



Iran Data Portal

Kargozaran-e Sazandegi-e Iran
The Executives of the Construction of Iran (ACI)

The Party of the Executives of the Construction of Iran (*Kargozaran*) was formed shortly before the elections for the 5th parliament in 1996. President Rafsanjani had failed to convince fellow members of the Society of the Militant Clergy ([*Jameh Ruhaniyyat-e Mobarez-e – JRM*](#)) to include in their Tehran list of candidates the names of five technocrats whom he deemed important. The excluded candidates, with his support, founded a new party under the title “Executives of the Construction of Iran.” Several of the founders had served as vice ministers and in other capacities in Rafsanjani’s second cabinet (1993-1997). The new party managed to become one of the most influential factions of the 5th parliament (1996-2000). Economically, the party supported free markets and industrialization; it also placed a high emphasis on the priority of progress and development. Culturally, the group had a “liberal” slant and believed in a higher degree of social freedoms than the Traditional Right faction, symbolized by the JRM.[1] The main organ of this liberal perspective was the Hamshahri newspaper, published by the Tehran municipality under the mayoral tenure of Gholam Hossein Karbaschi, one of the founders of the party. It was the first color daily in Iran and featured general topics about the everyday life of the urban middle class. Because of its different outlook in cultural and economic policy, the party soon became regarded as the main core of the Modern Right faction in Iranian politics. Like all other active parties in Iran, the Kargozaran states that members believe in the doctrine of the “Guardianship of the Jurist” (*velayat-e faqih*).

Among the leading members of the party are Gholam Hossein Karbaschi, the party’s Secretary-General, who served as mayor of Tehran (1989-1997); Mohsen Noorbakhsh, who served as Head of the Central Bank of Iran (1981-2003); Ata’ollah Mohajerani, who served as Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance (1997-2000) in Mohammad Khatami’s first cabinet; Mohammad Atrian-Far, the editor of Hamshahri

newspaper; Hosein Mar'ashi, a member of the 6th parliament (2000-2004) who is also Rafsanjani's brother-in-law; and Rafsanjani's daughter Faezeh Hashemi, a member in the 5th parliament (1996-2000).

Towards the end of Rafsanjani's second term as president in 1997, the party first tried to amend the Constitution to make it possible for Rafsanjani to run for a third term. However, failing to do so, the party entered into a coalition with left-wing parties such as the Association of Militant Clerics (*Majma'e Ruhaniyoun-e Mobarez*) and supported candidate Mohammad Khatami in his campaign. Khatami's landslide victory made it possible for high-ranking party members to stay in their positions within the executive. However, less than one year after Khatami's victory in 1997, hardliners (who are in control of the judiciary) brought the party's Secretary-General, Gholam Hossein Karbaschi, to court. Karbaschi was accused of embezzlement and was eventually sentenced to three years in prison. In the 6th parliament (2000-2004), the Kargozaran were able to win several seats and became an active part of the reformist camp, which enjoyed the majority of seats. However, in the parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2008, many of the party's candidates were disqualified by the Guardian Council. In the presidential election of 2005, the party supported former president Akbar Rafsanjani, who ranked first in the first round, but could not gain the absolute majority of votes. In the second round, Rafsanjani was defeated by his hardline rival Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the party failed to stay in the executive.

In the 2009 presidential election, the party endorsed Mir-Hossein Mousavi, while Secretary-General Gholam Hossein Karbaschi supported Mehdi Karroubi, another reformist candidate. In the political upheaval that followed the 2009 presidential elections, three high-ranking members of the party, Mohammad Atrianfar, Hedayat Aghae, and Jahanbakhsh Khanjani, were arrested, as were many leaders of other reformist parties.

[1] The traditional Right was the most powerful political faction at that time and had the majority of seats in the fourth parliament (1992-1996) and many other positions in key political institutions within the state

Literature:

Roy, Olivier, and Sfeir, Antoine. 2007. *The Columbia World Dictionary of Islamism*. New York: Columbia University Press.