lesser of two evils, for their labor was instrumental in maintaining production. Employers, who even in Pishavari's eyes could not reasonably be expected to disregard their own interest, nevertheless were treating their workers merely as a commodity, paying no heed to the lower classes "plea for some sort of owners. By June 11th, Pishavari was describing Tabriz as a ruined village. The city's hospitals had been closed for six months and only 27 primary and high schools remained open (Azhir, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1944 -Azhir, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1944)<sup>7</sup>. Biriya declared that serious action needed to be taken to combat unemployment, but only Jahanbari was sent to listen to the complaints. When a factory meeting was on November 18<sup>th</sup>, with Pishavari in attendance. Biriya assured the workers that labor and trade union movement was not for plunderers, and no one should thus fear either for life or property. (U.K Government).<sup>8</sup>

The establishment of the local government of Azerbaijan on December 12<sup>th</sup>,

1945 by the Firaqa-yi Democrat marked a new but limited advance. The new government immediately faced financial disaster. The National Bank of Iran, in reaction to the creation of the Local Government ordered a prohibition of credit and withdrawal throughout the whole of northern Iran for both private and public purposes (Rahbar , 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1945 -Mardom, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1945-Mardom, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1946)<sup>9</sup>, which created a money-less section in all Iran of 8 million people. Despite the general protest, exemplified by a mass transfer of capital from the National Bank of Iran to the Shahi Bank, the Local Government of Azerbaijan was left facing the huge problem of paying all public salaries and wages. The difficulty was resolved to a certain extent through the revival of industry and the establishment, six months ahead of Tehran, of a Ministry of Labor headed by Biriya(U. K Government)<sup>10</sup>, which created employment to balance the slump aggravated by the flight of worried factory owners. These measures taken by the Local Government of Azerbaijan stand out in contrast with Tehran's, where much talk was made about reducing unemployment which was directed towards enabling the establishment of a new Ministry of Labor to create highly-paid jobs for the upper classes. Pishavari criticized the central government for not seeing that unemployment could be , and was successfully in Azerbaijan , reduced by reviving and creating new industry within Iran , both to provide employment and goods , and to reduce foreign imports (Dad, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1946).<sup>11</sup>

Thus the Pashmina factory , one of the largest in Tabriz , which had shut down due to the ending of a lucrative contract to provide uniform to the Red Army and instability of the area, was re-opened and modernized. it subsequently became the largest and most efficient factory in Iran, supplying uniforms, worth 1 million Rials, instead to the Fida i and Local Army of Azerbaijan. Its efficiency and that of industry in general in Azerbaijan was also improved as a consequence of Pishavari,s concern for employee –welfare. This covered the equipment of factories with clubs, cafeterias swimming – pools and sports complexes .The Pishmina factory

had a hall to fit 150 people, and facilities for films and speakers were discussion group also met . Extensive medical care was offered, drinking – water and good, cheap food , and injured workers were treated at one of the best Soviet hospitals in Tabriz in private rooms coast 150 rials a day. A nursery school was also attached for the use of the employees, with a special teacher who taught the rudiments of writing and reading . The children also had the use of a garden , bedrooms and a toy - room, a feature unique in Iran(Zafar , 11<sup>th</sup> September 1946)<sup>12</sup>. It was a factory that was truly national and based upon democracy. Workers shared in its success through a proportionate rise in wages, and its profits were spent primarily on benefit for the workers, as well as equipment for , and expansion of, the factory. Chavushi, the man in charge, was only a simple worker, but one with a great enthusiasm. Four Soviet advisors worked in the factory for 6 months, training technical staff, including the 6 Azerbaijan workers who took over on the departure of the four Russians.

Pishavari also opened a stocking and nylon –cloth factory , introduce from the Soviet Union (Dad , 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1946 ).<sup>13</sup> and installed in two houses belonging to Cols .Darakhshni and Ihami. Despite the financial problems, the employment benefit and production increase justified the one million Tomans expenditure on the plant , plus another 400,000 on installation . The factory produced 9,000 stocking per annum, as well as underwear and jackets. Since Pishavari, s policy was to employ female workers, the factory also included baths, a club, cafeteria, nursery and playroom . A wooden floor countered the possibility of damp in the building, there were regular medical inspectors, and the workers wore a special uniform. A notice above the entrance proclaimed: “ work in this factory is not for the lazy “ (Zafar, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1946 ).<sup>14</sup>

The Firqa-yi Democrat never the less did not oppose capitalism , for it recognized the benefits that it had brought for the development of the development of the third world . They encouraged private enterprise, and cottage industries, and gave assistance to factory owner facing closure . Raw

materials, and facilities were provided in return for materials b benefit to society. In this way , the formation of trade unions was a positive element for production. Nor was this confined to Azerbaijan , for the workers sympathized with other workers all over Iran . The situation of trades unions different widely between the North and South (Zafar , 15<sup>th</sup> August 1946 )<sup>15</sup>. The Fiqqa-yi Democrat provided strong support and backing for the movement , whereas the south was heavily under the influence of the British oil companies. This created a viability gap whereby the independence of the trade unions was assured in the North . While the central government was able to crush the movement in the South through collaboration with the A.I.O.C( Zafar, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1946 )<sup>16</sup>. The Azerbaijan showed their solidarity a mass meeting of 30000 strong to condemn the action . While the Fiqqa- yi Democrat provided medical and education facilities, together with conferences and congresses , the very existence of trades unions was illegal in the South . The Azerbaijan situation angered the A.I.O.C . and central government , and provoked their sharp reaction . The A.I.O.C. prohibited any further employment of Azerbaijan , and those already employed were ordered to be fired.

The other accomplishment of the Firqa-yi Democrat was the promulgation of a Labor Law , passed on May 12<sup>th</sup> , 1946 six days before the National Labor Bill enacted by Qavam . This law was theoretically introduced throughout Iran, but was implemented as intended only in Azerbaijan: workers in the South complained constantly about its lack of proper enforcement (Zafar, 257, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1946, 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1946, 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1946).<sup>17</sup> Its broad compass covered the recognition of trade unions, the right to strike, and the settlement of worker employer disputes by the Ministry of Labor(U.K. Government).<sup>18</sup> Workers rights and condition were promoted through a number of measures: wages were increased, enabling increased chance of financial security in conjunction with a drop in inflation and low housing costs. Evening-classes were conducted in factories



including political education. Health care was provided free of charge: industrial disputes settled by a council of three one worker, one employer, one Fiqua-yi Democrat member(Zafar, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1946 ).<sup>19</sup> Full pay was given on official holidays, and redundancy payments were made upon voluntary closure of a factory if the circumstance were beyond its owner, s control. Annual paid holiday covered a period of between 15 days and a month depending upon the type of work. Minimum wages were to be determined in future legislation(U.K. Government)<sup>20</sup> an eight - hour working day , and forty - eight hour week were set by law , and an overtime pay rate of 50% was fixed. Illiterate workers were given permission to leave work on hour early to attend classes . A ban was also placed upon the import of goods similar to those produced within Azerbaijan , except those essential items listed by the Azerbaijan Ministry of commerce and Economy . All government employees, for example, were to wear locally produced clothing, although this was partly linked to an exhortation to dress well.(Purzad. A –Naqshina. V. 1982).<sup>21</sup>

The first Labor Congress of workers in Azerbaijan was in Tabriz on 3<sup>rd</sup> Murdad 1325, in the National Square (Zafar, 27<sup>th</sup> July 1946)<sup>22</sup>. The representative of the central council of Trade Union in Tehran was invited to attend and to perform the opening ceremony(Zafar, 21<sup>st</sup> July 1946, and, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1946).<sup>23</sup> Azerbaijan was represented on the Central Council by Mahzari. Who was also present at the Congress. Louis Sayana, chairman of the World Congress of Trade Union also attended. Sayana had been to Moscow for the second conference of the World Syndicate of the council of Trade Union, and from there he travelled to Iran to look over the Labor organization in the country . He arrived in Azerbaijan on 4<sup>th</sup> August to check the progress made in Azerbaijan and to attend the congress. In his speech , Sayana declared “ You Azerbaijan workers and peasants have brought democracy and freedom to Iran by your blood.” Pishavari followed him, saying “ Azerbaijan workers, along with those throughout the world, have a responsibility to ensure that democracy prevails in Iran.” Rusta, a

representative of the central council also spoke, saying, 300,000 workers and progressive pin their hopes of achieving democracy in Iran, on you. Azerbaijan is the heart of democracy in Iran, and I am glad to see that unemployment has ended here.“

The Firqa-yi Democrat a relations in this respect with the USSR in respect to the Labor movement and trades union movement were not close. Throughout the crisis, Soviet policy was dictated by self – interest, at least as far as the Tabriz union were concerned: partly to encourage production of supplies for the red Army, and, towards the end of the war, to ease agitation within the Labor union(Lajvardi. H . 1981).<sup>24</sup> When Eveling asked Pishvari why the Firqa-yi Democrat had accepted Soviet aid and moral support , Pishavari replied that they would gladly receive aid from whomever was willing to give it, whether moral, economic or technical – just as Britain and America helped the constitutionalist in Iran from 1905-11 (Khandagh, 2011).<sup>25</sup> He also added that such help would have to be un condescending and respectful of their natural and national pride, but it could be gratefully received, since the Firqa-yi Democrat were eager for the establishment of the modern and technically - based industry

The Labor movement and trade union in Azerbaijan were sponsored by the Firqa-yi Democrat, and in their hey - day enjoyed a considerable strength and influence. Through the efforts of the Firqa-ya Democrat and its affiliated trade unions national industries were established and developed, and private enterprise was encouraged, so that on the one hand production was increased and on the other, unemployment within Azerbaijan was simultaneously cut down. The Labor law enacted by the party did not remain merely on the statute book, but passed into action use, whereby Azerbaijan workers received health, welfare and education services, as well as personal rights and freedoms: workers “ rights and those of employers were both taken into equal consideration. This movement however, lasted a mere year, and after the defeat of the Local Government in Azerbaijan under

central government pressure, backed by British and American influence, the Azerbaijan Trade Union movement, along with the CCUTU( and their affiliated member, the Trade Party ) were outlawed. All went underground in 1947. It must be recognized that despite the short –lived existence of this movement , its importance goes far beyond the extent of its life in terms of years. The freedoms given to trades unions throughout Azerbaijan within this period, and its successes were gained in a very short time, was and still remains a unique experience within Iranian history.

### **Land Reform**

Azerbaijan as a province held great agricultural potential , for it had rich soil, fertile ground, good weather , all confirming its reputation as the “ bread – basket of Iran “(Cottam, 1964).<sup>26</sup> This potential was not being fulfilled, however, due to the repressive system of feudal land tenure, which while operative throughout Iran, was particularly harsh in Azerbaijan. The system, which had survived for thousands of year, established a relationship between peasants and land –owners that amounted to near slavery of the former. Many land – owner possessed vast tracts of land , and treated their peasants as cattle: Zulfaqari for instance owned most of the district of Zanjan, an area equal to the size of Belgium, and was nick – named, Mr Zanjan. Zulfaqari “ruled“ with a private armed force, and control over government officials , police and gendarmes. Any peasant who brought a complaint to him was as a matter of course beaten, imprisoned, or killed (Mard – I Imruz).<sup>27</sup> Land – owners retained solute control over the peasants – peasants were unable either to travel freely or to marry, without the approval and permission of the landowner: they were expected to bring “presents“ constantly, eggs, milk, chickens: the landowners had no responsibility to extend aid in emergencies, whether private or collective , and levied a high rate of tax upon the peasants(Ivanov. M ,n.d and Javanshir. M,1980).<sup>28</sup> If the latter were unable to pay the required sum, the only option available was migration, also without permission, so that it

became a drastic operation for the peasants. Thus at beginning of the twentieth century, many Azerbaijan peasants were fleeing to Baku in Soviet Azerbaijan (Azhir , July 20-25, 1943).<sup>29</sup>

Due to this situation, when the Tudeh Party was formed in 1941, they saw the imperative of representing the peasants land workers. The Tudeh program included the necessarily of land redistribution and reform, to abolish the feudal system and established the rights of these classes. Despite their good intention , and the basic correctness of the program, the measure taken by the Firqe were restricted in effect, partly because they were very radical, and because they were implemented with under speed. Most importantly, however, the Tudeh policies exacerbated the conflict between peasants and landowner : their emphasis upon peasants “ rights was bat the problem was found, but the opposition of the two groups still more clearly defined. Thus 1945 was a year of peasant discontent, replete with rent – strikes and other disturbances. (Ibrahimian.E.1982).<sup>30</sup>

With the establishment of the Local Government of Azerbaijan, the Firqa-yi Democrat implemented the measures set out in the declaration of September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Whereby the feudal land tenure system was abolished. Pishavari condemned the Tudeh Policy, and declared that the Firqa would achieve a peaceful resolution of the strained peasant – landowner relationship. His resolution was subsequently approved by the Local Parliament , and by the First congress of peasants: “All Azerbaijanis unite, and try to unite Azerbaijani people. The conflict between peasants and landowners will be manipulated by the enemies of Azerbaijan, so you must forgive each other. Peasants should pay the landowners, who in turn must consider the peasants conditions and not tax them too heavily “(Khandagh, 2014).<sup>31</sup>

A Commission of government officials was set up specifically to investigate the problem of peasant – landowner relation in September 1945. Its report was sent for approval to the Governor of Azerbaijan, but its recommendations were disregarded by many landowner, who employed

gendarmes to further harass the peasants . This situation is clearly reflected in both points 11 and 12 of the program of the Local Government .

The legislation concerning land distribution and reform is divided into two parts , regulating public and private land . Land redistribution was considered to be an essential element in the resolution of the conflict. Through it, peasants would receive their dignity as human beings and proper tenants , giving them freedom from the feudal landowner and a personal incentive to farm.

According to a single Article of the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1946(Azerbaijan , 20<sup>th</sup> February 1946),<sup>32</sup> all public land, including that to individuals by Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar since 1850, was to be divided among the peasants. This was a complementary law to that passed on 23<sup>rd</sup> Isfand(Rahbar. 14<sup>th</sup> March 1946 ),<sup>33</sup> whereby public land, their produce and forests were distributed amongst the peasants and their families : they had only to go to their local committee request their share. This law encouraged the realization of agricultural potential , for negligent peasants were threatened with the removal of their land(Azerbaijan, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1946).<sup>34</sup> Everything with a complaint about distribution could come before a special committee to make their complaint and it would be sorted out there(Mardum12<sup>th</sup> January 1946).<sup>35</sup> The Firqa-yi Democrat claimed that there was nothing unconstitutional about the division of public land amongst peasants since public land was given away by the Shah, so that the procedure could not be illegal. Jahan Shahlu, one of the Democrat leaders, commented that ownership was permissible for the Firqa-yi Democrat, but landowner who had acted cruelly in the past should be answerable to a local court , where the penalty would be decided(Dumya- yi Imruz, 24<sup>th</sup> December 1945).<sup>36</sup>

Where land continued in the hands of the previous owner who were Democrat supporters , there was little disagreement between peasants and landowners. This was especially the case in the border country of Azerbaijan , where land had been distributed in the Qajar period , and was already worked under the principle that owners would receive only one

tenth of the profits . Thus a strong incentive among the peasants to protect the border – as, for example, in Shul , a village near Muku – where the land was owned by the Bayat-I Maku I family (Dad, 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1945).<sup>37</sup>

According to section ten of the 27<sup>th</sup> Bahman Act, all property belonging to landlords who had left Iran, and were encouraging sabotage, and those Azerbaijan absent from the province , was confiscated by the Government . As a result, 3,000 pieces of land came into the Firga's hands and were divided amongst peasants , including farms , orchards and wells: the land of émigrés comprised around 437 pieces (Azerbaijan 24<sup>th</sup> February 1946).<sup>38</sup>

Two days latter, the Ministry of Agriculture, under Mahtash, stated that they would actively enforce the law, which ensured that redress could be had through the Treasury by means of a lawyer (Rahbar, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1946).<sup>39</sup> If, too, landowner with only small tracts of land lost it through redistribution , they were given financial compensation in order to enable them to live(Azerbaijan. 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1946).<sup>40</sup>

The distribution itself was effected through the agency of surveyors, who were sent through the villages and districts of Azerbaijan with a map to mark out the boundaries . This method was found to be laborious and slow , so that later, representatives were send to each village to consult with the people as to how best to effect the division.

For the implementation of the redistribution and reform the Firqa passed a resolution consisting of 14 points. A commission of 5, from the Ministries of Agriculture, Justice, Finance, Inter Affairs, and one from provincial council was thereby set up to receive report from village committees on the amount of land, and the number of peasants. It would then authorize the appropriate division of land, having access to the land Records Office and Topographical Records . It was pointed out in the resolution also, that the sale, transference renting of property subsequence to redistribution was illegal except in the case of illness, when it could be rented under the owner,s own personal supervision. All villages retained some land for public

welfare – sites for schools, baths and parks etc.

In all, over the million peasants benefitted with land by the Act of 27<sup>th</sup> Bahman (16<sup>th</sup> February), dividing both public and private land (Azerbaijan. 15<sup>th</sup> April 1946).<sup>41</sup>

The First congress of peasants, held in Tabriz on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1946 was the first such congress held in Iran. The aims of its 600 delegates were two – fold : to approve the laws and suggestion concerning the relations between peasants and landowner : and to raise agricultural production . The congress was asked to present its members with a law passed by the Local Government on 22<sup>nd</sup> Farvardin. The bill, s 22 articles were concerned mainly with the rents payable to landowners: what belonged to each, what percentage, of what nature, etc. Each village was to have a council of 5, made up from local between the two groups. If this local council found itself unable to cope with the problem, the matter would be taken before the Ministry of Agriculture, and if that body was insufficient, finally before a committee composed of member of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Interior, and of the peasants, decreeing that, in the same instances, only one seventh of production was required to be paid to the landowners. A basic pre-tax rate of 20% was guaranteed to the peasants in order to safeguard their livelihood in case of national emergencies and such like (Azerbaijan 18<sup>th</sup> April 1945).<sup>42</sup>

Pishavari, in his opening speech, asked the delegates to become aware of the methods of land distribution which the Firqa-yi Democrat were employing. Having expounded upon the background of the condition of the village and gendarmerie etc., he urged the peasants to until, safeguarding their aims, and to try to participate in political affairs. By so doing, they could become a powerful force, instrumental in preventing a return to the control of the central government.

Pishavari advised the peasants further to widen their crop choices: it was to their advantage not to concentrate totally upon wheat, the basic bread staple, but to also plant the more profitable crop such as cotton, tobacco and

sugar- beet. He warned also of the disadvantages of using primitive machinery and methods . In conjunction with this , he recommended that the National Government should create a bank of Agriculture, which would buy the necessary modern equipment and machinery and sell it to the peasants on an instalment plan. The Bank should also extend loans in times of emergency, with no interest rate and repayment schedule enabling the peasants to cope during periods of drought, famine or floods and so forth.

In his closing speech, Pishavari gave high praise to the peasants, declaring that they were the saviours of the National Government since they had taken up arms and defended Azerbaijan. The National Government thus intended to make theirs the first priority in society(Azerbaijan, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1947).<sup>43</sup> Unlike the central government, which had made difficulties for Azerbaijan , there would be no discrimination within the land distribution: this applied also to nomads, who would be given lands and thus encouraged to settle their difference similarly to the peasants.

This program of land distribution and reform was unique throughout the Middle East. Twenty years later when Muhammad Reza Shah introduced a land reform, it was nowhere near as comprehensive as that of the Fiqā-yi Democrat for only this for instance included legislation concerning nomads and Mohammad Reza Shah, s measures, despite promising freedom of pasture, did not in fact allow peasants to have equal use of it with landowners(Pahlavi.M . R. 1964).<sup>44</sup> Pishavari declared that Iranian peasants had both the right and the will to divide land amongst themselves . If the Iranian government wished to emulate this, it must take comparable steps throughout Iran (Zafar 20<sup>th</sup> June 1946).<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the Firqa yi Democrat ,s measures succeeded in freeing millions of peasants slavery under the landowners and form the feudal system, affording them for the first time a dignity in their relationship with the landowners consonant with their stature as human beings (Azerbaijan, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1956).<sup>46</sup>



### **Judicial Reform**

Judicial proceedings before December 12<sup>th</sup> in Azerbaijan, as in many other provinces, were voluminous, and little of it was ever adequately dealt with. This was partly due to an insufficient number of lawyers, but many cases were also brought far too late, and bribery flourished at all levels throughout the judiciary.

As a consequence of measures adopted after the formation of the Local Government(Dad, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1945),<sup>47</sup> there was so little litigation that the legal atmosphere, according to Dad, resembled that of the Swiss Courts. The first act of the Local Government was an ‘amnesty’ on all pending cases excluding serious crimes – murder rape or theft etc. This effectively reduced the bulk of court-business by 80%. Following upon this came an act that shortened the criminal procedure, and also incorporated the summary trial of criminals on a month’s trial period, which was subsequently extended to 3 months(Razm, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1945).<sup>48</sup> In addition, various other reforms, including, for example, insistence upon the presence of the accused at his trial, were introduced. The crimes against persons and property which remained in force became subject to very stiff penalties, including capital punishment, a deterrent that very effectively reduced the crime rate and increased civilian security. This rather inhuman solution seemed necessary at the time. Thus thefts, embezzlement, bribery and sexual harassment seemed to fall drastically in number(Dad, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1945).<sup>49</sup> Two Fida’I who had stolen arms and two civilian thieves were executed under this act, for example, and many thieves avoided punishment by the surreptitious return of stolen goods, even from long-forgotten crimes; a clerk was also executed for accepting a bribe of 500 tomans. The effect upon the level of litigation brought about by these unprecedented legal reforms was the increased time available to the courts for concentrated attention to be given to serious crimes.

The Firqa-yi Democrat paid considerable attention not only to adult crime but also to juvenile delinquency. A law was passed (Rahbar.14<sup>th</sup> March 1946).<sup>50</sup> whereby children below the age of 13 were not held

responsible for their misdemeanors but still warnings and advice were given to their parents, telling them to watch closely their children's behavior. Those between 13-18, who were convicted, were sent to approved schools, where, however, educational and sporting facilities were an integral feature, and everything was done to rehabilitate and reform, although a special institution for teaching purposes was also created.

The land reform program(Dad, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1945 )<sup>51</sup> introduced by the Local Government also affected the activity of the judiciary, since it minimized disagreements between peasants and landowners, being dealt with either by a tribunal of peasants, or by a local committee of Firqa-yi Democrat members. Industrial disputes between workers and employers were similarly resolved by a council of workers.

On 10 March, the Firqa – yi Democrat enacted a bill with 5 articles, one of which regulated the use of drugs and their peddling.(Rahbar, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1946 )<sup>52</sup> Drugs such as hashish, heroin and opium were prohibited, and the third article also prohibited the smuggling of such drugs into Azerbaijan, punishable rather severely, perhaps, by death. By doing this, drug use was drastically reduced. Addicts were advised to go to special doctors working in certain places, through whom they could obtain prescriptions(Rahbar , 14<sup>th</sup> March 1946),<sup>53</sup> On the same day , a law forbidding all forms of torture in Azerbaijan was passed, since the Firqa – yi Democrat disagreed with such measure to help reform anybody, since they would be far more likely to harden the criminal and increase his resentment and resistance. This exemplifies the short – term and rather hurriedly enforced penal code, which by its nature and severity differed considerably from the Iranian Law . Of course, the short – lived existence of the Azerbaijani Government precludes long – term comparison.

Pishavari himself held a stern and severe attitude towards criminal behavior, for he believed that a falling crime- rate could guarantee the improvement of society (Dad, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1946).<sup>54</sup> it is thus interesting that few appeals against

sentence were ever granted: the two Fida I above failed in their appeal to Pishavari for clemency, despite the serious need for Fida I member.

With such judicial reforms, which were unique to Azerbaijan, and unique also within Iranian history, the Firqa – yi Democrat made a real mark upon democratic progress in the judicial system. They simultaneously affected reform within the procedure itself, bringing tangible and psychological improvement, and a reduction in the actual rate of crime in Azerbaijan. Their serious and stern attitude achieved much success, and this within the court system is most noteworthy and laudable.

#### **Tax and Financial Reform**

The Firqa yi Democrat were faced with three initial economic problems upon the establishment of the National Government. The Government was faced with an immediate financial crisis, for soon after the declaration of September 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Firqa-yi Democrat had acquired a Communist image amongst the wealthy class in Azerbaijan. This group thus began to take their money out of Azerbaijan, encouraged by the central government (Pishavari, J.1980).<sup>55</sup> Tehran was anxious to force National Government into collapse, and further create economic difficulties and disorder within the province through urging the National Bank of Iran to forbid its provincial branches in the North to pay out money, especially in Azerbaijan (Mardum, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1946 – Mardum, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1946 and Rahbar, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1946).<sup>56</sup> The National Government, in retaliation, prohibited the sale of Azerbaijan– produced goods outside the province (Rahbar, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1945 and Rahbar 9<sup>th</sup> December 1945).<sup>57</sup> The shortage of money thus created was compounded by the paucity of tax revenues brought in for the Local Government. This circumstance reflected the difficulties in raising taxes traditionally experienced in Azerbaijan. In the past, tax revenues had rarely been spent according to their true purpose, to benefit the people: nor had it been distributed fairly, the wealthy being able to bribe the tax officials and leaving the poor doubly unfortunate, at the mercy of unethical and

ruthless officials who demanded from them enough tax to cover the share of the rich(Azerbaijan, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1946).<sup>58</sup> There was thus great reluctance amongst Azerbaijan to pay tax revenues.

The Firqa–yi Democrat were not discouraged, however, by this unhealthy situation. Such interference from Tehran had been anticipated, and the Fiqqa focused their efforts first of all upon resolving these economic problems , for they recognized the importance of economic stability as a prerequisite for the institution of any reform. (Azerbaijan, 14<sup>th</sup> January 1946).<sup>59</sup>

The first step taken to alleviate the financial was the issuing of Government bonds. Bonds had previously been introduced in Tehran through the Millspaugh Mission: they had failed dismally because of general and widespread distrust of their security , in view of the nature of the central governments . Pishavari , however , adopted the same system , and its success in Azerbaijan underscores sharply the trust placed by Azerbaijani put in the Firqa –yi Democrat and Local Government (Dad, 24<sup>th</sup> September 1946 ).<sup>60</sup>

A second step took the form of public tax education through the media and series of conferences and public meetings, the nature, purpose and importance of the tax system was disseminated through Azerbaijan society. Representatives of the various classes were invited to such meetings to learn the benefits of taxes, and their necessity for the government,s public works and welfare program(Azerbaijan 29<sup>th</sup> January 1946).<sup>61</sup> A short, intensive course was also set up, to train trusted people for tax propaganda activity, explaining the workings of the system and its advantages to villagers and towns people across the province and courteously requesting payment. Pishavari himself, stated at a big public meeting: "If we do not receive enough taxes from you, the people, we shall not be able to build schools, universities, hospitals or factories In the past, tax revenues were indeed misappropriated . We promise , however , that the money which you give to us will be properly spent upon the welfare and benefit of Azerbaijan societ(Azerbaijan, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1946).<sup>62</sup> Concluding his speech, Pishavari

declared that everyone present should be a good propagandist for the tax system amongst the population.

Through this widespread propaganda for the tax system together with its manifestly well-spent revenues, the *Fıqqa-yi Demokrat* were able to develop the economic life of Azerbaijan simultaneously establishing trust among the people and gaining the required income. The tax system introducing in Azerbaijan by the National Government was in fact copied from that instituted in Iran by Millspaugh, so that tax regulation were the same both in Tehran and Tabriz, Pishavari, s attacked on the Millspaugh Mission through *Azhir* (*Azhir*, 20<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June 1944),<sup>63</sup> although mistakenly taken as such, was not a denigration of the tax system itself, but rather, on the unlimited authority given to the Mission by the central Government in Tehran. In one article, Pishavari said: "We are friendly with American, and we want economic ties with her. This does not mean, however, that we have to give boundless power to one American. Any power, of any kind should be limited: we have to have economic freedom, in a free country." Millspaugh, s tax system was adopted by the National Governments, indeed, and had a high degree of success.

The economic situation of Azerbaijan was further complicated by the complex attitude taken by the National Government toward foreign trade. The *Fıqqa-yi Demokrat* initially did not favour foreign trade because it might lay them open to the familiar charge of being a separatist movement. They later came to the conclusion that outside trade was a requisite partly for the import of certain essential goods and also to appease Azerbaijan merchants who were anxious to expand their trade abroad (Maghsoudi . M.2003).<sup>64</sup> It was a sensible and profitable change of heart, for they managed to sell much of the goods produced by Azerbaijan and gained foreign currency and income in addition.

Although the Local Governments had to overcome a financial and economic crisis immediately upon its establishment, a situation compounded by the antipathy of the central government, it was able within a

very short time to create a stable economic foundation in Azerbaijan, The budge of the town council was raised from nothing to an adequate sum, inflation was reduced by 40%(Rahbar, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1945),<sup>65</sup> foreign trade was opened up, factories built and production increased, and many economic reforms, mentioned above, were instituted. The Azerbaijan economy become so strong that 11 rials in the rest of Iran were the equivalent of 10 rials of in Azerbaijan. All of these achievements were made primarily as a consequence of close and mutual relationship of trust between the people of Azerbaijan and Fiqa-yi Democrat.

### **Educational Reform**

The need for widespread and good education in Azerbaijan was taken very seriously by the Firqa-yi Democrat . The rate of illiteracy in the province was extremely high , and the party ,s leaders recognized that in order to retain the gains which they had made and to consolidate upon them, education people were required to full fill the posts tasks involved(Ahmadi, 2000).<sup>66</sup> Communication in all areas depended greatly upon education: the media was an importance tool of education the masses politically, and reading material would instill certain principles within them as well as stimulate and broaden their minds : in this way might became more aware and active in political affairs. The Fiqa -yi Democrat, s insistence upon Azerbaijan being in control of their own future and government, demanded education people. The danger in requesting outside help through an inner inability to hold one,s own, lay in control eventually being taken again from their own hands .(Khandagh, 2009 ).<sup>67</sup>

There was, however, a shortage of both schools and qualified teachers: many already teacher were incompetent and the education system itself badly needed reforming(Rahbar, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1945).<sup>68</sup> The Firqa-yi Democrat immediately mobilized their member and supporters to remedy a situation in which only four schools could be boasted of in Tabriz in 1936, for example,The party managed within a year to establish 500 public

schools in many high schools – attached to factories, clubs, etc- over Azerbaijan through these, almost 300,000 Azerbaijan were educated.

It was proposed to solve the shortage of teacher by penning a faculty of education within the University of Tabriz .(Azerbaijan, 9<sup>th</sup> January 1946).<sup>69</sup> The essential problem inherent in the established system of education in Azerbaijan rested upon the use of Persia as the language of instruction . Upon beginning school , children were immediately faced with learning in a language with which they were unfamiliar, since it was not their mother tongue , and was not spoken at home (Purzand .A 10<sup>th</sup> September 1982)<sup>70</sup> . The eighth article of the Firqa, s program, concerning local education therefore stated that Azari – Turkish was to be introduced immediately into all schools as the official language.

Language was an integral part of the Azerbaijan local identity, and a matter of both pride and obstinacy. These two attitude resulted in large part from the suppression of Azerbaijan as a local group by the central governments through long year, matched by the even more ancient local pride force by the people of Azerbaijan. Thus few Azerbaijan were wailing to use any other language , even if living outside Azerbaijan itself , for with it want also their local culture (Azerbaijan, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1946).<sup>71</sup> The Firqa – yi Democrat directed their attention and activity towards feeing Azari – Turkish from the inferior status accorded it by the central government. It was to be restored to a position of pride and legitimacy throughout Azerbaijan in all sectors of life. Thus Pishavari put his efforts into making Azari – Turkish the language also of education. It was, he claimed a complete language, distinct from any other, and it was spoken by the majority of the population who did not speak Persia . Reza Shah had attempted to remove all Turkish – speaking teachers and replace them with teachers who were ignorant of it to prevent communication in Azari between staff and students in the schools. Thereby, the children would be forced to learn and to speak Persian. The Fiqa- yi Democrat opposed this policy fiercely. Pishavari argued that despite the need to know Persian in

order to communicate with people outside Azerbaijan there was no reason to prevent nation from promoting their own mother tongue. To forbid a national from speaking its own language is to stunt its cultural development. This was recognized by the United National, and is incorporated into the international law of Human Rights of 1929, which states in article 3 that: “Every government has a duty to insure the rights of all nation to use or educate their people in any language which they choose” ( Rahbar, 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1945 ).<sup>72</sup>

The Fiqa-yi Democrat also attacked Reza Shah policy of the “Personalisation“ of Azerbaijan through the enforced use of Persian in the area of the media . They declared that such a program could be merely counter – productive and increase the tension with Azerbaijan . National papers in actual fact had a very limited circulation in Azerbaijan since few were eager to read in Persian . Even where Persian paper were published in Azerbaijan itself – Khavar –I Naw , Sitara– yi Azerbaijan in Tabriz , for example – their circulation reached only 500. With the establishment of the National Government and the subsequence publication of Azerbaijan and Bani Sharq, the circulation of these rose to 5,000. Thus, banning publication of books and papers in Azari – Turkish in order to enforce the learning of Persian would not have any effect. This circumstance is reflected also in the theatre, where before Reza Shah Azari- Turkish had been spoken. Reza Shah, s prohibition of the use of Turkish merely resulted in a cessation of people attending the theatres. (Azerbaijan , 12<sup>th</sup> February 1946)<sup>73</sup>

Education in itself was recognized as of vital importance also , with regard to the autonomy and consolidation of Azerbaijan were forced with a problem in the shortage of educated people to fill the top posts and lower echelons of the government process. The older men suffered from two disadvantages : having grown accustomed to corruption, sanctioned by the ruling authority, they found it very difficult to get out of such ingrained habits, even through most were willing to do so: simultaneously, their



methods and ideas were out – of – date and inappropriate for the new situation. The need to educate people to take their place was therefore a primary requisite . Similarly , there existed an educated group who yet lacked the proper training and who were thus also not capable of fulfilling the new jobs . The Firqa yi Democrat promptly embarked upon a program to train people according to the needs of society.

The Ministry of Education prepared an outline of a new improved education system to replace the old inadequate one.

The old system suffered from three major defects. Most of the provincial schools were staffed with under – or non – qualified teacher, since the only university in Iran , before the establishment of the University of Tabriz, was that of Tehran applicate, most teachers did not receive any training , and their knowledge was restricted to 6 years of primary school, or of most 3 years higher school. Furthermore, teacher salaries were so low that they were forced either to bribery or supplement their income through other means , with the net result that few were devoted to their task . Finally , the actual method of education was non – productive . Students were expected only to exhibit power of memory and rote – learning , and were not taught to inquire analytically or to use their own minds, process which far from stimulating their intellectual curiosity effectively suppressed it.

An example of this situation , representative of that throughout Iran, can be seen in Zanzan. The size of Belgium, with a population of 500,000, Zanzan district was equipped with only 20 schools, not all of these, even, operative and two high schools, for boys and girls. The building were unsuitable and in bad condition – in an investigation carried out by Fiqā– yi Democrat of a class. only two students out of total of twenty– two were healthy. A similar survey of teachers revealed that their knowledge of grammar , spelling and mathematics was extremely rudimentary . Following the establishment of the National Government, Mr. Navai was appointed Zanzan, s educational director. In an interview with Rahbar. Navai stated that deficiency of the existing education system was recognized but since term had already started,

it was not possible for reform to be instituted immediately. Thus, the same books were continuing to be used, but weekly meetings of staff and students were held to remind the teachers not to demand unthinking rote – learning that suppressed individual contributions, but to ask each student questions and analyze the material which they were raising. The books should eventually be replaced, since their contents dealt almost exclusively with Shahs: and this was neither right nor healthy: they should discuss literature and too, their feeling that the frontispiece pictures of the Shah, who was then no more than a figure – head and should not be and replaced with others, such as Shaikh Mohammad Khatami; no other democratic countries printed the King's picture at the front of their text – books. New schools should be built on émigré lands, in spacious and hygienic conditions, and teachers should make regular health checks on the students.

In a speech in the education college, Pishavari declared that “the world is based on science and education. If we want to keep up with progressive countries, we shall have to keep up with the advance of education and science“. He therefore strongly urged teachers to take their jobs seriously, learning to teach their students the right of freedom, and patriotism. Allied with this concern, and in its practical application, Pishavari was instrumental in establishing the University of Tabriz. The University was opened with three faculties: medicine, agriculture and education. In Pishavari's speech at the opening of a University for the asked of the name. “We are opening it because there is a desperate need for doctors, for agricultural experts, and for teachers whom we hope to employ in order to fill the present shortage“(Pishavari, 1980).<sup>74</sup> Thus the Faculty of Education was seen as a vital constituent element since they needed to train good teachers first who would then teach the students. “Pishavari finally urged the prospective students of the University of Tabriz to take their studies seriously; he himself would be attached to its teaching staff as a lecturer.

The University of Tabriz became influential throughout Azerbaijan,

educating to a high standard many teachers. After the fall of National Government, Tehran tried very forcefully to close the University down. This move was fiercely resisted in Azerbaijan, however, and the central government found itself unable to implement its decision. It was therefore forced to compromise the policy through the prohibition of Azerbaijan as directors of the University, but sent men from Tehran such as Dr. Diqhan, succeeded by Dr. S. Amin (Sharifi, March 1982).<sup>75</sup> Whatever the later events, the University was only the second established in the whole of Iran, and its creation and achievement were due to the efforts made tirelessly by the Fiqā yi Democrat.

The Fiqā yi Democrat introduced free compulsory primary schooling, and encouraged high school education through films and conferences. Education colleges were opened to complement the University of Tabriz. In the one year, the National Government also brought down considerably the rate of illiteracy. According to interviewees (Purzad . A and Sharifi, 1982),<sup>76</sup> if they had continued in power, they would have introduced a modern system, using their mother tongue and the best educational methods comparable to all advanced countries, which would have been unique in the Middle East, providing the best doctors, scientists, teachers and professors to advise the rest of Iran. With their collapse, however, the hopes of Azerbaijan vanished and even now, 38 years later, there remain a 75% illiteracy rate in Iran. Neither before nor since has Iran possessed a government which has taken education or the educational system so seriously, and it still waits in hope for such a development.

### **Health Care Reform**

The standard of health care throughout Azerbaijan – medical facilities, the number of doctors per patient, the level of treatment, hygiene, etc. – was extremely low, as in a number of other areas where the Fiqā yi Democrat introduced reforms. Malnutrition existed in both towns and villages exposing the people to a host of diseases, and making them vulnerable to the simplest and least harmful to the point of death. Facilities were available only in the

large towns , meaning that those sick in the countryside or small villages were forced to travel, increasing the likelihood of death before they could receive treatment. The infant mortality rate was high, due to a lack of midwives , especially in the villages , and vaccination facilities, while many fell victim to the prevalent trachoma that, without treatment , led to blindness . Hygiene was almost non – existent, since villages did not know of the benefits of soap or baths , the necessity of washing food before eating it , or of washing their hands before meals, etc . Thus the mortality rate in general was very high , and reforms were urgently needed (Eveling S . G , 1944 ).<sup>77</sup>

The dire situation of health care was recognized by the Firqa– yi Democrat when they came to power, and they set about ameliorating conditions throughout Azerbaijan. It was a difficult task , due to the absence of doctors , nurses and hospitals. Therefore , requests were made of medical personnel in the rest of Iran for support and help; some came, but far under the number required. A second step was the establishment of training program: 3 months duration for nurses and midwives, and 6 months for doctor assistants(Purzad, 1982),<sup>78</sup> Iranian and Soviet doctors were employed to run these courses(Sharifi, 1982 ).<sup>79</sup> Hospitals were built as quickly as possible in the towns, using confiscated and abandoned land as sites. A Russian hospital, for example, was set up in Tabriz to give treatment to the seriously ill. These measures, while good necessary, were still confined to towns and cities, for it required far more effort, resources and time than the Firqa–yi Democrat possessed, to provide a near adequate province– wide health service immediately. The problem of the countryside was temporality resolved through the employment of mobile clinic for the villages , each equipped with 1 doctor, two assistants two midwives, 3 nurses and one vaccinating official (Dougless. W, 1951).<sup>80</sup> These clinic carried soap , dried milk , vitamin pills and gave regular checked to the villagers. The emphasis was laid upon self–help and health education, but those with severe illnesses or diseases were hospitalized wherever possible. The long–term program,

program, however, envisioned the establishment of hospital through the countryside and villages—but mobile clinics were depended upon as a temporary stop–gap measure.

Health education was given by means of films showing methods and standards of hygiene, instructing the populace on the need for cleanliness, nutritious food, vaccination etc. Soup was produced and sold at very low prices to encourage and enable the people to use it. A regulation was instituted whereby one afternoon a week was set aside for factory workers to bathe, shave, and engage in sports – the carpet factories, for example, went to the public baths on Mondays(Dr. Sabri Tabrizi).<sup>81</sup>

By doing this, the Local Government dramatically improved health standards throughout Azerbaijan. 50 big hospitals, with 700 beds were set up across the province and thousands of mobile clinics sent out(Sitara, no, 363).<sup>82</sup> In order to overcome the shortage of drugs and tablets, medicines were imported from neighboring countries; later, they trained chemists to make up their own drugs(Purzad, 1982).<sup>83</sup> With the opening of the university of Tabriz, the Firqa hoped to train doctors for the future. Nevertheless, they were still able to bring down the mortality rate considerably even within one year, but unfortunately, fate did not give them enough time to full fill their program as intended. However, free local health throughout Azerbaijan was provided, and the measures and methods introduced in Azerbaijan were unique in Iran, possibly even in the middle east.

The Firqa was able to provide both a sense of dignity to Azerbaijanis and the physical environment in which this life could be lived at its fullest . The reforms enacted in the single year (December 1945 to December 1946) that the Local Government survived exceeded all those introduced throughout the previous 20 years. The Firqa–yi Democrat ‘s reforms were not limited to the major cities , but extended to smaller towns.The contrast between the rule of Reza Shah and the nature of Local Government under the Firqa – Yi Democrat is sharp and of great proportions. It is commonly believed that Reza Shah himself refused to institute any reforms; he also failed to

encourage, and even positively discouraged, private citizen from carrying any through, attempting to confiscate their wealth for himself. Through this brief comparison, the amount and quality of the reforms instituted by the Firqa-yi Democrat is pointed up clearly, since during the Pahlavi period many scholars believe that Azerbaijan had consistently been neglected as a consequence of Azerbaijanis political consciousness.

The achievements of the Firqa-yi Democrat were noted in several unprejudiced sources.

A foreign observer announced Pishavari (Azerbaijan, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1926)<sup>84</sup> "I was in the villages interviewing before your declaration of September 30<sup>th</sup>, and people then had a slave mentality. After the formation of Local Government, I again interviewed many in the same places, and now the peasants have become so full of pride."

The American Consul in Tabriz noted that the Firqa-yi Democrat effected in one year more reforms than all those carried out in Iran before (Elwell – Sutton, 1946).<sup>85</sup>

These reports are corroborated by the accounts given by non-sympathetic observers. When Amid Nuri (Dad, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1946).<sup>86</sup> the editor of Dad together with three other representative of the central government were sent by Qavam to Azerbaijan to confirm the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops after May 9<sup>th</sup> 1946. Amid Nuri was unable to hide or conceal his amazement at the reforms introduced by the Firqa-yi Democrat all over Azerbaijan. Upon his return to Tehran, he devoted space in Dad for one month, 29<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> June, to articles about Azerbaijan.

Fate did not give them enough time to full fill their reforms as intended. However, the people of Azerbaijan always wish to have a Local Government which could implement the essential reforms such as the reforms introduced by Firqa-yi Democrat Azerbaijan December 1945 to December 1946.

### **Analysis and Conclusion**

Azerbaijan was a province rich in potential, for it possessed fertile soil,

mineral wealth, plentiful resources, and a people eager for the potential to be fulfilled. Azerbaijan was further important geographically and strategically, situated on a good trade route between the Middle East and Europe. In its recent history, this development had been seriously retarded though the policies of Reza Shah , yet the Azerbaijanis local identity and pride had not been suppressed , and the province was ripe for a government which would seize the potential offered and draw it out to its fullest possibilities.

The Firqa –yi Democrat formed just such a Local Government, governed by democratic principles and fired with a desire for local renewal in Tehran . It was strong – willed to withstand this pressure and inwardly motivated to effect reform with in Azerbaijan ,such as " Industrial, land , judicial, tax and financial, education and health reforms" to improve the province.

The achievements of the Firqa–yi Democrat were noted in several unprejudiced sources.

There was practical application of the Labor Low , and all in all a general public works program mobilized through the support of the people. Many new roads and railway lines were constructed, as well as Radio Tabriz and the Tabriz University.

Since Azerbaijan held great agricultural potential, had been called the “bread– basket of Iran”. This potential was not being fulfilled,the Firqa–yi Democrat of Azerbaijan tried to work to this end. Local Government passed a complementary low on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1946 in order to redistribute land among peasants. Firqa–yi Democrat also tried to abolish the feudal system and established the rights of these classes. According to W.Douglas form instituted uniquely considered the mutual relationship of peasants and landowner.

All Azerbaijanis became equal before the low, and thereby women too were given , for the first time in Iranian history , the right to vote , stand for the Majlis, or even became Ministers . Azerbaijan society was purified of a high rate of crime which had made the streets unsafe, theft and burglary rampant, and the populace frightened and insecure Azerbaijan become so safe that people were free and unafraid to walk along by night, shopkeepers

felt safe to leave their shops open, cars could be left unlocked.

Bribery and corruption were eliminated to a large extent, hostels for the destitute were built to take them off the streets, financial help was extended to prostitutes so that they would have no further need to practice their profession, while others left Azerbaijan; institution to aid women and children were established.

free compulsory education was introduced throughout Azerbaijan . The party managed within a year to establish 500 public schools, almost 300,000 Azerbaijan were educated. Since language was an integral part of the Azerbaijan local identity ,therefore Azari – Turkish introduced immediately into all schools as the official language.

Facilities were available only in the large towns, the mortality rate in general was very high, and reforms were urgently needed, The dire situation of health care was recognized by the Firqa–yi Democrat when they came to power, The problem of the countryside was temporality resolved through the employment of mobile clinic for the villages, the Local Government dramatically improved health standards throughout Azerbaijan, to bring down the mortality rate considerably even within one year, free local health throughout Azerbaijan was provided, and the measures and methods introduced in Azerbaijan were unique in Iran, possibly even in the middle east.

Thus the only real disappointment was the single year permitted to the Firqa– yi Democrat , during which only a limited from of progress could be made , and nowhere near the full program set out by the party be carried through, to the great disadvantage of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijan people.

### **Acknowledgment**

I would like to express my appreciation to the Research Deputy of Tarbiat Modares University for providing the possibility of doing this research.



## References

1. Khandagh , N , 2010 , The Democratic Movement in Iran ,s Azerbaijan province in 20th Century : a Critical Analysis “ , Geopolitics Quarterly , vol .5 , No .3 , p.p. 106-133[in Persian].
2. Interview with Kaviyan , head of Azerbaijan police force , Zafar, (Newspaper ) no, 403 , 21st November, 1946[in Persian].
3. Rahbar ( Newspaper), no, 680, 29th March, 1946 , Zafar( Newspaper) , no, 228, 9th April 1946 , Rahbar, nos, 632-634 , 15th -20th August 1945 ,Rahbar, no , 637 , 23rd August 1945[in Persian].
4. Eveling . S.G , November 28th 1944 (RG/84/2243) National Archives ; of the analogy of the different tasks of the human fingers used by a local notable, Everling, S. G , June 1st 1945 (891.00/6/148)National Archives [in Persian].
5. Khandagh , N , 2014 , “Geopolitical Analysis of Azerbaijan Autonomous Movement“ , Geopolitics Quarterly , Vol .9 , NO .4 , p.p. 180-202[in Persian].
6. Everling , S.G, May , 5 , 1944 (891.00/3053) November 28, 1944 (RG/84/2243) , UKG TD March 7 , 1944 ( F1867/138/34)PRO, Azhir(Newspaper) , 10th April , 1944.
7. Azhir (Newspaper), 10th April 1944 and , Azhir ( Newspaper ) , 13th June 1944[in Persian].
8. U . K . Government, Tabriz Dairy 21st November 1945(9804/239/34)PRO[in Persian].
9. Rahbar , no, 659, 21st December , 1945 , Mardum ,( Newspaper ) special number 46 , 18th February 1945 , Mardum ,( Newspaper ) no , 50 , 26th February 1946[in Persian].
10. U . K Government , Tabriz Dairy , 31st December 1945 ( 900/900/34) and Rostow, R, 1956 “ The Battle of Azerbaijan “ , vol .10 , , p.19[in Persian].
11. Dad (Newspaper), 23rd July 1946.
12. Zafar, no, 350, 11th September 1946.
13. Dad ,23rd July 1946.
14. Zafar, no, 319, 7th August 1946.
15. Zafar, no, 330, 15th August 1946.
16. Zafar ,no, 356, 17th June 1946.
17. Zafar , , nos , 256, 14th April , 1946 , Zafar ,( Newspaper) 257, 15th April 1946, 16th April, 1946, 17th April, 1946.
18. U . K . Government Azerbaijan Labor Low 3/9/46(E19210/950/34)PRO.
19. Zafar ,no. 369 23rd September 1946.
20. U . K . Government August 31 , 1946 (F9246/900/34)PRO.
21. Personal interview : Mr . Purzand . A ,and Mrs . Naqshina . V , August and September 1982.
22. Zafar , no , 315 , 27th July 1946.
23. Zafar , nos , 309 ,310 , 311 and 312 . 21st July 1946, and, 24th July 1946.
24. Lajvardi . H .1981. Politics and Labor in Iran -1941- 49, Oxford , 1981 pp . 264-7.
25. Khandagh , N , 2011 , “ The Political Parties in Iran Between 1941-1947 , with particular emphasis Left-Wing Parties , , Geopolitics Quarterly, Vol . 6, No.4 , p.p. 154-167.
26. Cottom, R. 1964, Nationalism in Iran, p. 340.

27. Mard-I Imroz (Newspaper), no, 200, Najat –I Iran(Newspaper), no, 400 Tarqaqi (Newspaper) , no , 12 , Azezu (Newspaper) , no, 31. Progressives and trade unionists were treated similarly[in Persian].
28. Ivanov , M and Javanshir .M , n.d and 1980 . Tarikh –I Nuvin – Iran , pp 6-17 .and Hamasa – yi Dad , Tehran , pp . 63-71[in Persian].
29. Azhir , nos , 40-45, July 20-25 , 1943.
30. Ibrahimian ,E.1982 Iran Between Two Revolutions , Princeton , p.397.
31. Khandagh , N , 2014 , “ Geopolitical Analysis of Azerbaijan Autonomous Movement “ , Geopolitics Quarterly, Vol .9, NO .4, p.p. 180-202[in Persian].
32. Azerbaijan ,(Newspaper) no, 1, 5th September 1945.
33. Rahbar , no, 672 , 14th March 1946.
34. Azerbaijan, no, 174 , 16th April 1946.
35. Mardum, special no . 12th January 1946.
36. Dumya – yi Imruz (Newspaper), Special edition , 24th December 1945.
37. Dad, 17th and 19th June, 1945.
38. Azerbaijan, no, 133, 24th February 1946.
39. Rahbar, no, 667 , 8th March 1946.
40. Azerbaijan,no, 131, 20th February. 1946.
41. Azerbaijan, no, 173 , 15th April 1946.
42. Azerbaijan, no , 179 , 18th April 1945.
43. Azerbaijan, no , 124 , 12th February 1947.
44. Pahlavi . M. R, 1967, Inqlab - I Safid, Tehran, passim[in Persian].
45. Zafar, no, 286 , 20th June 1946.
46. Azerbaijan (Newspaper), no, 110, 25th September 1956.
47. Dad, 6th June 1945.
48. Razm,( Newspaper )supp, no 23rd December 1945.
49. Dad, 16th June 1945.
50. Rahbar, no, 672, 14th March 1946.
51. Dad, 6th June 1945.
52. Rahbar, no, 672, 14th March 1946.
53. Rahbar, no, 672 , 14th March 1946.
54. Dad, 7th June 1946.
55. Pishavari, J, 1980, Irmibir –I Azar( 21 Azar) Nutglar va Maqalalar,(speeches and articles)Tabriz. p.13.
56. Mardum , spec . nos 46 , 18th February 1946 , Mardum ,(Newspaper) , 50 , 26th February 1946, Rahbar, no , 659 , 2nd December 1946.
57. Rahbar, no, 647 , 5th December 1945 , Rahbar ,(Newspaper) , no , 650 , 9th December 1945.
58. Azerbaijan, no, 112, 29th January 1946.
59. Azerbaijan, no, 101, 14th January 1946.
60. Dad, 24th September 1946.
61. Azerbaijan, no, 112, 29th January 1946.
62. Azerbaijan, no, 112, 29th January 1946.
63. Azhir, nos, 159-162, 20th, 22nd, 25th and 27th June 1944.

64. Maghsoudi, M . 2003 , Ethniic development in Iran,Tehran[in Persian].
65. Rahbar, no, 647, 5th December 1945.
66. Ahmadi. H, 2000 , Ethnicity and Nationalism in Iran , From Myth to Reality [in Persian].
67. Khandagh, N , 2010 , The Democratic Movement in Iran ,s Azerbaijan province in 20th Century : a Critical Analysis“, Geopolitics Quarterly , vol.5, No.3, p.p. 106-133[in Persian].
68. Rahbar,no, 658, 20th December 1945.
69. Azerbaijan, no, 96, 9th January 1946.
70. Personal interview with: Purzad. 10th September 1982.
71. Azerbaijan, no, 109, 24th January 1946.
72. Rahbar, no, 658, 20th December, 1945.
73. Azerbaijan, no, 124, 12th February 1946.
74. Pishavari . J, 1980 Irmibir –I Azar Nutglar va Maqalalar ,(21 Azar -speeches and articles), Tabriz, p.p. 11-14.
75. Personal interview with Sharifi, March 1982.
76. Personal interview with Purzad . A and Sharifi , August and September 1982.
77. Eveling S.G . 5th May, 1944 (891.00/3055)National Archives[in Persian].
78. Personal interview, Purzad , September, 1982.
79. Personal interview, Sharifi, March, 1982.
80. Dogless. W, 1951, A strange Land and Kind people, New York, p.p. 430-44.
81. Personal interview , Dr . Sabri Tabrizi, 1983.
82. Sitare , no , 363 , 26th September 1945.
83. Personal interview, Purzad, September, 1982.
84. Azerbaijan, 124, 12th February 1946.
85. Elwell– Sutton, 30th December 1946, (89.00/3053)National Archives [in Persian].
86. Dad, 29th May 1946.