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JAMʿIYAT-E MOʾTALEFA-YE ESLĀMI II. JAMʿIYAT-E MOʾTALEFA AND THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

JAMʿIYAT-E MOʾTALEFA-YE ESLĀMI

ii. Jamʿiyat-e Moʾtalefa and the Islamic Revolution

After the 1979 Revolution, the “Coalition of Islamic Mourning Groups” changed its expressive and meaningful name to the rather awkward appellation of Jamʿiyat-e moʾtalefa-ye eslāmi (the Society of Islamic Coalition). This change went largely unnoticed in Iranian political circles. Each segment of the society was pre-occupied with defining and propagating its own vision of the future Iranian state and society while adjusting to the revolution and its rapidly evolving leadership. Furthermore, to the recently politicized youth and even to their elders, the “Coalition of Islamic Mourning Groups” was not a common household name. The new name remained loyal to the history of the group, by retaining the term ‘Coalition,’ yet omitted any reference to the original activities of the groups composing the Coalition. This was a first step towards political modernization. The Coalition was breaking with a past, which projected it as a traditional religious force primarily concerned with the

observation and practice of rites and rituals, while emphasizing its political and revolutionary credentials. Replacing the term “mourning groups” simply with “society” was sending a message of continuity and change to those whom it wanted to recruit.

COALITION AND THE MAKING OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

On the eve of the revolution and in its immediate aftermath, the Coalition did not constitute a major force on the Iranian political scene. The Coalition did not possess a coherent political structure, organization or even an identifiable constituency or base. It did, however, possess influential individual members and sympathizers who had been gradually released from prison and it could depend on a group of affiliates who had been outside prison, essentially engaged in social, charity and educational activities of primarily a religious style rather than a political one. In sum, the “Society of Islamic Coalition” was a loose association of friends and old brothers, sharing a common history, common heroes and martyrs as well as common enemies and friends.

The most important characteristic of the Coalition’s sympathizers and members continued to be its long-held firm belief in allying itself with Ayatollah Khomeini and his clerical followers and accepting their religio-political leadership and guidance. This position was the Coalition’s winning card in the aftermath of the revolution. The Coalition could hammer at its revolutionary and militant historical credentials among the new generation of Islamic zealots and ride on the wave of Khomeini’s popularity. The fact that after some 16 years Ayatollah Khomeini, the Coalition’s founder and spiritual leader had become the uncontested leader of the revolution and that their clerical counselors, collaborators and prison cell-mates were occupying key positions of power, provided the Coalition with a golden opportunity to rebuild its organization and carve out a major political position for itself in the post-revolution structure of the state.

The Coalition re-organizes. In the last few months before Khomeini’s triumphant return, individual members and affiliates of the Coalition began to re-build their network in cooperation with their clerical allies. Members of the Coalition participated in meetings, discussions and organization of demonstrations and political actions with Khomeini’s clerical representatives, preparing and planning for the transfer of power (Rażawi, p. 135). During the mass demonstrations of *tāsuʿā* and *ʿāšurā* (10 and 11 December of 1978) in Tehran, upon the request of Hojjat-al-Eslām Maḥallāti, key Coalition figures

were instrumental in channeling and directing the slogans of the demonstrators. During the *ʿāšurā* demonstration, the slogan of "Death to the Shah" orchestrated by Coalition members echoed for the first time in the streets of Tehran (Maḥal-lāti, p. 104).

As the days of the Shah's regime came to a close, the administration of the transition of power and the running of the state fell upon the revolutionaries. A small group of Khomeini's clerical followers and members of Mehdi Bāzargān's Iran Freedom Movement (Nahżat-e āzādi) to whom Khomeini had confided the lion's share of the responsibilities, needed to rely on people whom they knew and shared a history to relegate more specific tasks and responsibilities. Individual Coalition members were being contacted by Khomeini's clerical representatives, especially Ayatollah Moṭahhari, to participate in various tasks and functions. In the transition of power to the new revolutionary leadership, old acquaintances were gradually re-forged into new networks and organizations.

The Reception Committee. One pressing task was to prepare for Khomeini's safe return to Tehran while the Shah's regime was still in power. The "Committee for the Reception of his Eminence the Imam," (Komita-ye esteqbāl az ḥażrat-e emām) was charged with this task. The Committee was to operate under the supervision of Moṭahhari, who was also in charge of the "Council of the Islamic Revolution," the highest revolutionary authority in Iran in the absence of Khomeini. In January 1979, Khomeini sent a message from France, officially charging this Revolutionary Council, which had been secretly in place since November 1978, with the task of "realizing the Islamic objectives of the people" (Kordedeh, p. 31). Of the six key clerical figures nominated by Khomeini to this Council, three were very closely associated with the Coalition. Moṭahhari and Behešti had been members of the Coalition's "Clerical Council" and Bāhonar along with Behešti had been instrumental in drafting the Coalition's Charter in 1963. Two other members of the Revolutionary Council, Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mahdawi Kani had been in Evin prison with the Coalition leaders and knew of them and their activities since 1963 (for the list of the six clergy, see ibid, pp. 24-25). It is also said that in 1972, Rafsanjani who had founded a company called "Dežsāz," had commercial dealings with certain members and sympathizers of the Coalition such as Rafiqdust, Šafiq, Mirfenderesky, Mir Moḥammad Ṣādeqi and Tawakkoli (Aḵawān Tawḥidi, pp. 267-69). The Coalition's longstanding, close and untarnished historical connection and relation with Khomeini and the key members of the "Council

of the Islamic Revolution," assured them of a fair share in the new Islamic system.

The "Reception Committee" was responsible for facilitating Khomeini's return, assuring his safety, planning his agenda as well as the logistics for what was to be a historical return. The "Reception Committee" enabled Coalition members to systematically re-build their organization and pull together their sympathizers in a coordinated and well-structured manner. Mohsen Rafiqdust, was called upon to join the "Reception Committee" and was placed in charge of finding a suitable residence for Khomeini as well as assisting in his security and safety in Tehran. He suggested the Refāḥ School. A young member of the old Coalition, Rafiqdust was imprisoned and released on the eve of the Revolution (Rafiqdust, pp. 34, 110, 125, 131). Refāḥ was a girl's school that was founded by members of the Coalition (Rowšan-nehād, pp. 88-89, 98-99). The responsibility for maintaining peace and order and assuring Khomeini's security on his arrival in Tehran was entrusted to Ṣādeq Eslāmi, one of the founding members of the Coalition. Eslāmi had divided the task of maintaining order among 12 appointees who were mainly Coalition sympathizers if not members. It is said that Ṣādeq Eslāmi's Orderliness Council (Komita-ye enteẓāmāt) mobilized some 60,000 individuals to assure internal security on the day of Khomeini's return. This impressive number is said to have formed the initial nucleus of what came to be the "Committee of the Islamic Revolution" (Komita-ye Enqelāb-e Eslāmi; see *Šomā*, 12 Tir, 1376 Š./3 July 1997).

Committee of the Islamic Revolution. This committee was a key body not only responsible for state security after the breakdown of the old regime, but for bringing members of the old regime and counter-revolutionaries to justice. Their task included door-to-door searches, setting up check points in cities, confiscations and imprisonments. In effect the "Komita" had replaced the national police. Coalition members were also involved in the Propaganda Branch (Komita-ye tabliḡāt) of the "Reception Committee" which was stationed at Khomeini's residence. At the Propaganda Branch, it seems as though Bādāmčiān, another key Coalition member, played a supervising role in channeling information to the Iranian press (*Šomā*, 17 Bahman 1377 Š./6 February 1998).

In Tehran, Coalition members were actively involved in preparing for the return and rule of Khomeini. ʿErāqi arrived in France shortly after Khomeini and stayed close to the Ayatollah supervising the logistics of his ever-more

populated and frequented residence, acting as his body guard and assuring his peace and tranquility. He also acted as the liaison between Khomeini and the "Reception Committee" (Ḡaffāri, pp. 315, 402).

After his arrival at Tehran's Mehrābād airport and a short speech, Khomeini sat in the front seat of a Chevrolet Blazer next to Rafiqdust, who drove through a crowd popularly estimated to be made up of some two million or more well-wishers who had literally "brought Tehran to a standstill to greet the Imam" (it should be noted, however, that this is a very dubious figure if examined carefully; the figure of two million, were it not an exaggerated number, would require a procession of people organized at 20 persons to a row that would need approximately 100 kilometers of space in order to stand).

Once Khomeini reached Tehran, however, it was the Coalition who were at the wheel. Since the foundation of the Islamic Republic, Coalition members have spread out into and occupied key roles in numerous sensitive and decision-making arenas. It would be difficult to provide a precise account of their presence in all aspects and facets of Iran. At best, only a broad overview of the Coalition's spread and scope of power in post-revolution Iran is possible. The Coalition's involvement in the three main domains of financial-economic, political, and judiciary-security-military will be assessed, before presenting the evolution of the Coalition's world outlook.

THE FINANCIAL-ECONOMIC DOMAIN

Less than ten days after the victory of the revolution, Khomeini appointed Askarawlādi to help Maḥallāti supervise the "Cooperative Fund" of Tehran's guilds (Ṣanduq-e taʿāwoni-e aṣnāf; Maḥallāti, p. 134). In the summer of 1980, Askarawlādi was also appointed as director of the Endowments Organization (Sāzmān-e awqāf). In an official edict on 10 March 1979, Khomeini appointed Mehdi Karrubi along with Askarawlādi and Šafiq to establish relief committees across the nation. Accounts were to be opened for this charitable venture and the funds collected were earmarked to alleviate the needs of the poor (*Ṣaḥifa-ye nur* V, p. 188). This committee came to be known as "Imam Khomeini's Relief Committee" (Komita-ye emdād-e Emām Ḵomeyni). After Karrubi's appointment to the Foundation of Martyrs (Bonyād-e šahid), Askarawlādi continued to be Khomeini's representative and subsequently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's (ʿAli Ḵāmenaʾi) representative at "Imam Khomeini's Relief Committee." This organization, under the control of Askarawlādi to this date (2008) has become an important Coalition stronghold (Nāṭeq Nuri, p. 67).

By 1994, this organization provided services to some 2,850,000 people in Iran. These services varied from setting up small-scale production units to providing dowries for newly wedded women and free medical services. In recent years, the Imam Khomeini Relief Organization has expanded its programs beyond Iran's borders and into the Azarbaijan Republic, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Bosnia and Palestine (see *Salāmirān.org* in bibliography).

Foundation of the Oppressed. Less than a month after taking over power, Khomeini issued a key edict, ordering the establishment of the "Foundation of the Oppressed" (Bonyād-e mostażʿafin), renamed as the "Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled" (Bonyad-e mostażʿafin wa jānbāzān) after the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. This foundation was charged to expropriate all the assets and belongings–movables and immovable of the Pahlavi family as well as those individuals who were affiliated, associated or collaborated with the previous regime. According to Khomeini, the confiscated properties were considered as war booty (*ḡanāʾem*) and as such did not belong to the government, but to the people and were subsequently to be spent in favor of the poor and downtrodden by a non-government organization. Khomeini charged the Foundation to relieve poverty, homelessness and destitution in the entire country (Khomeini [Ḵomeyni], *Ṣaḥifa-ye nur* III, p. 366).

Once the foundation's charter was written in July 1979, ʿAli-Naqi Ḵāmuši was nominated as director of the powerful "Foundation of the Oppressed" and ʿErāqi was appointed as its supervisor (Kāviāni, pp. 44, 65). ʿAli-Naqi Ḵāmuši, an old member of the Coalition, in turn nominated Ḥabib-Allāh Šafiq, who was already appointed to the "Imam Khomeini Relief Organization" and MosÂtafā Mir Salim, another Coalition member as financial supervisors of the foundation (ibid, p. 65). Six months after Ḵamuši's appointment, in one of his public speeches, Khomeini enquired, "is it true that the Foundation of the Oppressed has become the Foundation of the Rich [and arrogant]?" (ibid, p. 65). Subsequent to the report of a task force appointed by Khomeini to investigate the affairs of the Foundation and fourteen months after Ḵamuši's initial appointment, he was removed from the Foundation.

Ḵamuši returned to the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines of Iran (q.v.), joined two Coalition brothers, Askarawlādi and Mir Mo-ḥammad Ṣādeqi and served as the president of the Chamber from 1984 to 2007 (Eʿtemād, *Sāl-nāma* 1385 Š./2006, p. 70). In its role as the strongest lobby of the private sector, the Board of the Chamber is represented on key

governmental bodies, including the sensitive councils of Money and Credit, Stock Market, Exports, Coordination of Foreign Affairs and the Arbitration Council of Customs, Taxes and Insurance (*Hammihan*, 31 Ḵordād 1386 Š./21 June 2007).

From September of 1980 until the spring of 1989, the "Foundation of the Oppressed," Iran's financial and economic powerhouse with total administrative autonomy, hardly any mechanism of checks and balances and an annual budget of $10 billion, employing some 150,000 workers, slipped out of the hands of the Coalition (Oxford Analytica, 23 July 1999). However, from 1989 until 1999 when Moḥsen Rafiqdust was nominated by Ayatollah Khamenei as the director of Foundation, this gigantic economic conglomerate came back under the control of a Coalition member.

The decisions concerning investments, production and imports by the industrial, agricultural, construction, service, and commercial units of the Foundation have major consequences for home market prices and profit margins of domestic private firms. The Coalition's control of the para-state foundations as well as its control over an array of market and bazaar organizations such as the Iran Chamber of Commerce, the Guild Affairs Committee, the Islamic Economy Organization, the Union of the Association of Islamic Guilds and Bazaar (Ettehādiya-ye anjomanhā-ye eslāmi-e aṣnāf wa bāzār), provided it with a considerable and asymmetric share of economic and financial power. The scope of the Coalition's activities allowed it to construct and benefit from a widespread network of patron-client structures and relationships. The Guild Affairs Committee and the Islamic Economy Organization were both co-founded by Taqi Ḵamuši, a member of the old Coalition. The "Union of the Association of Islamic Guilds and Bazaar" was founded by Amāni and acted as an important lever in mobilizing the bazaar in support of the Coalition's political demands (Qučāni, p. 7; Ḡolāmi).

The Coalition operated the Iranian economy as a traditional family enterprise, in which brothers would help out one another on the basis of kinship and loyalty rather than efficiency, expertise or merit. In a patrimonial enterprise, it was evident that the family would seek to secure and guarantee the benefits and gains of its members. The exceptional concentration and monopolization of financial power in the hands of the Foundation along with its ironclad political shield from outside investigations and the absence of transparency in its accounts provided it with a highly disproportionate economic and political weight in the country.

THE POLITICAL DOMAIN

The Coalition has vied for political power by actively competing for all elective offices enumerated in the Constitution. It has systematically presented candidates for the President's Office, the Parliament, the Assembly of Experts, Local Councils and all conceivable so-called civil society associations and organizations such as the association of doctors, lawyers and journalists. In tandem with its efforts to seek political power on the elective front, the Coalition has worked behind the scenes employing its brotherhood network to solicit positions on appointed bodies such as the "Guardian Council" (Šurā-ye negahbān) "Expediency Council" (Šurā-ye masÂleḥat-e neẓām) and the para-state organizations.

Islamic Republic Party. On 29 February 1979, the founding of the Islamic Republic Party (IRP) was announced by five influential clerical figures, Behešti, Musawi Ardabili, Rafsanjani, Bāhonar and Khamenei. Behešti, Bāhonar and Rafsanjani were, to different degrees, directly affiliated with the Coalition and had a common history with it. According to an account, from the 21 member Central Council of the IRP, eight were members of the Coalition (*Šomā*, 5 Āḏar 1384 Š./26 November 2005). At least one third of IRP's Central Council was under direct control of the Coalition. The IRP was a broad umbrella organization of various Islamic tendencies, some at ideological odds with one another, united only in their acceptance of Khomeini's religio-political leadership.

Presidential campaigns. From the first presidential elections in 1980 the Coalition played an active role in nominating its members or allies for the office of President. Its nominee for the first election was Jalāl-al-Din Fārsi. The second presidential election occurred during the difficult times of internal instability and the raging Iran-Iraq war in 1981. The Coalition tested its independent strength by fielding two Coalition members, Askarawlādi and ʿAli-Akbar Parvareš. While the Coalition had two of its own members running for presidency, it officially supported Moḥammad-ʿAli Rejāʾi, the IRP candidate, who was eventually elected. This seemingly contradictory behavior demonstrated that the Coalition candidates were not seriously expected to compete for power, but were actors in a show of competitive presidential elections (Ṣāleḥ, p. 672).

Once Khamenei was elected president in October 1981, his first nominee for the powerful post of Prime Minister, ʿAli-Akbar Welāyati, was rejected by the

Majles. Subsequently, Khamenei presented a list of five candidates for the Majles to choose from (Ṣāleḥ, pp. 685-86). Among the five, Parvareš, Mir Salim and Ḡafurifard were Coalition members, reflecting the influence of the organization at the time. The Majles, however, voted in favor of Mir Ḥosayn Musawi as Prime Minister and the Coalition's political ambitions were curbed.

The Coalition in government. After the departure of President Abu'l-Ḥasan Bani Ṣadr from the political scene, Rejāʾi the second President of the Islamic Republic appointed Bāhonar as his Prime Minister and in Bāhonar's government four Coalition members or affiliates received ministerial posts. The two key ministerial positions of Commerce and Education went to Askarawlādi and Parvareš, (Ẓarifiniā, Appendix). In the provisional government of Ayatollah Mahdawi Kani, following the assassination of Rejāʾi and Bāhonar and subsequently in Mir Hossein Mousavi's (Mir Ḥosayn Musawi) leftist government of November 1981, the four Coalition figures retained their positions.

It was not until the end of August 1983 that Askara-wlādi left the cabinet, while the other three Coalition members continued to serve in Musavi's government. In the summer of 1984 Musawi re-shuffled the government and did not include any Coalition members or affiliates. The only exception was Moḥsen Rafiqdust, who had come to occupy the new ministerial position of the Revolutionary Guards. It was not until Rafsanjani's second government in 1993 that the Coalition was once again represented in the government through Āl-e Esḥāq and Mir Salim, occupying the ministries of Commerce and Islamic Guidance. Once again from 1997 to 2005, during Khatami's presidency and since 2005 when Maḥmud Aḥmadinejād served as the president, members of the Coalition were not represented in the cabinet. These cabinets primarily represented the two new ideological configurations in Iran's political scene, which burgeoned in the 1990s: the new reformist and pro-democracy and the new populist, fundamentalist currents with no sympathy for the right wing fundamentalists (see ISLAM IN IRAN xiii).

In the early 1980s, the Coalition's pro-market position was actively supported by the influential Society of Qom Seminary School Teachers (Jāmeʿa-ye modarresin-e ḥawza-ye ʿelmiya-ye Qom). In a joint meeting of Askarawlādi and Nabawi with the members of this Society, the forthright and plainspoken Ayatollah Aḥmad Āḏari Qomi, who later even confronted Khomeini on economic issues, lambasted the economic formulations, policies and positions of the government. Āḏari Qomi, reflecting the common concerns of the Society

of Qom Seminary School Teachers as well as that of the Coalition and bazaar, qualified the economic policies of the Mousavi government as leading the country down the path of "Communist societies" and declared these anti-market policies as simply un-Islamic. (Ṣāleḥ, pp. 302-3).

The issue of whether Islamic economics on the basis of traditional legal edicts (*aḥkām-e feqh-e sonnati*) were capable of resolving the economic problems of a revolutionary society with egalitarian aspirations and in the throes of war was not a simple matter. In May of 1982, first the members of the Society of Qom Seminary School Teachers and less than a week later, the members of the Coalition visited Khomeini to complain about the un-Islamic discriminatory policies against the market and owners of capital and wealth. In the meeting between the Society of Qom Seminary School Teachers and Khomeini, the Ayatollah informed the exalted members of the Society that he too was trying to abide by and implement Islamic jurisprudence. Khomeini, however, warned them against giving the people the impression that they were "supporting the capitalists" (Ṣāleḥ, p. 327).

During the Coalition's meeting of June 1981 with Khomeini, the members expressed their anxieties concerning the economic situation in the country and argued that government policies were drifting away from the precepts of Islam based on jurisprudence. Bādāmčiān, representing the interests of the business and commercial classes couched his free-market arguments in strictly Islamic terms. He referred to the Islamic Republic's successful track in dealing with political and military problems and attributed this success to the adoption of policies that relied on that type of Islam which emanated from the clergy. Bādāmčiān concluded that economic problems too should be resolved on the basis of *Islam-e feqāhati* or an Islam based on jurisprudence. Bādāmčiān was astutely arguing that economic policy had to take its lead not from the revolutionary lay in the government, but from the learned jurists of the Society of Qom Seminary School Teachers or the President (Ṣāleḥ, p. 335).

The pro-market position of the Society of Qom Seminary School Teachers, based on their understanding of Islam, brought them ever closer to the Coalition, which also believed in the non-involvement of the government in the economy. The two organizations, one religious and the other political and traditionally linked to the bazaar believed in the simple fact that economic affairs should be left to the bazaar. The extent of Askarawlādi and the Coalition's constant disputes with Mousavi is well documented in Rafsanjani's memoirs. The scope of these differences found its echo in the left-leaning

Majles as well (Hashemi Rafsanjani, 2002, pp. 40, 85, 91, 128, 163-64, 170). The standoff between Mousavi's left-leaning government and the alliance of the Society of Qom Seminary School Teachers, the Coalition and the bazaar dragged on. After Khamenei's second Presidential term, the anti-Mousavi bloc including the Coalition campaigned in favor of Mahdawi Kani as the new Prime Minister. The confrontation between the Coalition and Mousavi over economic issues and interests on the one hand and Khomeini's support of Mousavi on the other hand is said to have led the Coalition to abandon its much flaunted loyalty to and blind emulation of Khomeini. Correctly assessing Khomeini's sympathy for Mousavi's egalitarian economic outlook, the Coalition is said to have pragmatically identified and opted for a different Source of Emulation than that of Khomeini on economic issues. An influential Coalition member is said to have opined that: "the Imam [Khomeini] is a mojtahed and Ayatollah Mahdawi Kani is also a mojtahed and we imitate Mahdawi Kani on this [economic] issue" (Ḡolāmi, part one). Just as the Coalition had sought someone else's opinion, when Khomeini refused to permit them to assassinate Prime Minister MansÂur, once again, the Coalition tried to circumvent Khomeini's position. In spite of President Khamenei's opposition to Mousavi, Khomeini's support for his Prime Minister assured him of a second four year term. During Mousavi's second term (1985-1989) the Coalition lost its power in the government.

LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGNS

In the first post-revolutionary Iranian parliament, the Coalition was represented. Ever since, with ebbs and flows, the Iranian Majles has had its own Coalition faction. An alliance between the IRP, the Society of Tehran's Militant Clergy and the Society of Qom Seminary School Teachers facilitated the election of Coalition members and sympathizers to the Majles. In the legislative elections for the 2nd Majles (1983), while Tehran could only send 30 members to the Majles, Askarawlādi ranked 32nd in Tehran and was shut-out of the parliament. Other Coalition members such as Zavāreʾi, Amāni and Bādāmčiān, however, succeeded in entering the Majles. In the elections for the 3rd Majles (1987) none of the Coalition's key figures succeeded in obtaining a seat. Yet in the 4th Majles (1991), with the aid of the Guardian Council's newly acquired right to reject the eligibility of certain candidates and the Coalition's usual alliance with the two influential clerical societies, Ḵamuši, Askarawlādi and Bādāmčiān entered an overwhelming right-leaning parliament. The Coalition's election platform was based on improving and rejuvenating the

economy through privatization, structural adjustment, attracting foreign investment and the establishment of Free Trade Zones. The Coalition's call for economic welfare after 8 years of war must have fell on receptive ears. Politically, they presented themselves as followers of both Khamenei and Rafsanjani. Their election slogan of "obedience towards the Leader and support for Hashemi" provided them with a secure political position and assured them of certain key ministerial positions in Rafsanjani's government.

The success of the Coalition and its right-leaning clerical allies in the 4th Majles (1992-96) seems to have convinced the Coalition that it could rely on its own support network to push ahead with its agenda. This surge of self-confidence implied that the Coalition had become convinced that it no longer required Rafsanjani's support. The Coalition and Rafsanjani did not have major differences on economic issues such as the role of the private sector in the economy, even though they may have disagreed on sectoral emphases, the modality of economic interaction with the West or the division of the economic pie. Yet in terms of managerial style and the objectives and scope of economic development, disagreements were more than simmering. While Rafsanjani was able to attract and use a well-educated, up to date and relatively efficient group of managers and technocrats, the Coalition continued to look upon these technocratic, sometimes Western-educated newcomers, lacking traditional credentials, with great suspicion. The Coalition was also weary of the cultural and political implications of Rafsanjani's ambitious developmental policies. The Coalition felt that Rafsanjani's policies would erode the kind of Islamic identity that it deemed suitable for Iran. In return, Rafsanjani was weary of allying himself and compromising with the traditional right-leaning Islamic factions, which he regarded as a force restraining him from achieving his objectives of economic welfare and construction.

For the election campaign of the 5th Majles, the Society of Tehran's Militant Clergy and a Coalition dominated constellation of small Islamic organizations such as the Islamic Society of Engineers, the Islamic Society of Workers and the Society of Zeynab—the women's organization of this constellation—announced the formation of an ad hoc umbrella entity with the clumsy name of Society of Tehran's Militant Clergy and their Concordant Organizations (Jāmeʿa-ye ruḥāniyat-e mobārez Tehran wa Tašakkolhā-ye hamsu). At the time, this old political alliance, which had existed in various forms for almost ten years, seemed to be the winning ticket. Certain of their

victory in the 5th Majles, the Tehran Militant Clergy and the Concordant Organizations refused Rafsanjani's request for five slots on their common list of 30 candidates for Tehran. It has been suggested that it was not the Society of Tehran's Militant Clerics that vetoed Rafsanjani's request but the Concordant Organizations, namely the Coalition. It has even been insinuated that Askara-wlādi, Ḵamuši and Lājevardi were the Coalition members vetoing Rafsanjani's seemingly innocuous demand (*Hafte-nāme-ye Bahār*, 9 Esfand 1374 Š./28 February 1996; Mortaji, p. 12; *Payām-e emruz*, Mordād-Šahrivar, 1376 Š./August-September 1997).

Hashemi Rafsanjani was almost compelled by the Coalition to form his new family, the Functionaries of Construction (Kārgozārān-e sāzandegi). The success of Rafsanjani's technocratic and liberal-minded protégés in the 5th Majles coincided with the political decline of the Tehran Militant Clergy and the Concordant Organizations. The sectarianism of the Coalition sealed the political fate of the Society of Tehran's Militant Clergy as well (*Payām emruz*, Bahman-Esfand,1374 Š./February-March 1996).

The legislative euphoria of the Coalition and their right-leaning allies during the 4th Majles was rather short-lived. In the three subsequent elections, namely the 5th, 6th and 7th Majles, Coalition members proved unsuccessful in entering the Majles. The mixed and recently poor performance of the Coalition in parliamentary elections is a reflection of the degree of their popularity and a measure of their social weight and significance, as a political force. The fact that the eligibility of their candidates has not been questioned by the Guardian Council in elections, while the qualifications of their rivals has been subjected to widespread rejections adds to the significance of the Coalition's relatively unsuccessful record in the electoral process. Yet their limited success in the legislature should not be construed as a setback for their policies and programs especially between 1989 and 1997.

From March 1988 to the death of Khomeini in June 1989, the close clerical ally of the Coalition, namely the Society of Tehran's Militant Clergy, became largely overshadowed by the left-leaning clerical faction of Society of Tehran's Militant Clerics (Majmaʿ-e ruhāniun-e mobārez-e Tehran). This new clerical formation which seceded from the Society of Tehran's Militant Clergy over its conservative Islamic paradigm was favored by Khomeini and his son, Ahmad Khomeini. As long as the Ayatollah was alive, this new clerical group could not be excluded or pushed out of the political scene. After Khomeini's death, the Society of Tehran's Militant Clergy and their allies swiftly regained their

influence and power in pivotal institutions such as the Guardian Council, the 2nd Assembly of Experts, and the 4th Majles. The close and sym-biotic political relation between the Coalition and the two key conservative clerical "Societies" (Tehran's Militant Clergy and Qom Seminary School Teachers) fused their fates. As the fortunes of the left-leaning Society of Tehran's Militant Clerics started to wane, that of the "Societies" rose. This important change of winds enabled the Coalition to realize its objectives and interests even though it could not muster the constituency allowing it to play a key role in the legislature. Despite appearances, the secure political position of the Coalition has become shakier after the 7th Majles in which a new breed of conservatives gained a majority. The young conservatives that succeeded in the 7th Majles and won the presidency in 2005 were again a different type of conservatives from the Coalition, even though the Coalition wishes to act as their spiritual mentor.

THE JUDICIARY, SECURITY, AND MILITARY DOMAINS

Immediately after the revolution, Lājevardi, ʿErāqi and Kaču'i took charge of the arrested members of the old regime who were brought to the Refāḥ School. Later, Kaču'i and Lājevardi went to work at Evin prison (*Šomā*, 12 Tir 1376 Š./3 June 1997; and 30 Dey 1385 Š./20 January 2006). Soon the circle of the enemies of the new Islamic Republic expanded from the relatively old and petrified members of the old regime to the young and militant members of a variety of political opposition groups. In June 1981, concomitant with the Peoples' Mojāhedin's "declaration of war" against the government and the escalation of their armed struggle, Lājevardi, who had a long history of animosity with the Mojāhedin after having collaborated with them for a period, was appointed to the post of the Islamic Revolution's Prosecutor of Tehran (Dādsetān-e enqelāb-e eslāmi-e Irān). This was a sensitive and important judiciary-security position, providing Lājevardi with nearly unlimited powers to uproot the armed opposition. Lājevardi played a key and categorical role in the repression of the Mojāhedin and other political opponents of the Islamic Republic (Hashemi Rafsanjani, 2002, p. 60). He is said to have been in favor of a thorough, uncompromising and violent policy towards political opposition. Lājevardi was not only suspicious of all opposition forces, but viewed the Mojāhedin of the Islamic Revolution, who were committed to Khomeini and were represented in Mousavi's government, with grave mistrust (Bāqi, 2000, pp. 46-49). At this very sensitive juncture of the Islamic Republic's history, the Coalition played an important role in setting a precedent on the manner and

intensity in which armed as well as passive confrontation with the state would be dealt with and resolved in the new Islamic Republic (Hashemi Rafsanjani, 1999, p. 440).

The Head of the Judiciary. From 1989 until 1999, Ayatollah Moḥammad Yazdi, who is said to have been close to the Coalition, headed the Judiciary (Oxford Analytica, *Iran: Judicial Battleground*, 23 June 1999). According to the Constitution, the head of the judiciary is appointed by the Supreme Leader. Yazdi was and is not an official member of the Coalition. He traced his sympathy for the Coalition to the first months after the victory of the revolution and applauded them for their "bravery and acceptance of the rule of the jurisconsult (*welāyatpaziri*)." Yazdi recalled that while he was the head of the Judiciary, he was asked by the Coalition to attend their meetings. On a number of occasions he attended their meetings and explained the policies of his office to the Coalition members (Yazdi, p. 349). Upon his appointment to the head of the judiciary, Yazdi appointed Reżā Zavāreʾi, a Coalition member, as his counselor (Dād, p. 69). Zavāreʾi was also a member of the Guardian Council. In 1992, Bādāmčiān, the Coalition's number two figure, was appointed as counselor to the head of the judiciary. Lājevardi's appointment to the directorship of the country's "Prisons and Reformation Organization" was during Yazdi's control over the judiciary. During Yazdi's tenure, Šafiq, an old member of the Coalition was placed in charge of coordinating the affairs of his office in the judiciary (*Šomā*, 30 Dey 1385 Š./20 January 2007). While prior to the appointment of Yazdi, the judiciary was criticized by the Coalition, during his appointment, the Coalition rallied behind him and became one his main supporters (Ḡolāmi).

After Khomeini decreed in 1979 the establishment of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Moḥsen Rafiqdust, who at the time was active in Tehran's Revolutionary Committee, was summoned to attend the first meeting of the founders (Rafiqdust, 2004, p. 172). Rafiqdust was a member of the five-man team which commanded the IRGC (Sāzgārā, 23/07/06). He participated in drafting the Charter of the Corps and was designated as Director of the Corps' supplies and logistics department. Later, ʿErāqi and Rafiqdust played a key role in merging, consolidating and centralizing various armed groups loyal to the Islamic Republic, under the umbrella of the IRGC. The IRGC started its activities with a minimum of resources and, for the first six months of its operation, its personnel worked on a voluntary basis and the newly created revolutionary corps was directed by a Central Council. The

guards of the Corps in certain military barracks such as *Wali-e ʿasÂr* turned against Rafiqdust and accused him of financial wrongdoings and graft (Rafiqdust, 2004, p. 192).

With the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, the IRGC experienced a radical transformation. The size of its organization and the resources at its disposal expanded exponentially. While the weakened, disheartened and distrusted Iranian Army found it difficult to confront the Iraqi occupation of Iran on its own, the young and zealous IRGC fighters proved a more potent, promising and trusting force. As the war raged, the IRGC was given greater scope to obtain heavy weapons in order to create a major military force with its own proper army, navy and air force branches. This metamorphosis required the IRGC to engage in the heavy procurement of armaments. Rafiqdust as the Director of logistics played an important role in the arms purchases and financial operations of the IRGC. (Hashemi Rafsanjani, 1999, p. 496; idem, 2001, p. 61).

From the summer of 1982, the idea of creating a Ministry of the IRGC was in the air. The chief function of the Ministry was to act as the supplier of IRGC. This implied greater regulation and supervision over the logistical activities and defense procurements of the IRGC by placing the IRGC's acquisitions and purchases under the purview of the government. This Ministry did not officially come into existence until November 1982. The Maj-les voted in favor of Rafiqdust as the first Minister of IRGC (Hashemi Rafsanjani, 2001, pp. 272, 302). It is reported that in 1987 the IRGC was allocated $700 million in foreign exchange and its overall budget for military procurements was 2.4 times higher than that of the regular army. On 12 September 1988, the Majles refused to reinstate Rafiqdust as Minister of the IRGC and he was ousted after a vote of no-confidence. After six years, Rafiqdust left his place to Ali Šamḵāni and the Coalition lost its leverage on the powerful Ministry of IRGC.

Expediency Council. For the first time since the foundation of the Expediency Council (Majmaʿ-e tašḵisÂ-e masÂleḥat-e neẓām) in February 1988, Coalition members succeeded in entering this highly influential body in March 1997. Two official members of the Coalition, Askarawlādi and Mir Salim, in addition to a close affiliate of the Coalition, Morteżā Nabawi were appointed by Ayatollah Khamenei to the 19-member Council headed by Hashemi Rafsanjani (*Šomā*, 21 Farvardin 1376 Š./10 April 1997).

THE COALITION'S WORLDVIEW

Political platform. The political platform of the Coalition is based on an unshakeable belief in, and devotion to, the religio-political leadership, guardianship and custodianship of the clergy (*ruḥāniyat*). From its inception and long before the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the Coalition believed in "the creation of an ideal Islamic society." It was Ayatollah Khomeini who gave birth to the Coalition and subsequently by ushering the Islamic Revolution provided them with the opportunity to experiment with the "creation of an ideal Islamic society." Therefore, the Coalition identifies and distinguishes itself as a lay political organization totally loyal and devoted to those clergy who consider "Imam Khomeini" as their role-model. The Coalition believes that only such clerics can discern right from wrong and therefore lead the Coalition to make correct and desirable Islamic decisions on social, economic, cultural and political issues.

The promotion of total compliance with and loyalty to the rule of the jurist-guardian, while emphasizing the importance of the peoples' role in the affairs of the state has created a theoretical paradox in the Coalition's discourse. The political opponents of the Coalition have systematically accused it of ignoring the popular vote and promoting a religious oligarchy. At times, certain statements by Coalition leaders have given credence to this criticism. In April 1997, Askarawlādi declared that: "In the absence of the Twelfth Imam, the just jurist as his vice-gerent is responsible for running the affairs of the Muslim community (*omma*). The suggestion of those who argue that the legitimacy of the jurist-guardian's rule (*welāyat*) is based on the peoples' vote is a plot and the wish of the enemies of Islam. The jurist-guardian's rule in an Islamic system is derived from Islamic sources and not from the peoples' vote" (Mortaji, pp. 44-45).

Consistent with its initial objective of "creating an ideal Islamic society" in April 1997, the Coalition suggested that the Expediency Council should explore and assess the process by which the Islamic Republic could be transformed into a 'Government of Islamic Justice' (*Šomā*, 21 Farvardin, 1376 Š./10 April 1997) The Coalition's suggestion implied that the Islamic Republic was a transitional form of government which should eventually be replaced with an Islamic Government. The deletion of the noun Republic could be construed as a call to eliminate the Republican characteristic of the Iranian political system. By purging the political system of its pivotal guarantor of the peoples' partial sovereignty, the Coalition seemed to be promoting a political system where the jurist-guardian would monopolize all power without any checks and balances

by the people.

The fact remains that despite its political defeats and deceptions in numerous rounds of political competition, the Coalition's zeal for political participation has not dampened. It seems as if, with the passing of time, the Coalition has become ever more committed to becoming a viable and modern political party, a development not favorably looked upon by many of its clerical allies. With the maturing of the Coalition, it has become difficult to label this political organization as categorically authoritarian, anti-democratic and simply in favor of a hierocracy. At the end of 2005 and some six months after the election of President Ahmadinejad, Ayatollah MesÂbāḥ Yazdi and his students, especially Moḥsen Ḡarawiān, launched and publicized the highly inflammable dual idea that the establishment of an Islamic Government, in contrast to an Islamic Republic, was a religious necessity and that Imam Khomeini neither believed in a Republic nor the legitimizing character of the peoples' vote. These propositions were an echo of the Coalition's suggestions some nine years ago. MesÂbāḥ Yazdi, President Ahmadinejad's chief clerical proponent, even went as far as suggesting that those who would consider the validity of "Republicanism" as equal to that "Islamism" were infidels (*Šarq*, 20 Dey 1384 Š./10 January 2005).

In view of the Coalition's previous flirtation with the concept of a "Government of Islamic Justice," belittling the people's vote in contrast to the role of the jurist-guardian, its reaction to the wave of anti-Republicanism whipped up by MesÂbāḥ Yazdi and his followers was unexpected if not astonishing. Bādāmčiān and Ḡafurifard rejected the anti-Republican ideas attributed to Khomeini. Bādāmčiān referred to Khomeini's famous dictum of "an Islamic Republic neither a word more nor less" and suggested that the Imam's succinct statement had clearly settled the issue. Ḡafurifard went further and treated the suggestion that Khomeini did not believe in the Republic as a grave accusation against the Imam's ideas. He argued that based on "political rationalism" the Islamic Republic was the best political system as it "obtained its religiosity/legitimacy (*mašruʿiyat*) from Islam and derived its acceptance/desirability (*maqbuliyat*) from the peoples' vote (*Sharq*, 14 Dey 1384 Š./14 January 2005). Amir Moḥebiān, an important and measured theoretical voice always considered very close to the Coalition and a regular contributor to *Resālaat*, argued that "if the Republican aspect of the system is negated it would be important to see what would replace it. The antithesis of Republicanism, a system based on the peoples' participation, is Sultanism in

which one or a few people rule. If we reject the Republic, would we want to replace it with Sultanism? Certainly Sultanism was neither the Imam's preferred political system nor was it included in the Constitution, since the Islamic Revolution overthrew this type of government" (*Šarq*, 12 Dey 1384 Š./2 January 2005).

Economic platform. The economic platform of the Coalition constitutes yet another one of its axiomatic principals. Based on the employment record of a good number of its founding fathers and even that of the second generation of its adherents, the Coalition has been viewed as the bazaar faction of Iran's political forces. It has been suggested that the Coalition is probably the only political organization in Iran which possesses an organic relation with its social base of small shopkeepers and merchants (Ẓarifiniā, pp. 94-95).

The Coalition has consistently favored an economic system based on the sanctity of private property and the freedom of profit in commercial and economic activities, without any regulation on the accumulation of wealth as long as the activities engaged in are considered as Islamically permissible. During Mousavi's premiership, the Coalition became the most outspoken critic of the government's interventionist and statist position, condemning it as un-Islamic and socialist. At the time, the Coalition, in alliance with the Society of Qom's Seminary School Teachers, actively campaigned to reduce the purview of the state and cooperative sector to the benefit of the private sector. It also moved to protect the private sector from the state's incursions. The Coalition was intent on freeing the economy of state monopolies, denying the government the power to take over the distribution of certain goods during the war, and shielding the private sector from price controls and the imposition of fines and punishments against businesses accused of speculation and hoarding. The notion that the government may be a good supervisor, but not a good merchant, encapsulated the Coalition's position at the time.

During the war period, the anti-interventionist posture of the Coalition gave it a pro-market and pro-capitalist reputation. Categorizing the Coalition as pro-market and pro-capitalist may erroneously imply that it firmly believes in a perfectly competitive free-market capitalist system. As true as this may have been during the early years of the revolution, the Coalition seems to have outgrown its traditional small shopkeeper and merchant base and has become a major patron and benefactor in all conceivable economic and financial fields. The political and economic resources that it controls and commands have enabled it to widen and deepen its influence by creating a vast and yet

largely opaque patron-client network. The increasing significance of political power in securing economic gain has brought about an important change in the Coalition's initial admiration for free markets and disaffection for government intervention in the market.

The Coalition continues to hold private property, entitlement to the proceeds of commercial and economic activities as well as the right to reproduce and increase private property and wealth as an axiomatic principal. However the ever-increasing involvement of the Coalition in various state, para-state and government owned and managed economic units as well as its ability to guarantee profits and gains by influencing economic policy has provided it with a taste for rewards through political networking and favoritism. The shift in the Coalition's economic platform is a function of its increasing reliance on rewards obtained through non-market mechanisms. It can, therefore, no longer be regarded as the bulwark of the free-market that it was during the early days of the revolution.

First in June 2005 and subsequently in July 2006, Ayatollah Khamenei articulated a new reading of the famous Article 44 of the Constitution. He called for an increasing share of activities and resources for the cooperative and the private sector in the national economy. He also evoked the necessity of privatizing state-owned economic units and reducing the state's financial and managerial load. The Coalition supported this important re-orientation in the economy, which had been nominally underway since Rafsanjani's presidency. Moḥammad Nabi Ḥabibi, the Director General of the Coalition party called for the creation of "a centralized and efficient management group dedicated to Article 44, in order to implement and realize the directives of the Leader [i.e., Khamenei]" (*Šomā*, 5 Esfand 1385/24 February 2006). Bādāmčiān, the vice-director of the Coalition Party, shed some light on the composition of this key management group which the Coalition promoted to implement the directives of the Leader. He argued that the reason for the nation's economic failures had been the hegemony of "eclectic thoughts and tendencies" at the governmental level. This distortion, Bādāmčiān argued, had taken root ever since the transitional government of Bāzargān came to power. According to Bādāmčiān, the prevalence of un-Islamic and eclectic thoughts of both the socialist and Western variants during previous governments had produced a situation where 82 percent of the economy was state-owned.

For Bādāmčiān, correction of the ideological-religious deformation which he identified as the prime cause of Iran's economic plight, hinged on "entrusting

the economic affairs to individuals possessing healthy Islamic thoughts derived from the ideas of Imam Khomeini." Naturally, these individuals would be expected to be free of any Western or Eastern deviations. Bādāmčiān emphasized that this religiously correct designated group also needed to be experienced managers familiar with he world economy (*Šomā*, 15 Esfand 1385 Š./6 March 2006).

Elaborating on the particulars of this designated group who would take over the economic realm and realize the directives of the Leader, Bādāmčiān's called for "relegating [economic] responsibilities to those individuals who were proponents and upholders of values (*arzešgerāyān*)." The "upholders of values" are defined as those who "during the past three decades" had not been eclectic and who were capable of fostering and managing a 'pro-value revivalism.' Bādāmčiān argued that such a necessary revival needed "authoritative, managerial and thoughtful individuals" (*Šomā*a, 15 Esfand 1385 Š./6 March 2006). For Coalition leaders, solving unresolved economic problems was not necessarily related to the dismantling of the state and para-state economic units, privatization, introduction of competition, stamping out corruption and improving transparency, but was contingent upon entrusting and relegating the management of the economy to individuals whose profile resembled the Coalition's first generation. The change in the Coalition's economic platform is well reflected in its emphasis on economic administration, planning and control by "worthy and pro-value" individuals rather than empowering the impersonal market.

The Coalition's control over non-private economic titans, obtained through political networking and brotherhood relations has provided it with a high-yielding power base. Furthermore, the economic gains from these resources are, to a large extent, politically determined. The Coalition has come to realize that it stands to gain much more from the state's politically motivated allocation of oil revenues than from the market's allocation mechanism. It, therefore, finds itself in the favorable dual position of drawing economic advantage in the form of economic rent from control over political levers as well as economic returns from an imperfect market, the rules of which it can influence to its own benefit. Success in an impersonal market system requires transparency, perfect information, minimal state and political interference as well as efficiency. Benefiting from economic rent in a "confraternal capitalist system" requires access to political power; proximity, familiarity and friendship with power brokers; opaqueness and patron-client relationships,

requiring loyalty and not necessarily productivity. The Coalition has expanded its power base by relying on and benefiting from an authoritarian "confraternal capitalist system" and will not be able to prosper as much in an impersonal efficiency-seeking market capitalist system.

Cultural platform. The Coalition firmly believes in the truth, validity and legitimacy of its own perception of Islam, which it attributes to a religious jurist. The claim by the Coalition that it obediently follows the lead of a Source of Emulation legitimizes it to treat all its political rivals as effectively un-Islamic. In practice, however, the Coalition has sought and followed the Islamic interpretation that best suits its own interests. The Coalition has consistently claimed that its positions were a pure reflection of Ayatollah Khomeini's. However, following its own interest, the Coalition did not shy away from opposing Khomeini's decision to support Mousavi's economic policies during his Premiership. Yet the Coalition's argument that they represent and uphold true Islamic values because those values have been identified as such by the Islamic jurists, constitutes the main pillar of their claim to legitimacy as a political force. Khatami's alternative Islamic discourse, with its own vocabulary and categorizations, presented a real challenge to the Coalition. During Khatami's presidency, the Coalition was confronted with a young and well-read generation of Islamic intellectuals, which compelled it to define and redefine its ideology in relation to their theories.

According to Bādāmčiān, pluralism has no place in an Islamic government, since it leads to chaos, the emergence of a violent dictatorship or the hegemony of foreigners (*Šomā*, 21 Farvardin, 1378 Š./10 April 1999) The Coalition's dislike for pluralism in all its aspects sets the tone for the cultural platform of this political organization. The notion of "freedom for the opposition" became an important slogan of Khatami's election campaign and gradually gained popularity as a virtue and a value during his presidency. The Coalition's response to the spread and popularity of an invitation to political and cultural tolerance for the "other" was one of anxiety and suspicion. To the Coalition pluralism, tolerance and indulgence befogged the clearly delineated boundaries separating the righteous revolutionary Islamic forces or the Coalition and its concordant forces, who were worthy of running the state, from the undeserving "others." Acceptance of the rights of "others" or pluralism and tolerance weakened categorical distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, and friends and enemies. The Coalition, however, promoted and needed to homogenize in order to label. It viewed pluralism

and the extension of freedom to the opposition as a possible Horse of Troy which could not only pave the way for a parliamentarian overthrow of the Islamic system, but would also undermine Islamic values by promoting moral laxity and gender mixing (*Šomā*, 8 Ḵordād 1378 Š./29 May 1999). To the Coalition, the application of authority and homogenization were undisputed virtues in all domains (*Šomā*, 4 Āḏar 1385).

As the non-clerical custodian of Islamic values, the Coalition is deeply alarmed about the erosion of certain values and principles in the face of what it conceives to be a "cultural assault." Convinced of an ongoing conspiracy against the cultural Islamic values of society, the Coalition adopts an offensive position against all its political rivals who may think differently. In its weekly, *Šomā*, the Coalition officially itemized the cultural strategy of the "enemy." (*Šomā*, 11 Āḏar 1385 Š./2 November 2006). It argued that subsequent to the failure of its military assault against the Islamic Republic, the enemy sought to destabilize the Republic through a "cultural assault." According to the Coalition, the "enemy" conducted its cultural campaign against the Iranian youth on eight different fronts: first, advertisement and propagation of Western lifestyles, worldliness and Westernization; second, propagation of secularism and the division between religion and politics as an ideal political model; third, the propagation of pluralism and the multiplicity of discourses in relation to religion and Islam with the objective of wiping out the original, correct and pure Mohammedan discourse; fourth, presenting a violent and terrorist image of Islam; fifth, mocking Islamic beliefs and sanctities through desecrating otherworldly values; sixth, assaulting and attacking the basis of Islam, the Islamic system and all those institutions guaranteeing the Islamic nature of the system; seven, propagating the notion of duality in the power-structure and the government, while pitting the elected against the appointed in the system; and eight, changing the taste, demand and expectation of people and channeling them to collide with the ideals and objectives of the Islamic Revolution.

The Coalition maintains that the "cultural assault and massacre of the revolution's third generation" has been paved by governments adopting a policy of "tolerance and indulgence." According to the Coalition, this cultural assault was akin to a "silent toppling" of the system, with newspapers, books, films, CDs, DVDs, journals and free tribunes at universities acting as its main foot soldiers. (*Šomā*, 11 Āḏar 1385 Š./2 November 2006). In its reaction to events that could be categorized as "cultural assaults," the Coalition has been

accused of supporting a discourse of violence (*Payām-e emruz*, Šahrivar-Mehr 1378 Š./September-October 1999). During the student unrests that followed an attack by the security forces on the main dormitory of Tehran University in July 1999, the notion of "cultural assault" blended with "political assault." Askarawlādi supported Ayatollah MesÂbāḥ Yazdi's position in relation to the use of violence against dissidents, nonconformists and rioters, who were categorized as "corruptors and assailants." Askarawlādi supported MesÂbāḥ as "one of the most outstanding figures of the Qom seminary" and "an astute and deep connoisseur of Islam" (*Šomā*, 28 Mordad, 1378/19 August 1999). MesÂbāḥ Yazdi had justified violence by arguing that: "Islam allows any Muslim to kill a person who insults Islamic sanctities" (*Payām-e emruz*, Shahrivar-Mehr 1378 Š./September-October 1999). In reference to the students, Askarawlādi argued that "undoubtedly those who had participated in Tehran's riots had entered the phase of toppling [the regime] and deserved to be considered as corruptors and assailants since they had taken their orders for such activities from espionage services of the enemy." Having categorized the students involved as "corruptors and assailants," Askarawlādi concurred with MesÂbāḥ that religious punishments (one of which could be death) had to be applied to the culprits and condemned those who criticized MesÂbāḥ as a theoretician of violence (*Šomā*, 28 Mordād, 1378 Š./19 August 1999). According to Bādāmčiān's assessment, the tumult was masterminded by "the Americans, the Zionists and a few dependent foreign governments in collusion with domestic mercenaries" (*Šomā*, 31 Tir, 1378 Š./22 July 1999).

Under the pretext of defending Islamic sanctities, the Coalition is said to have orchestrated waves of opposition against Khatami's government in order to limit constitutionally sanctioned liberties and freedoms. In its effort to curb such liberties, the Coalition is suspected of having compelled the Society of Tehran's Militant Clerics to write an open letter against Khatami in September 1999 (*Payām-e emruz*, Ābān 1378 Š./November 1999).

FROM RELIGIOUS MOURNING GROUPS TO POLITICAL PARTY

The provisional government of Ayatollah Mahdawi Kani in 1981 reflected the delicate balance of power between the very different economic and religious outlooks that had come together under the umbrella of the Islamic Republic Party. In the absence of the widely respected Mahdawi Kani in the subsequent government the differences and rivalries became more pronounced and confrontational. The influential members of the Coalition, especially Askarawlādi, resisted the statist and interventionist economic policies of

Mousavi. Economic disagreements over-flowed into religious disputes, with the pro-market Coalition accusing Mousavi's left-leaning interventionist faction of ignoring primary religious edicts. The brawl eventually necessitated the intervention of Khomeini. The topics of dispute and personal disagreements in the government mirrored the tug of war between two main factions in the IRP.

It was not until the differences between the two factions rendered the party effectively inoperative and the disagreements between President Khamenei and Prime Minister Mousavi, each representing a different faction reached new and unmanageable heights that in June 1987, the IRP dissolved itself to prevent the animosities from permeating throughout society. In the same year, the Coalition decided to reorganize itself independently and, having obtained permission from Khomeini, it began the new phase of its political activities and registered its organization under the name of Jamʿiyat-e Moʾtalefa-ye Eslāmi (*Šomā*, Dey 1384 Š./January 2005). The 12 founding members of the new organization were Amāni, Bādāmčiān, Tawakkoli-binā, MosÂtafā Ḥāʾerizā-deh, Abu'l-Fażl Ḥāji Ḥaydari, Sayyed AsÂḡar RoḳsÂefat, Moḥammad Jawād Rafiqdust, Mehdi Saʿid Moḥammadi, Ḥabib-Allāh Šafiq, Ḥabib-Allāh Askarawlādi, Aḥmad Karimi EsÂfahāni and Jawād MaqsÂudi (Qolāmi). Askarawlādi became Director General or the official leader of the organization and remained in that position until 2004, when he stepped down and Ḥabibi, took over from him as the Director General.

The Coalition's first Congress was held in the winter of 1992 (Dey 1370 Š./January 1992), followed by its second Congress two years later. At the 2nd Congress, the Coalition's charter was modified and the number of members on the Central Council was expanded from 15 to 30. The 5th Congress decided to change the name of its plenary meeting to a General Assembly. The most important change in the organization came during the 7th General Assembly, held in 2004. The Coalition members present at the General Assembly voted in favor of changing the Coalition's name to Ḥezb-e moʾtalefa-ye eslāmi or the Party of Islamic Coalition. Until the 3rd Congress in 1995, names of Central Council members as well as the time and place of the plenary meetings were largely kept secret from the public. The 4th Congress broke with this clandestine tradition and the organization became more transparent (Ḡolāmi). The 7th General Assembly was widely publicized by the Coalition. The names of 26 members of the Central Council were published, yet for some reason the names of four other members of the steering 30-person Central Council were

concealed. According to the official statistics of the Coalition, there was only one clerical figure and three women among the Central Council members. Thirty percent of the Central Council was reported to be young (*Šomā, Viženāma*, Dey 1384 Š./January 2006).

In February 1997, the Coalition published its official weekly newspaper. *Šomā*, appeared a few months before the presidential elections during which the Coalition forcefully campaigned for Nāṭeq Nuri. The name of the weekly, *Šomā* was the abbreviation for *šohadā-ye moʾtalefa-ye eslāmi* or the "Martyrs of the Islamic Coalition." During the first nine months of its publication, the expression of "Martyrs of the Islamic Coalition" was systematically printed at the top of the first page. Yet in October 1997, the "Martyrs of the Islamic Coalition" was first replaced by "Society of Islamic Coalition" and later by "Party of Islamic Coalition." During the past ten years, the scant and austere 8-page weekly has grown to a large 18-page tabloid. Before the publication of *Šomā*, the Coalition's positions and opinions were usually reflected in the pages of *Resālat* newspaper, which appeared in January 1986. The editor of *Resālat*, Kāẓem Anbārluʾi, became a member of the Central Council of the Coalition and the director of the Coalition's Political Center.

CONCLUSION

The upward social, economic and political mobility of the Coalition since its inception reflects a phenomenal transformation in the organization and its members. Coalition members have gone from obscurity to fame, from marginality to centrality, from militant contenders of power to influential members of the legislative, judiciary and executive branches. Their mode of organizational interaction was impacted by the milieu from which they came. The Coalition's first generation firmly believed in an all-male community in which relations were based on solidarity, selflessness, brotherhood, loyalty, charity and a sense of chivalry, all for the cause of God. These qualities were virtues to be aspired to in the pre-modern commercial world of Iranian bazaars (see BĀZĀR iii; JAVĀNMARDI). At the time of its inception, the Coalition was a small semi-clandestine, petty-trader, bazaar-based entity with the majority of its all male lower middle-class members in their youth, living very modestly in the popular neighborhoods around Tehran's bazaar. The Coalition's ideal was to be of service to Ayatollah Khomeini, in whom it believed as a religious as well as a political source of emulation, and to help him topple the regime. The Coalition has now developed into an official political party with its own youth, women, regional and international

organizations, holding regular open meetings and seminars. Its think-tanks are involved in studies, analysis, planning and policy formulation. The Coalition Party delegates participate in international seminars, pay official visits to countries such as China, Malaysia and Syria and confer with their governmental representatives.

Today, the Coalition has a distinguished place among the political and economic elite of Iran. By 2007, a good number of its members whom in the 1960s were committed to dismantling the Shah's regime would probably appear among the imaginary 1,000 families of power and fortune that is always said to have ruled. The Party and its members have concentrated political and economic power to an unprecedented degree. Even though leading Coalition members still officially meet with the people of the street and the traditional mosque-going folk in Iran, their political and economic success has physically, mentally, inspirationally and ideologically uprooted them from the soil, which nourished their zeal, ideals and aspirations. Caught in the duality of its past and present, the Coalition needs to decide the ideal Islamic behavior which it wishes to promote among its younger members. Would it choose the lifestyle, ethical norms, value systems and aspirations of the likes of Boḵrā'i, Ṣaffār Harandi, Niknežād, Amāni, and ʿErāqi, who sacrificed their lives for its cause or should it candidly accept the events since the revolution and its own earthly conditions embroiled with economic and political power and all that is associated with it?

The first generation of the Coalition, with its dated ethical norms, has now come to be viewed as "dead wood" and dinosaurs facing extinction by the new generation of Islamic conservatives, emerging primarily from the Revolutionary Guards and Mobilization forces. They have been represented by various short-lived and disposable groupings such as "The Constructors" (*ābādgarān*), "The Sacrificers" (*iṯārgarān*), "The Pleasant Scent of Service" (*rāyeḥa-ye ḵoš-e ḵedmat*), and the recently created rubric of "The United Front of Conservatives" (*Jebha-ye mottaḥed-e oṣulgerāyān*). Yet as upstart political groups, they have no real commitment to playing the game of politics according to the values and norms of the Coalition's first generation.

In the 2nd Local Elections of February 2003 and the 7th Parliamentary Elections of November 2004, under pressure from their young and parvenu political rivals, key Coalition members desisted from running for office, which may result in its gradual elimination from political power. The new conservative rivals of the Coalition, with their new political ethics who

attained power in the above Elections, and more specifically in the Presidential Elections of 2005, saw no reason to share the power they had obtained through their own political acumen and tactical astuteness with the Coalition (see further ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS IN 20TH CENTURY IRAN).

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