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Islamic Coalition Party
Jami'at-e Mo'talefeh-ye Islami - JMI

The Islamic Coalition Party (*Jami'at-e Mo'talefeh-ye Islami - JMI*) was founded in the early 1960s with the unification of three traditional religious associations representing the interests of the “bazaar.” The bazaar is not only a workplace but also a mercantile traditional lifestyle. Mo'talefeh's members were followers of Ayatollah Khomeini invested in building up Khomeini's claims to the marja'iyya (i.e. to be considered a source of emulation for Shiite followers - the highest religious authority). Mo'talefeh was also the first group that took taqlid as a basis for political (as opposed to religious). The group was very active in the uprising of 1963 when Khomeini opposed the modernization policies of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. It mobilized the traditional segments of society in opposition to the Shah. Mo'talefeh was also involved in armed attacks. For instance, Mohammad Bokharai, a member of the party, assassinated Hasan Ali Mansur, the Iranian prime minister in 1964. When Khomeini was in exile, Mo'talefeh made copies of his statements and tapes and disseminated them throughout Iran. Many of the members of Mo'talefeh were sentenced to jail between 1962 and 1977. During the revolution, they were active in organizing strikes and marches.

After the victory of the 1979 revolution, Mo'talefeh stopped its activities as an independent political group, and at the order of Ayatollah Khomeini merged into the Islamic Republican Party of Iran (IRP). However, with the dissolution of the IRP in 1987, Mo'talefeh was reorganized as an independent association.

Politically, the group supports the doctrine of the Guardianship of the Jurist (velayat-e faqih) and believes that political activity should be based on taqlid - the emulation of an outstanding religious authority (marja'). Thus, the group has had a close relationship with the [Society of Militant Clergy](#) (JRM). Economically, it rejects state interventionism in trade and commerce. Culturally, it advocates traditional Islamic values and state censorship of the media and the arts.

In the first decade of the Islamic Republic and during Mir Hossein Mousavi's tenure as prime minister, Mo'talefeh could be considered the legal opposition of his cabinet, but an opposition from within the regime. The main point of disagreement between Mousavi and Mo'talefeh was the latter's rejection of Mousavi's interventionist policies in the economic sphere. After the office of prime minister was eliminated in the constitutional amendment of 1989 and the president became the head of the executive, the party supported Rafsanjani's government (1989-1997) in its early years, but as he pursued privatization and international economic integration gradually started to criticize his policies. The root of the party's criticism of Rafsanjani was again in the realm of economics. While Mo'talafeh favored a more traditional mercantile economy, Rafsanjani pursued industrialization policies to restructure the economy.

In the 1997 presidential election, Mo'talafeh supported JRM member Akbar Nateq-Nouri, who lost the election to Mohammad Khatami. During the eight years of Khatami's government, Mo'talefeh consistently opposed his reformist policies in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. In the 2005 presidential election, Mo'talefeh supported Ali Larijani's candidacy. However, when Ahmadinejad won, it backed his government, and in the disputed 2009 elections, Mo'talefeh officially supported him.

The prominent members of Mo'talefeh include Habibollah Asgar-Oladi, the former minister of commerce and former secretary-general; Mohammad Nabi Habibi, secretary-general; Mostafa Mirsalim, former minister of culture and guidance; and Hasan Ghafuri-fard, former Minister of Energy.

The Central Committee, the Secretary General position, the Constituent and Supervisory Board, and the General Assembly are the most important organizational elements of the organization. The General Assembly, which elects the thirty main and five substitute members of the Central Committee, is convened every three years. Currently the Committee is in its eighth term. Habibollah Asgar-Oladi served as secretary-general for seven terms, when he was replaced by the current secretary-general Mohammad Nabi Habibi.

Official Website: <http://www.motalefe-party.com/>

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