



# **The Pledge: ASA, Peasant Politics, and Microfinance in the Development of Bangladesh**

*Stuart Rutherford*

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The Association for Social Advancement (ASA) of Bangladesh recently topped *Forbes* magazine's first-ever list of the world's best microfinance banks. This is an extraordinary achievement for an organization that started life as a revolutionary movement aiming to bring a peasant-led government to the newly created and desperately poor South Asian nation of Bangladesh. This book tells the story of how ASA's determined but practical-minded founder and leader, Shafiqul Haque Choudhury, steered his organization through the maze of competing ideas about how best to develop poor countries. The book sets Choudhury's accomplishments in the context of Bangladesh's chaotic but inspiring postcolonial history and is rich in its understanding and descriptions of how ordinary village and slum dwellers deal with the complicated web of politics, international donations, and development expertise. The author's long and intimate knowledge of ASA and of Bangladeshi microfinance makes this one of the best case studies of a development organization available to the general public.

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