

Jama'at Islami is a political outfit in the guise of religious revivalist movement. It was founded in Lahore on 26th August 1941 by Sayyid Abu al-A'la Mawdudi (d. 1979), a journalist and political activist. Mawdudi was joined by people like Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi and Mohammad Manzur Nu'mani of Deoband. Soon after its creation, the party established its headquarters in Pathankut in East Punjab, led by Mawdudi as its first president. Between 1941 and 1947, the Jamaat spread its messages across India through its widely distributed literature, rallies, conventions, and public sessions.

The Jamaat followed the teachings of Mawdudi, which are primarily based on Salafism / Wahhabism.

Since the 1960s Jama'at-e-Islami has also developed a women's wing as well as semi autonomous organizations such as publication houses and unions, especially a student union, Islami Jam'iyat Tulaba.

Following the partition of India, the Jamaat divided into three separate units for India, Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan. Mawdudi, along with the bulk of the original party leaders and members, left India for Pakistan and established the headquarters of Jamaat Islami of Pakistan in Lahore, and soon became fully immersed in Pakistani politics. Mawdudi and the Jamaat quickly approached the Ulama and other self-style religious movements in pressing the newly formed state for a Salafi constitution in the name of Islam. The Jamaat's activism culminated in an open confrontation with the elected Governments of Pakistan.

In 1951 the Jamaat became directly active in politics by taking part in the Punjab election. The anti-Ahmadiyah agitation in Punjab enhanced the party's political standing. In 1957 the Jamaat declared that it would participate in the national elections of 1958 as a full-fledged party. But during Ayub Khan's rule, the Jamaat's offices were closed down, its activities were restricted and Mawdudi himself was imprisoned. Later, the Jamaat became more focussed for the removal of Ayub Khan and the restoration of a political climate that would be conducive to religio-political activism. Therefore, the Jamaat joined the alliance of political parties that advocated restoration of democracy and an end of Ayub Khan's rule.

During Bangladesh conflict with India, the Jamaat spearheaded a political movement that vigorously appealed to religious sentiment to weaken the Bhutto regime. It was the Jamaat that undermined the Bhutto government and in 1977 provoked a military coup d'etat.

In Zia ul-Haq period, Jamaat leaders occupied important government offices, including cabinet posts, and the party's Salafi / Wahhabi views were reflected in Pakistani government's programs.

By the end of the Zia period it was apparent that the Jamaat had become a powerful political force with significant social and cultural influence, in view of its organizational structure and ability to manipulate the Salafi factor in Pakistan's political balance.

Students Islamic Organization of India (SIO) is the students' wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, India. It was formed in 1982 to spread the teachings of Maududi among Muslim youth and students of India.