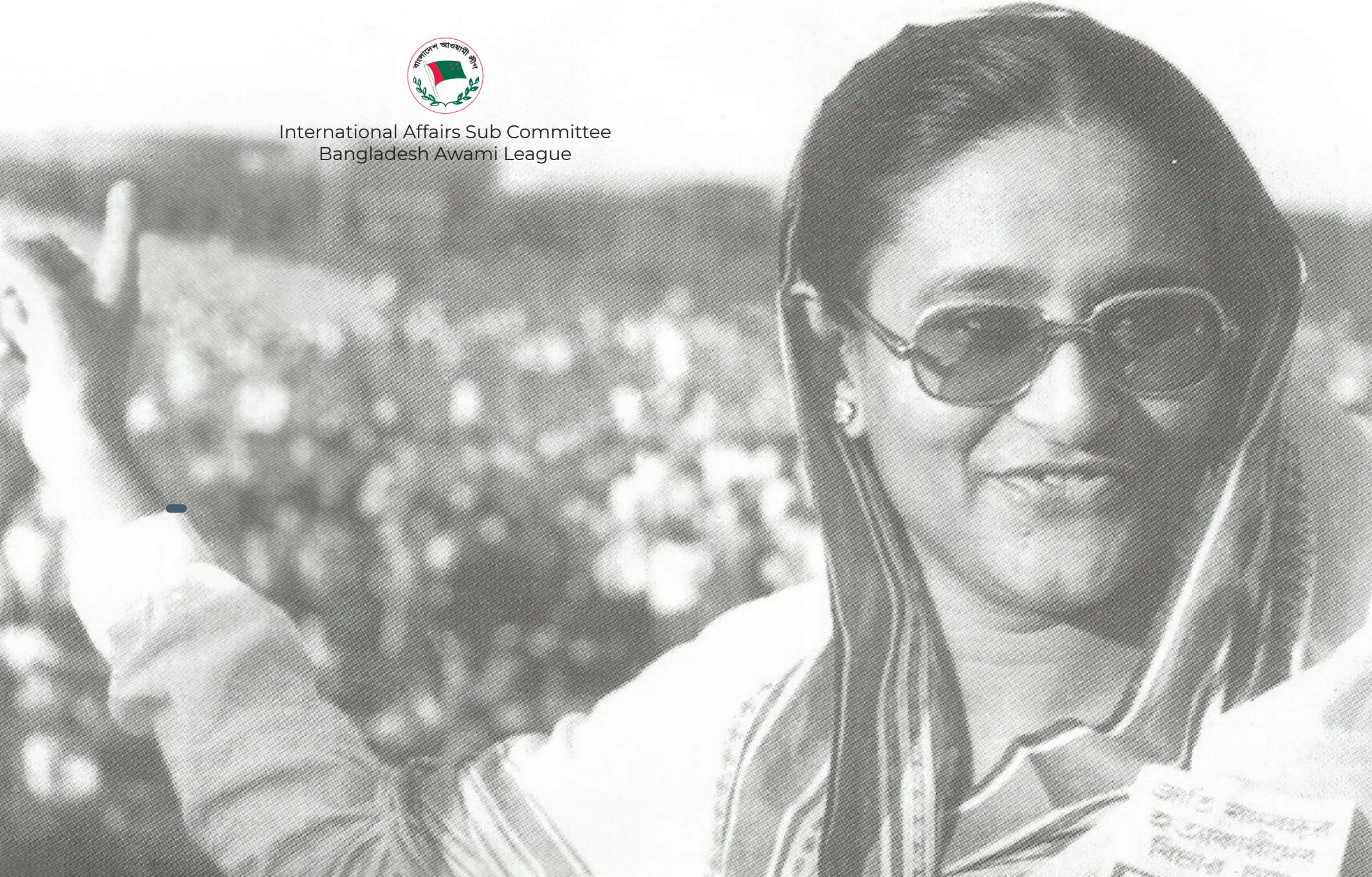


SHEIKH HASINA **PORTRAITS IN COURAGE**

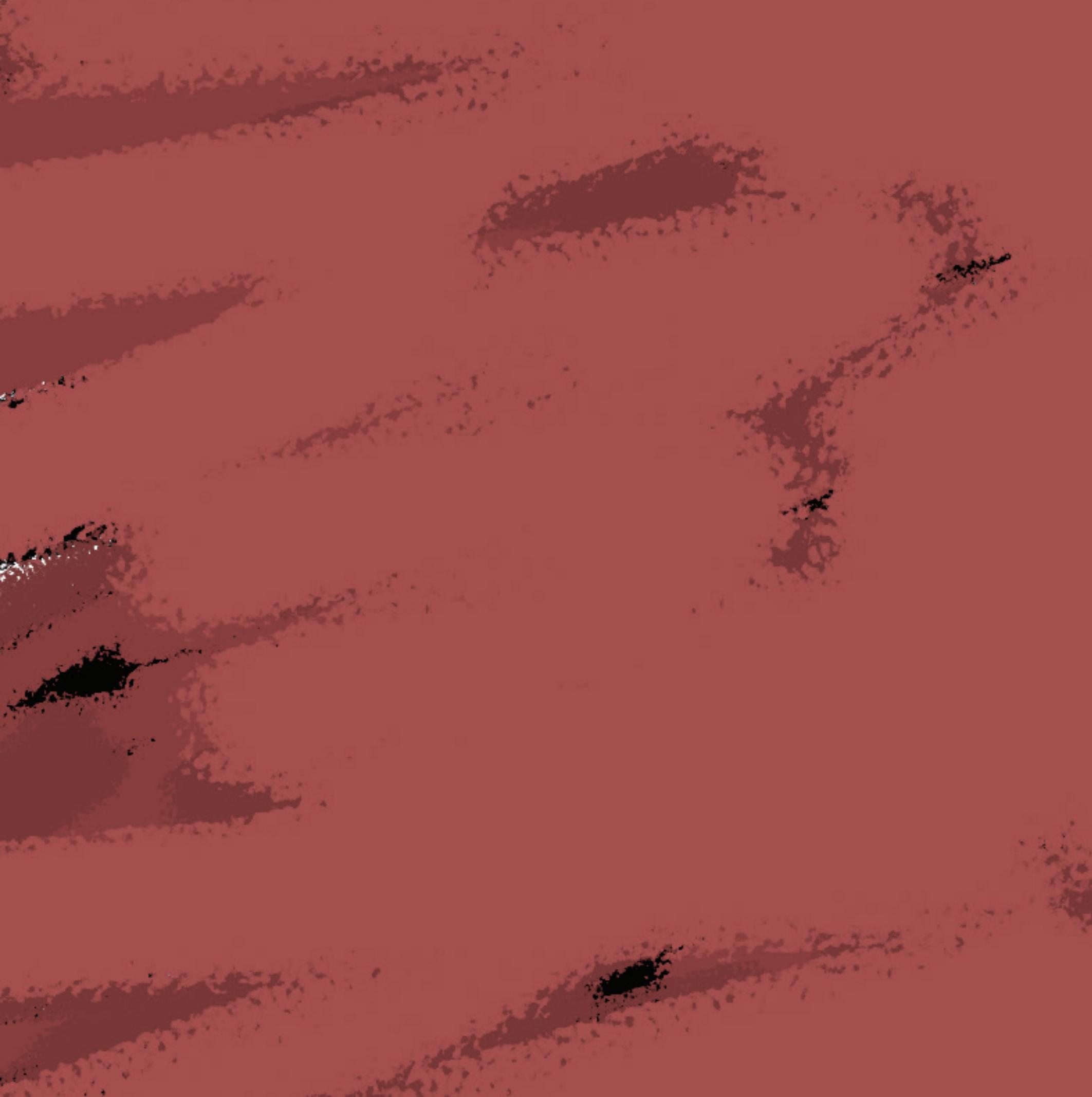


International Affairs Sub Committee
Bangladesh Awami League

Sheikh Hasina
Portraits in Courage



International Affairs Sub Committee
Bangladesh Awami League



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*I devoted myself to the task of welfare of my
countrymen - not as a ruler but as a servant.*

”

Sheikh Hasina

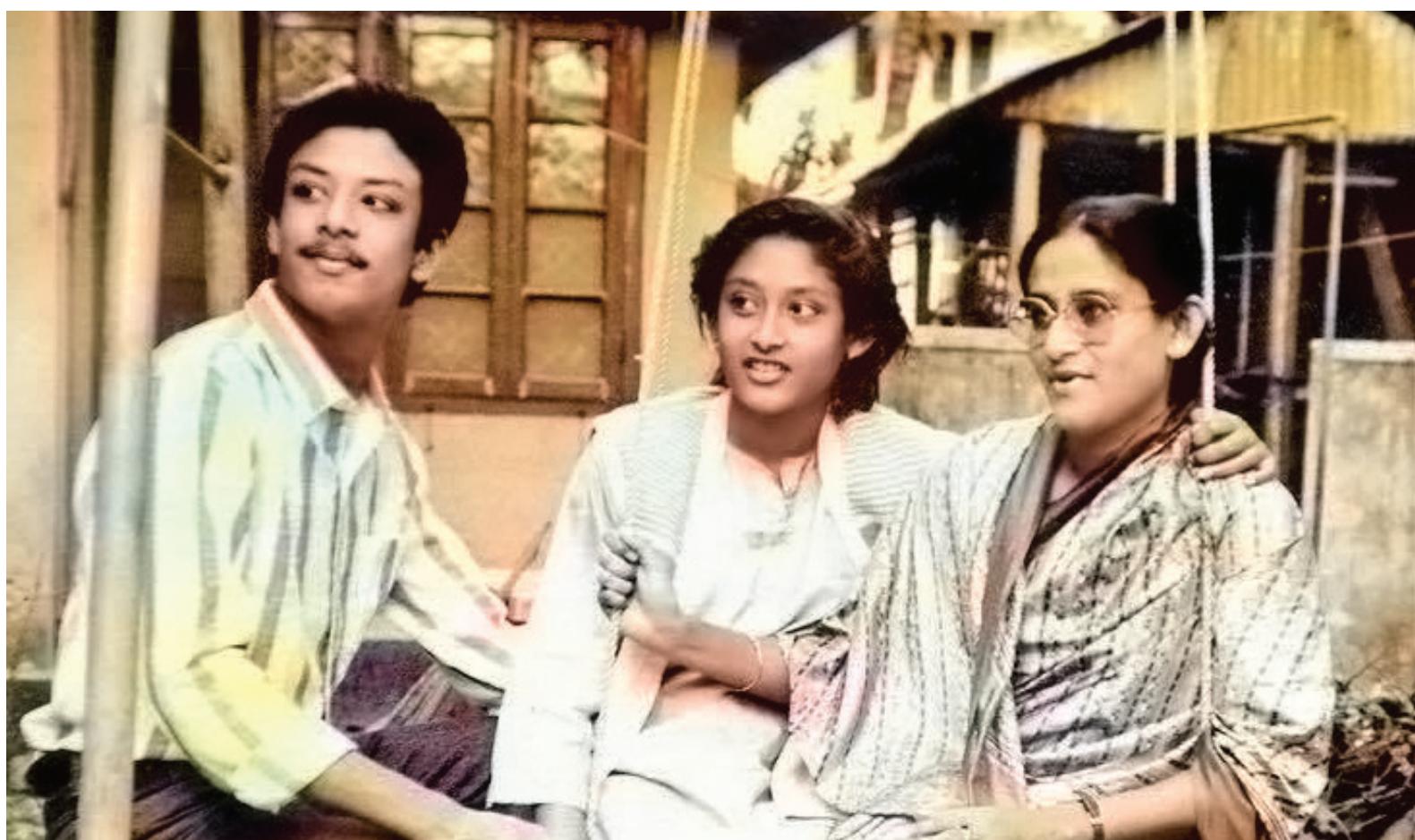
Born on 28 September 1947 at Tungipara Gopalganj, Sheikh Hasina was the eldest daughter of the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. As a result of being brought up in a household where politics was prevalent and almost an everyday affair, the political awakening of Sheikh Hasina started from a very early age. As a child and teen, she saw her father being arrested on a regular basis for standing up for Bangalis to the then rulers of Pakistan, often for long stretches of time. She also saw the patience and deftness with which her mother, Sheikh Fazilatun Nessa Mujib handled the family and political affairs during her father's prolonged periods of incarceration.

As a student of the Azimpur Girls High School, she was an activist against the then military ruler General Ayub Khan and even took out a pro-democracy procession with fellow high school students. As a student of Eden

College, Sheikh Hasina was elected the Vice-President of the college's students' union in 1963. Whilst a student of the University of Dhaka in 1967, Sheikh Hasina married the nuclear scientist Dr M A Wazed Miah. Together, they would have two children: Sajeeb Wazed, an ICT Specialist and Saima Wazed, a mental health advocate. She kept up her political activism as a student in university, and was elected the General Secretary of the Rokeya Hall Unit of Bangladesh Students' League in 1973. Life came to an abrupt halt on the dark night of 15 August 1975, when Sheikh Hasina lost almost her entire family, save her younger sister Sheikh Rehana, as a group of renegade military officers with the help of national and international conspirators, carried out a mass murder of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members at his residence in Dhanmondi, Dhaka.



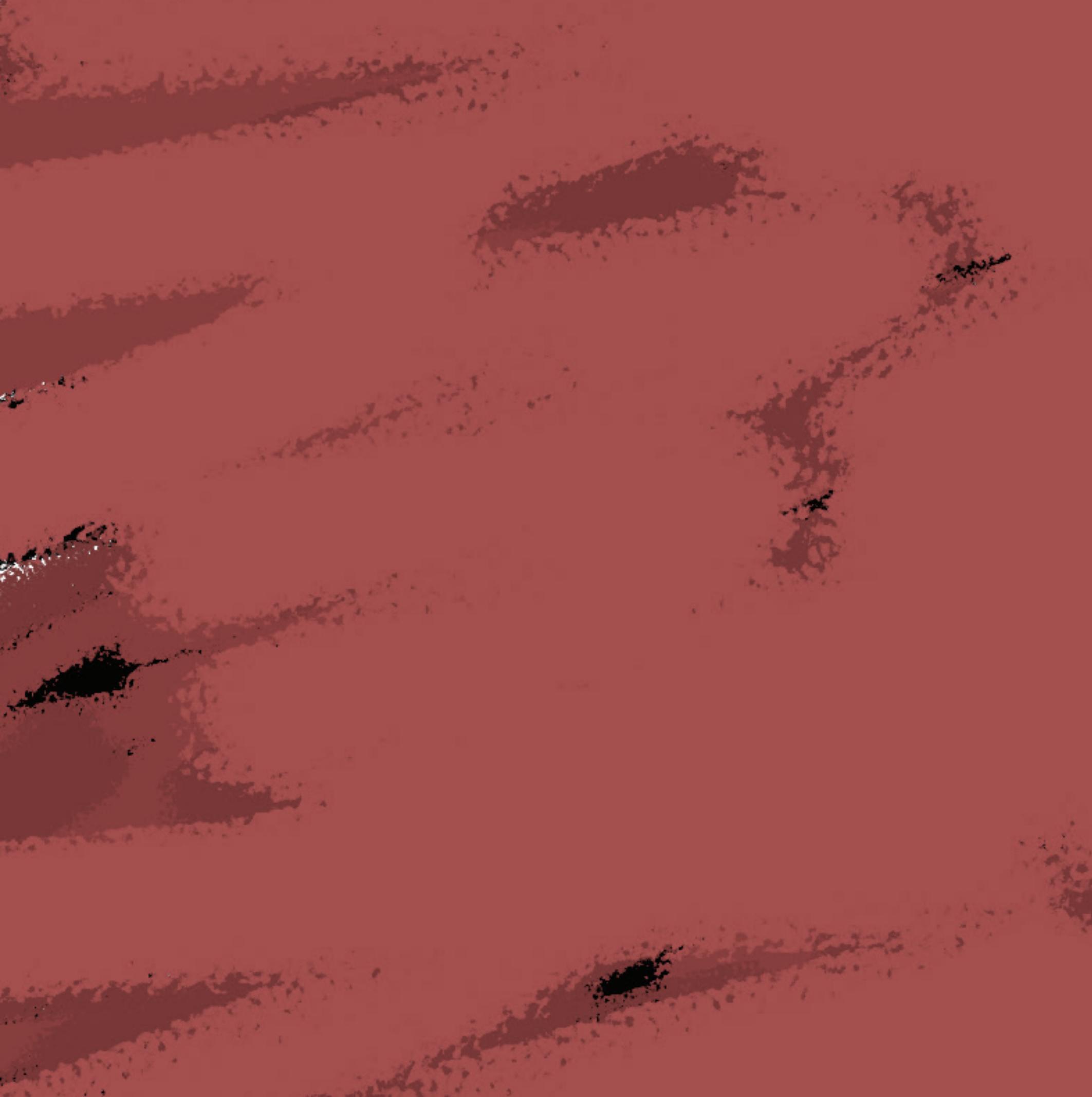
Left: Sheikh Hasina at Gopalganj.
Top Right: Young Sheikh Hasina with her grandparents.
Bottom Right: Sheikh Hasina with her siblings.



Top Left: Sheikh Hasina and her well-known smile.

Top Right: Wedding photograph of Sheikh Hasina and Dr. Wazed Miah.

Bottom: Sheikh Hasina with her children Sajeeb Wazed (Left) and Saima Wazed Hossain (Centre).





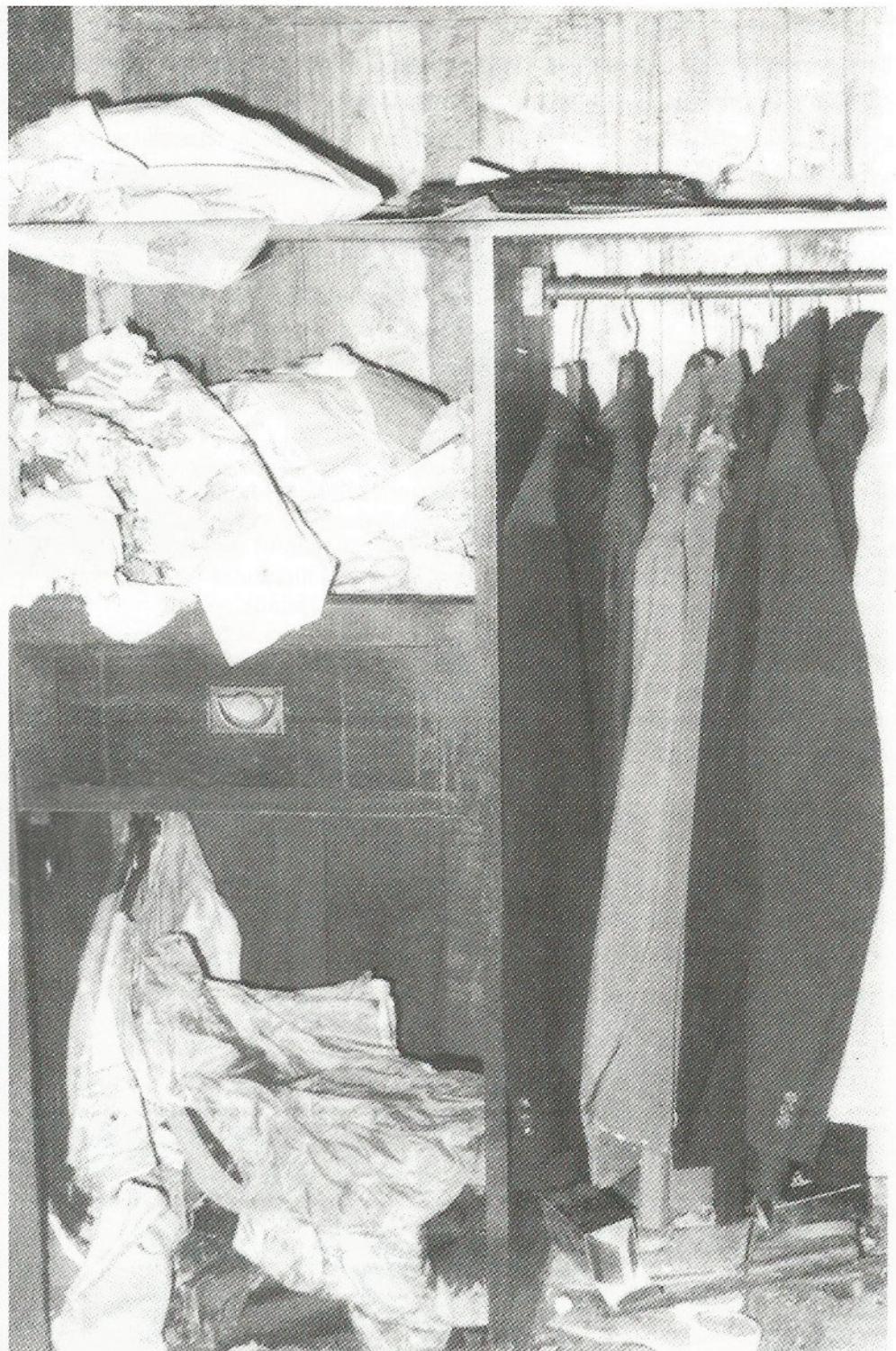
Strength Through
Tragedy



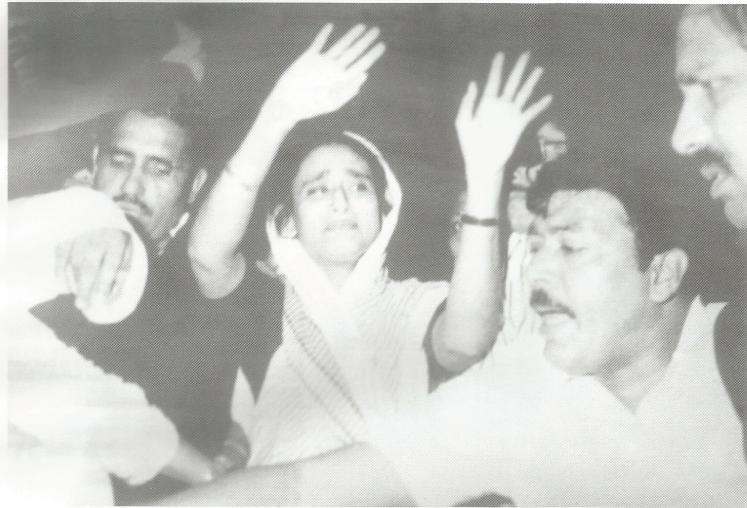
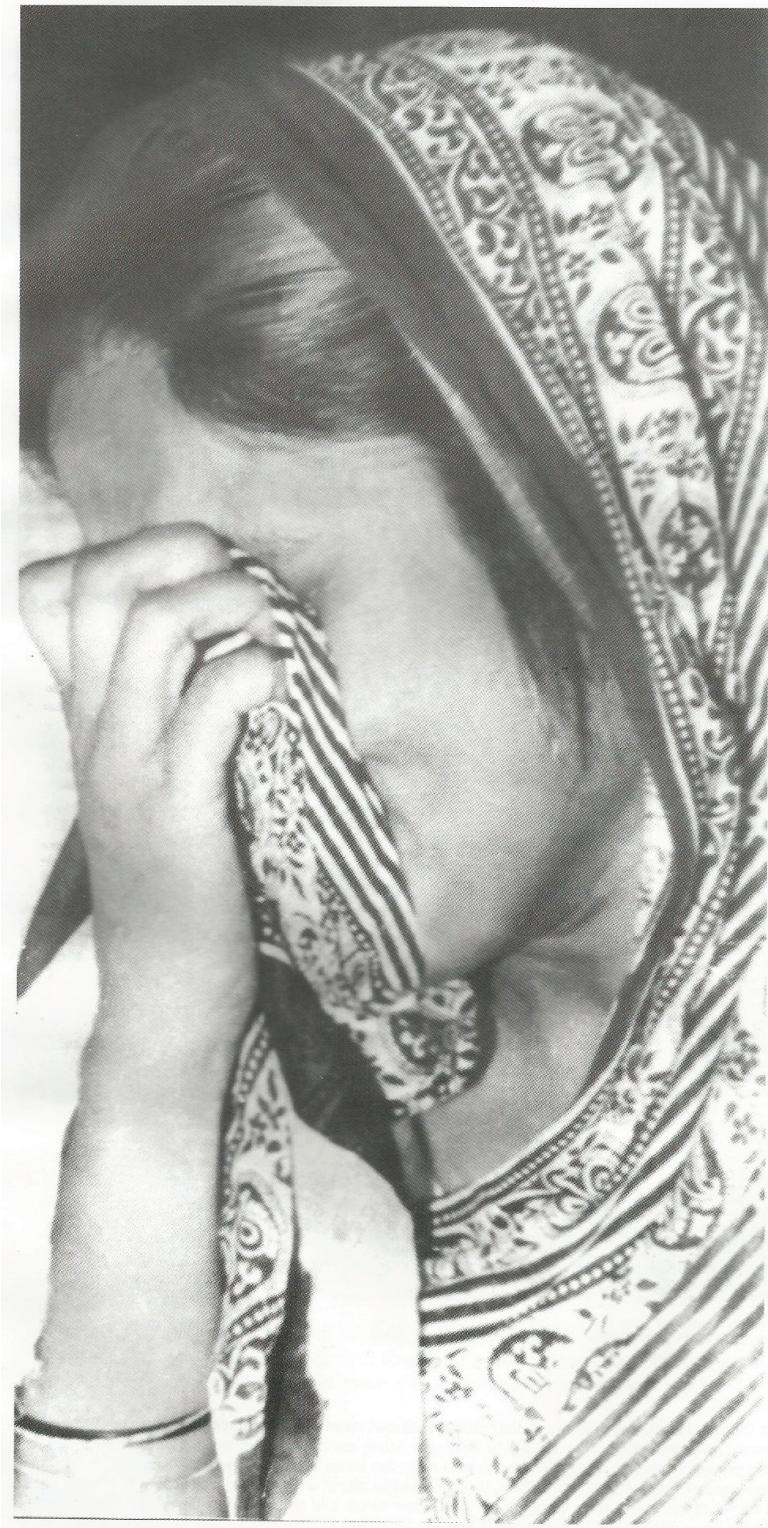
10 Sheikh Hasina: Portraits in Courage

The days following the 15th August tragedy were particularly trying for Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana. It was only a stroke of fate that had saved her from the massacre, as Sheikh Hasina was holidaying abroad at that time with her husband and younger sister. From Belgium to Germany to India, life in forced exile for years tested the mettle of the young Sheikh Hasina. The killers and their patrons in Bangladesh wanted to finish their assignment by killing Bangabandhu's two daughters, hence, their lives were at risk even whilst in foreign exile. They had to change their names while staying in Delhi, India. However, despite the tragedy, Sheikh Hasina was bent on returning to Bangladesh and fight for democracy and justice for her family's murders. She kept in constant communication with her political colleagues in Bangladesh and was bidding her time and opportunity to return home. These six years would play a monumental role in the determined and relentless Sheikh Hasina that would emerge in the years ahead.

August 15, 1981: Sheikh Hasina broke into tears upon returning to her father's home at Dhanmondi 32 after six years of her family's assassination in 1975.



August 15, 1981: Sheikh Hasina in front of her father's closet at Dhanmondi 32 where Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and more than 19 people were murdered on August 15, 1975.



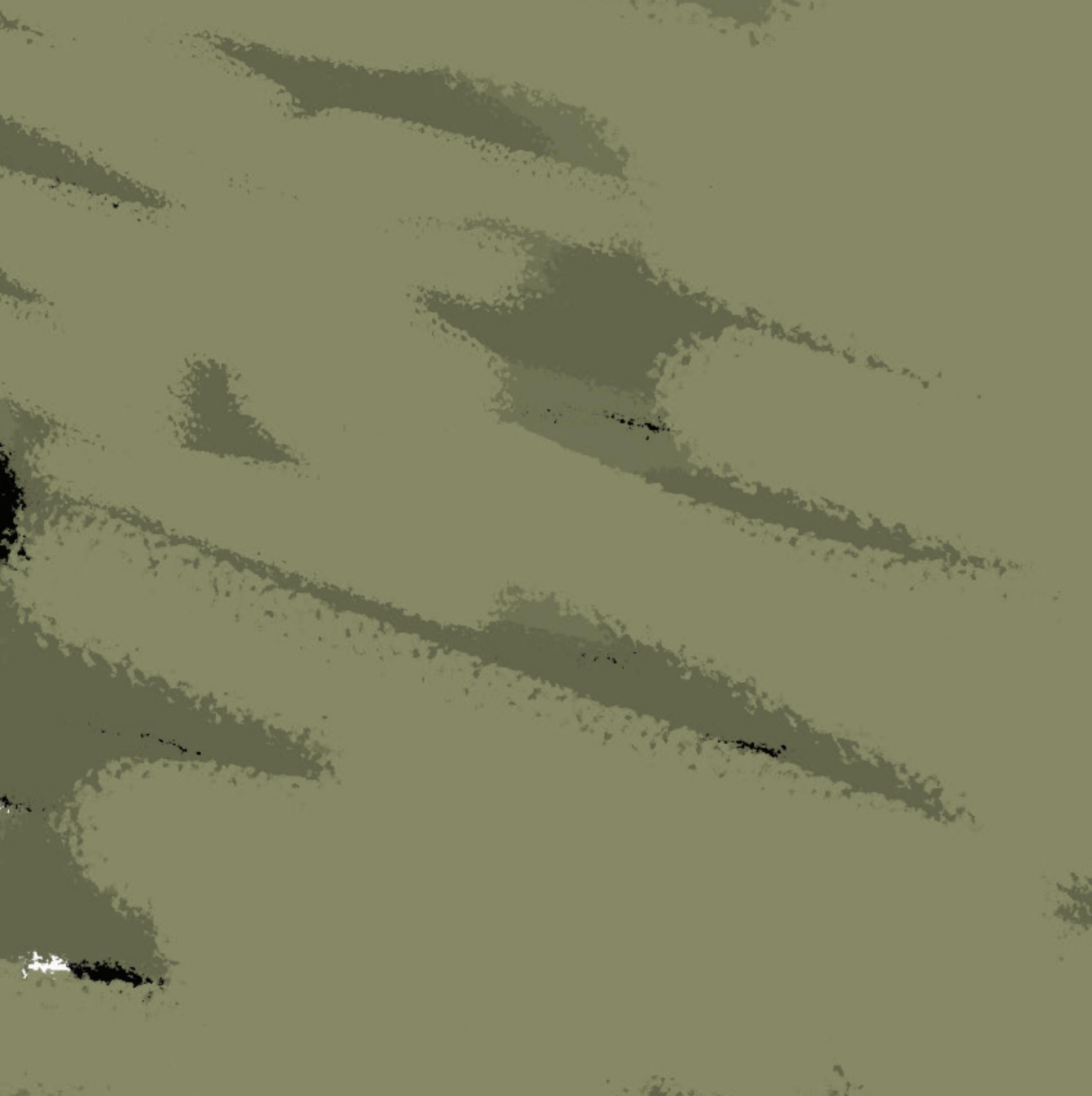
Left: August 15, 1981: Sheikh Hasina broke into tears upon returning to her father's home at Dhanmondi 32 after six years in exile.

Top Right: May 17, 1981: Sheikh Hasina returns home from exile despite threats on her life.

Bottom Right: August 15, 1981: Sheikh Hasina discovers a diary of her father, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



August 15, 1981: Sheikh Hasina, mournful and devasted, looking at memories of her assassinated family at Dhanmondi 32.





Fight for

Democracy

In 1981, whilst in exile, Sheikh Hasina was unanimously elected as the President of Bangladesh Awami League, the party which led the country's independence struggle and War of Liberation. On 17 May 1981, disregarding the prohibitions and intimidation of the then military ruler General Ziaur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina returned to Dhaka, Bangladesh after almost six years of forced exile. In 1982, Sheikh Hasina announced the regime of military ruler General Ershad 'illegitimate' and announced an all out movement for reinstating democracy and the constitutional rule. As a result of being the figurehead of the movement for democracy, Sheikh Hasina was a prime target of the military regime. On 15 February 1983, a total of 31 political leaders including Sheikh Hasina, were arrested for their political activism. For the coming years, Sheikh Hasina would quickly become the most prominent political leader of Bangladesh and hence, was under constant threat from the regime and its beneficiaries. This was also a time when the killers of her family had become more visible in the political scene of the country having formed their own party called 'Freedom Party'. These actors were

ready to use any and all means necessary to silence Sheikh Hasina for their own gains. She came under attack in various times and places, including notably being fired upon by the police and paramilitary forces in Chattogram on 24 January 1988. While she barely survived, nine activists and leaders of Awami League were killed in the attack. By the end of the decade of 80s, Sheikh Hasina had established herself as the biggest challenger to the Ershad regime as she had brought all pro-democracy political forces under one umbrella. In 1990, the movement for democracy had been consolidated under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina and by the month of December, Ershad's position had become untenable. Due to mass movement, led by Sheikh Hasina, and wholeheartedly fuelled by students and youth, General Ershad resigned on 6 December 1990. After a caretaker regime headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed arranged free and fair elections on 27 February 1991, Awami League under Sheikh Hasina emerged as the second largest party in Parliament, and Sheikh Hasina became the Leader of the Opposition.

1980's: Sheikh Hasina speaking at a public meeting of Bangladesh Awami League during Anti-Ershad Movement in Dhaka.



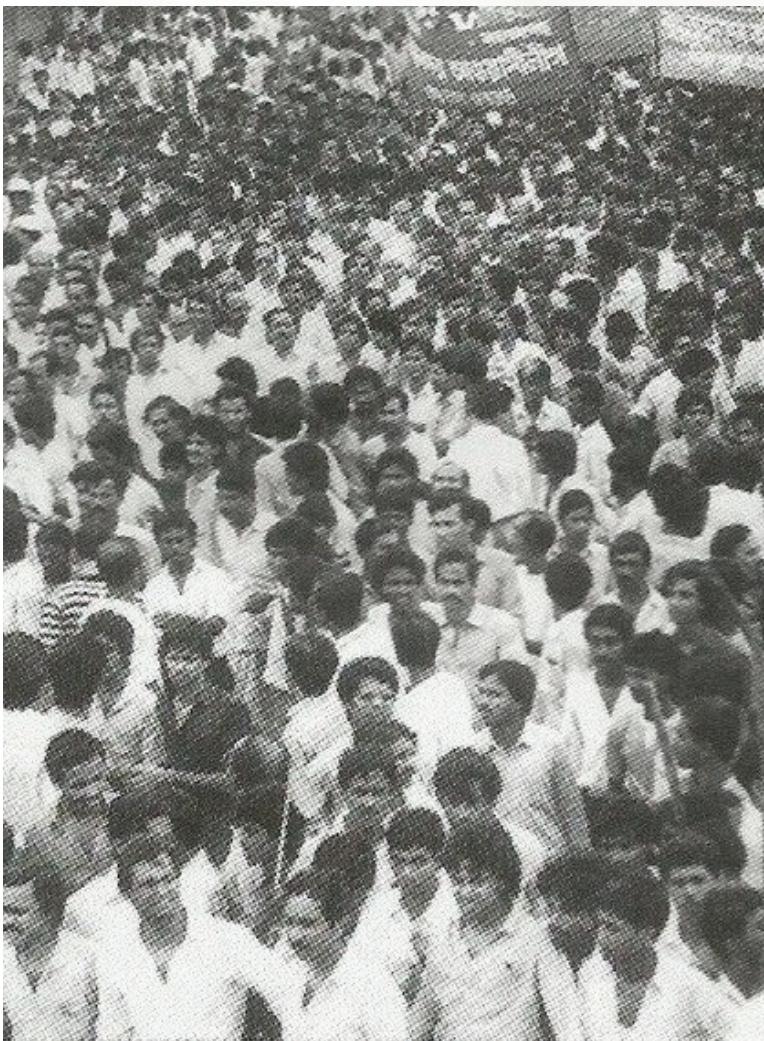


1980's: Sheikh Hasina-led 15 party alliance's collision with Police at a rally during Anti-Ershad Movement in Dhaka.

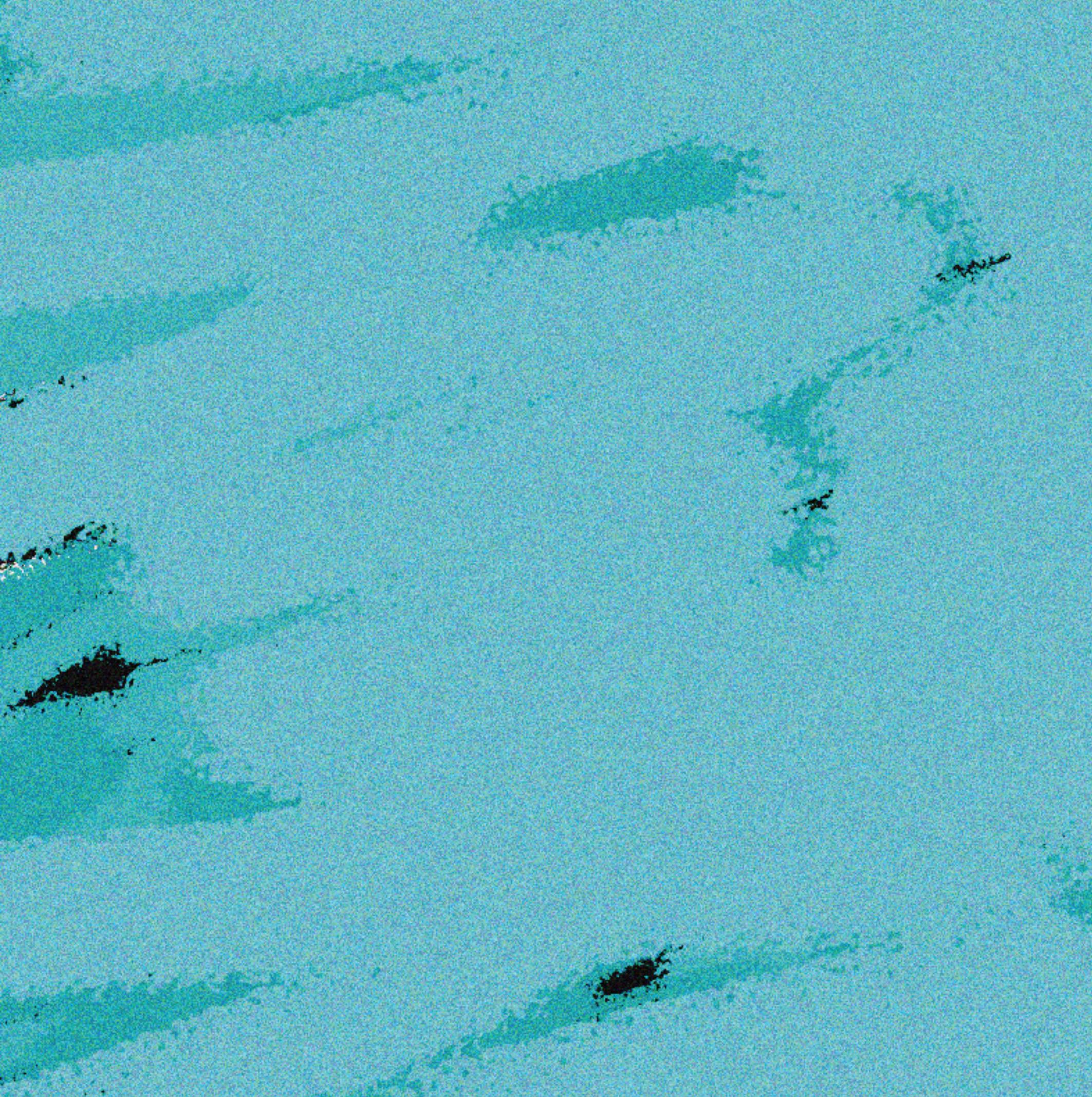


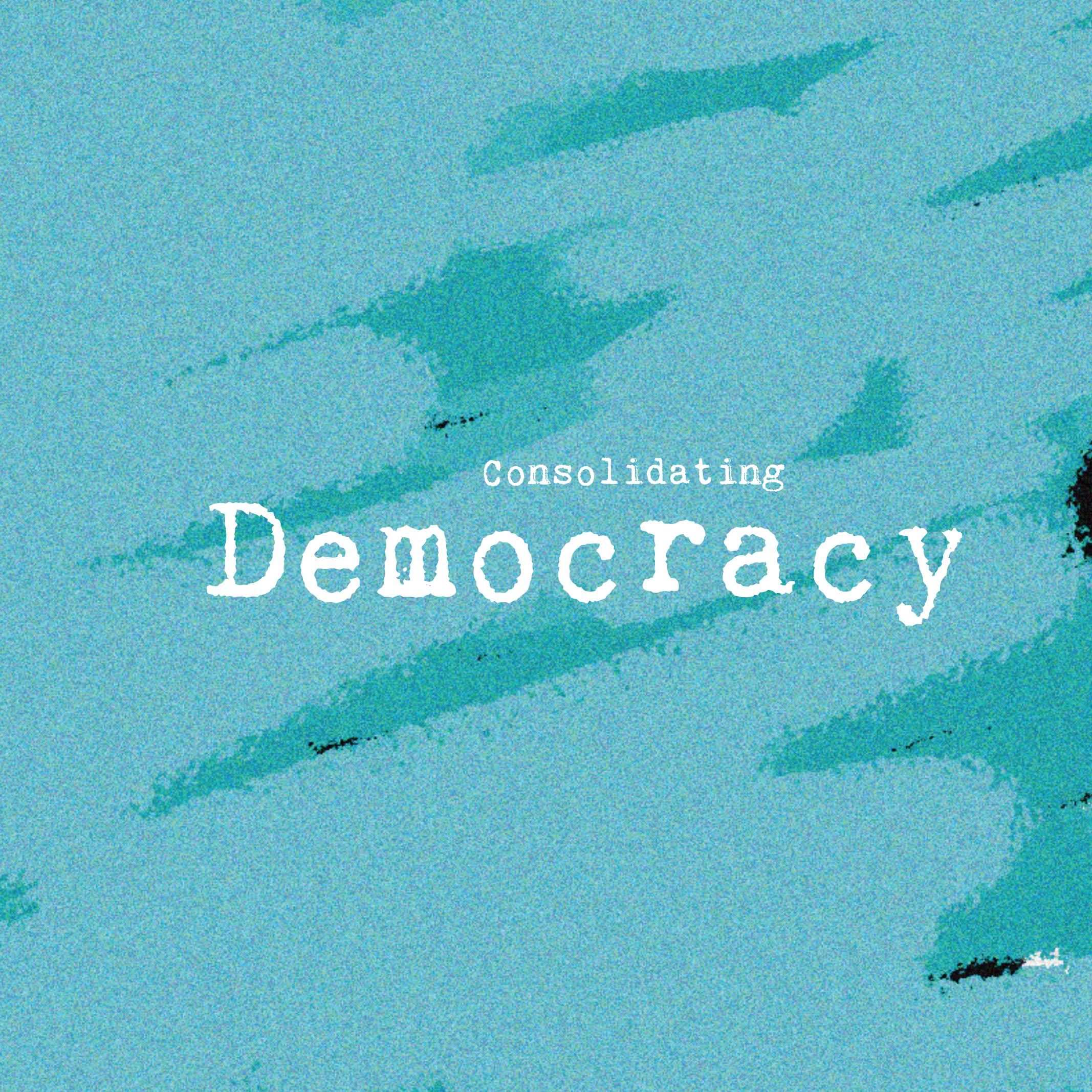


Top: 1990's, Sheikh Hasina (sitting in a rickshaw) with her fellow party leaders
Bottom: 1980's, Sheikh Hasina-led 15-party alliance in a clash with oppressing force of the then autocratic government

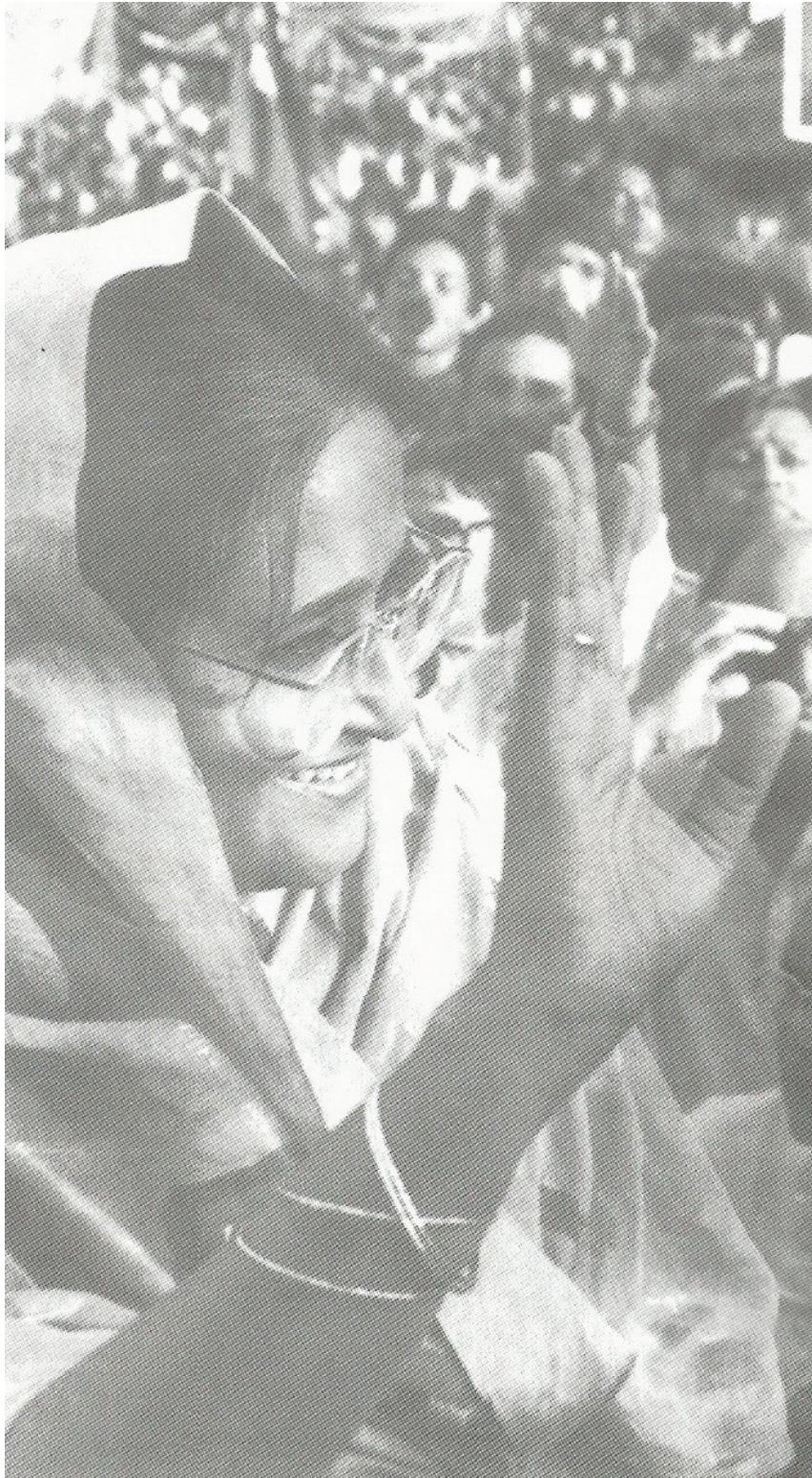


Top Left and Right: 1980s, Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting in Dhaka.
Bottom Left: 1980s, 15-party alliance procession during anti-Ershad movement in Dhaka.





Consolidating
Democracy



Between 1991 and 1996, Sheikh Hasina, as the Leader of Opposition, played a major role in the institutionalisation of democracy in Bangladesh. Through parliamentary procedures and political programmes, Sheikh Hasina held the government to account. She put up a political response to the creeping communalisation of politics patronised by Bangladesh Nationalist Party and their ally Jamaat E Islami by spearheading a cultural and social movement. At that point, she ceased being merely a political leader, and became a figurehead for progressive and secular politics in Bangladesh. At that point, a social movement led by Jahanara Imam was getting traction which demanded the punishment of war criminals who committed crimes against humanity during the 1971 Bangladesh War of Liberation. Sheikh Hasina lent her wholehearted support

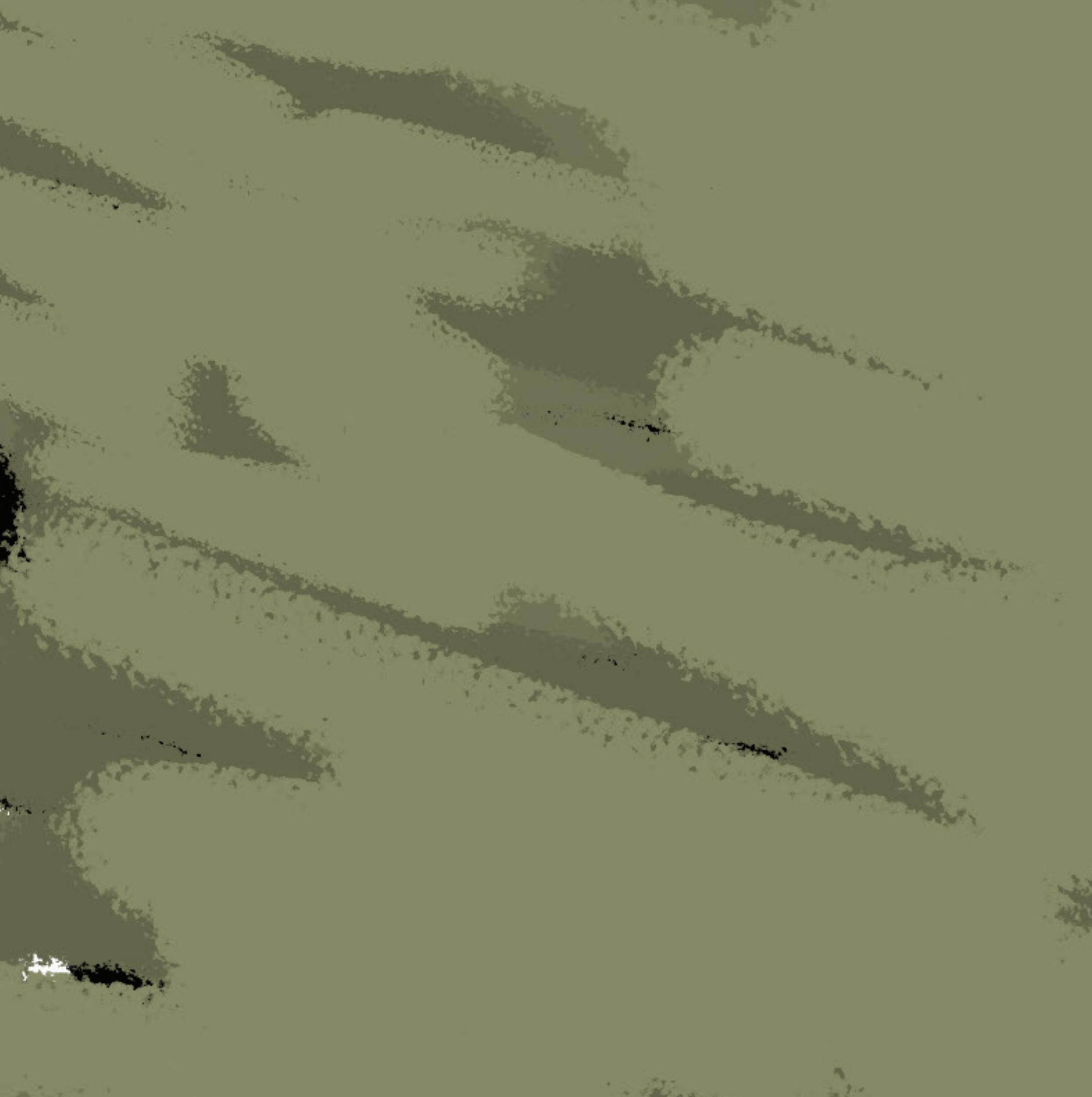
1990's, Sheikh Hasina waving at her party activists

for the movement. The BNP and their allies understood that there was no chance of getting a second term in government and hence planned a farcical election held on 15 February 1996. Awami League led the boycott of the elections and waged a movement for free and fair elections under a neutral caretaker government. Through a tremendous movement led by Sheikh Hasina, BNP was compelled to act and handed over power to a non party caretaker government. In a free and fair election held on 12 June 1996, Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina won a majority and formed government for the first time since the tragic events of August 1975. Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and embarked on the project of nation building.



Left: 1987, Sheikh Hasina leading a procession defying Police's directive while her car was being towed away.
Right: 1980's, Sheikh Hasina hoisting a black flag during a 15-party alliance procession.







Policy Driven
Development

During her first tenure as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina oversaw the first sustained period of growth and prosperity in the country's history. For the five years, the country's economy grew at an average rate of over 5%. Various social safety allowances were introduced for the first time to alleviate poverty such as the widows' allowance and the old age allowance. Other programmes such as the Ashrayan Project, One House One Farm, planned de-urbanisation etc helped transform the lives of millions of people for the better. Under her premiership, Bangladesh signed the landmark Ganges Water Treaty with India on 12 December 1996, solving a decades old water dispute. On 22 December 1997, Sheikh Hasina signed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Agreement, bringing to an end a long standing conflict between the majority Bengalis and

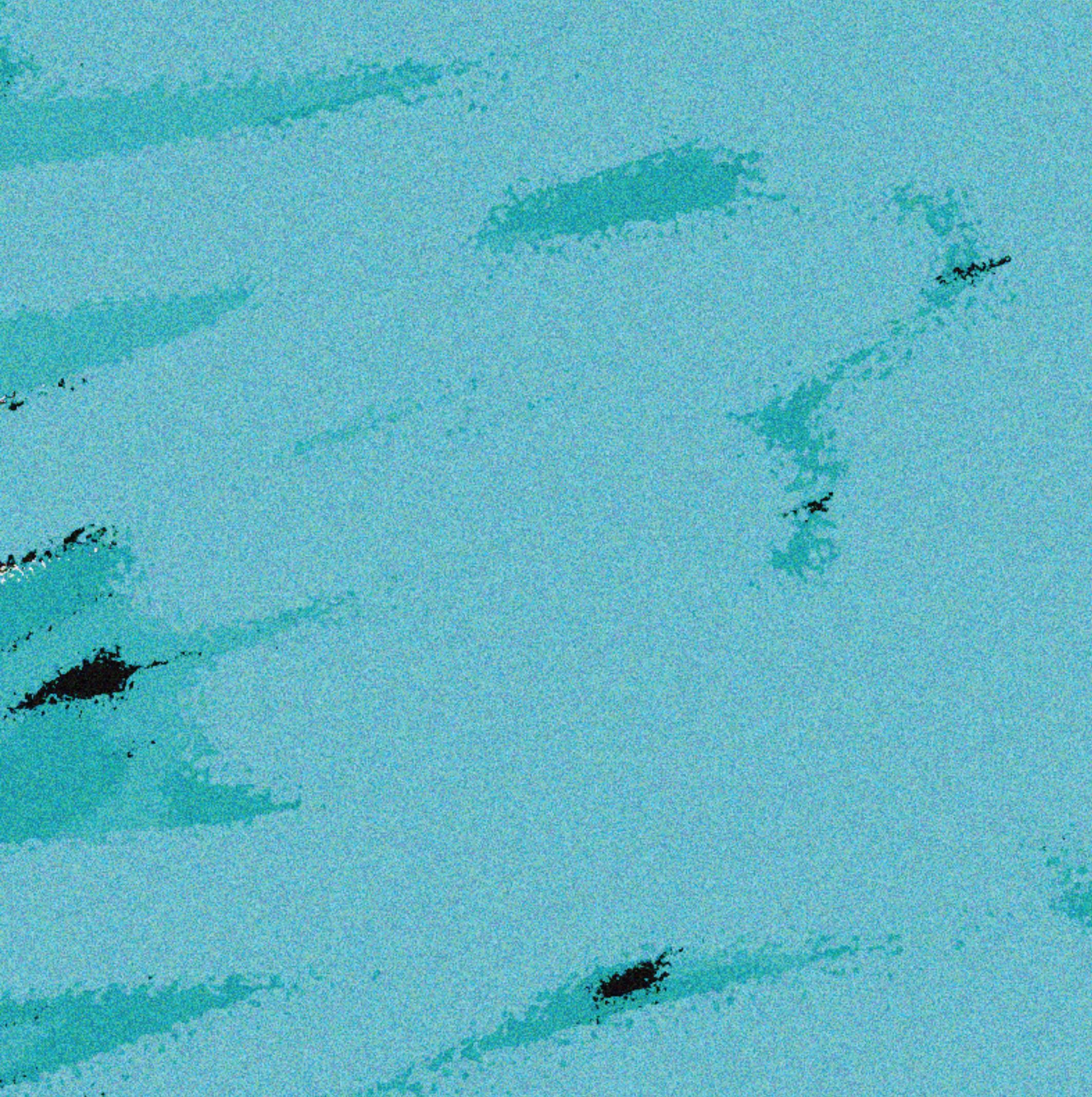
ethnic minorities in the Chattogram region. Her capacity in managing disasters was proved when she oversaw the relief and rehabilitation efforts during the huge nationwide floods of 1998. Sheikh Hasina took the initiative to get international recognition of Bangladesh's Language Movement and consequently, 21st February (Bangladesh's Language Martyrs' Day) was recognised as International Mother Language Day by the United Nations. Her reforms in agriculture were revolutionary and for the first time, Bangladesh became a food-self sufficient country from a reliant and deficient one. Upon completion of her tenure, for the first time in Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina peacefully handed over power to a neutral caretaker government on 13 July 2001.



Top: Rebel leader surrendering weapons to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after the signing of CHT Peace Agreement (1997)

Bottom Left: Sheikh Hasina at a paddy field

Bottom Right: Sheikh Hasina with her fellow party men during a visit to a far corner of Bangladesh



Corruption,
Terrorism and
Extra
Constitutional

Rule

Between October 2001 and January 2007, during the BNP-Jamaat Alliance Government, Sheikh Hasina played a brave and robust role as the Leader of the Opposition. This was a period of the rise of state-sponsored terrorism and corruption at the highest levels of the state. Groups like Jamaatul Mujaheddin Bangladesh were creating havoc in different parts of the country. Emboldened by support from the highest levels of government, on 17 August 2005, around 500 bombs were exploded by JMB at 300 locations in 63 out of the 64 districts of Bangladesh. Known war criminals like Motiur Rahman Nijami and Ali Ahsan Md. Mojaheed of Jamaat E Islami became Ministers in the Cabinet. The corruption, overseen by Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman, became an international disgrace for the country. For three straight years, Bangladesh was assessed as the most corrupt country in the world by corruption watchdog Transparency International. Sheikh Hasina became the voice of opposition during that time. From speaking out against the erosion of secular values to rising corruption affecting peoples' lives, only Sheikh Hasina was voicing the concerns of the mass people. Development of the country was at a standstill. She became the prime target of BNP, Jamaat and terrorist organisations. On 21 August 2004, all these forces came together to carry

out one of the worst terrorist attacks in the country's history. Military grade grenades were hurled at an Awami League rally in Dhaka which killed 24 people and injured hundreds. The target was Sheikh Hasina and the entire top leadership of Awami League. Having survived the attack, Sheikh Hasina mounted a consolidated opposition movement against BNP-Jamaat. During this time, BNP was also conspiring to get their own man as head of the caretaker government regime once their tenure was over. Sheikh Hasina and her party took a stance. And BNP was pushed into the back-foot. However, taking advantage of the political turmoil, a so-called caretaker government headed by Fakhruddin Ahmed was installed by the military on 11 January 2007, and it was the latter who held the real power in the country for the next two years. Sheikh Hasina was arrested on 16 July 2007 as part of a de-politicisation campaign of the military backed government. However, the regime underestimated the national and international appeal of Sheikh Hasina, and within less than a year on 11 June 2008 was forced to release her. Sheikh Hasina was offered the chance to escape arrest by going abroad by the powers that be. However, she did not opt for that as she was confident that the people would stand besides her. She was proved right.



Top: Sheikh Hasina and Zillur Rahman mourning the deaths on 21st August grenade attack during a rally on October 3, 2004.
Bottom: Unexploded grenade, lost sandals and dead bodies; the scene after the vicious grenade attack on Awami League in August 2004.



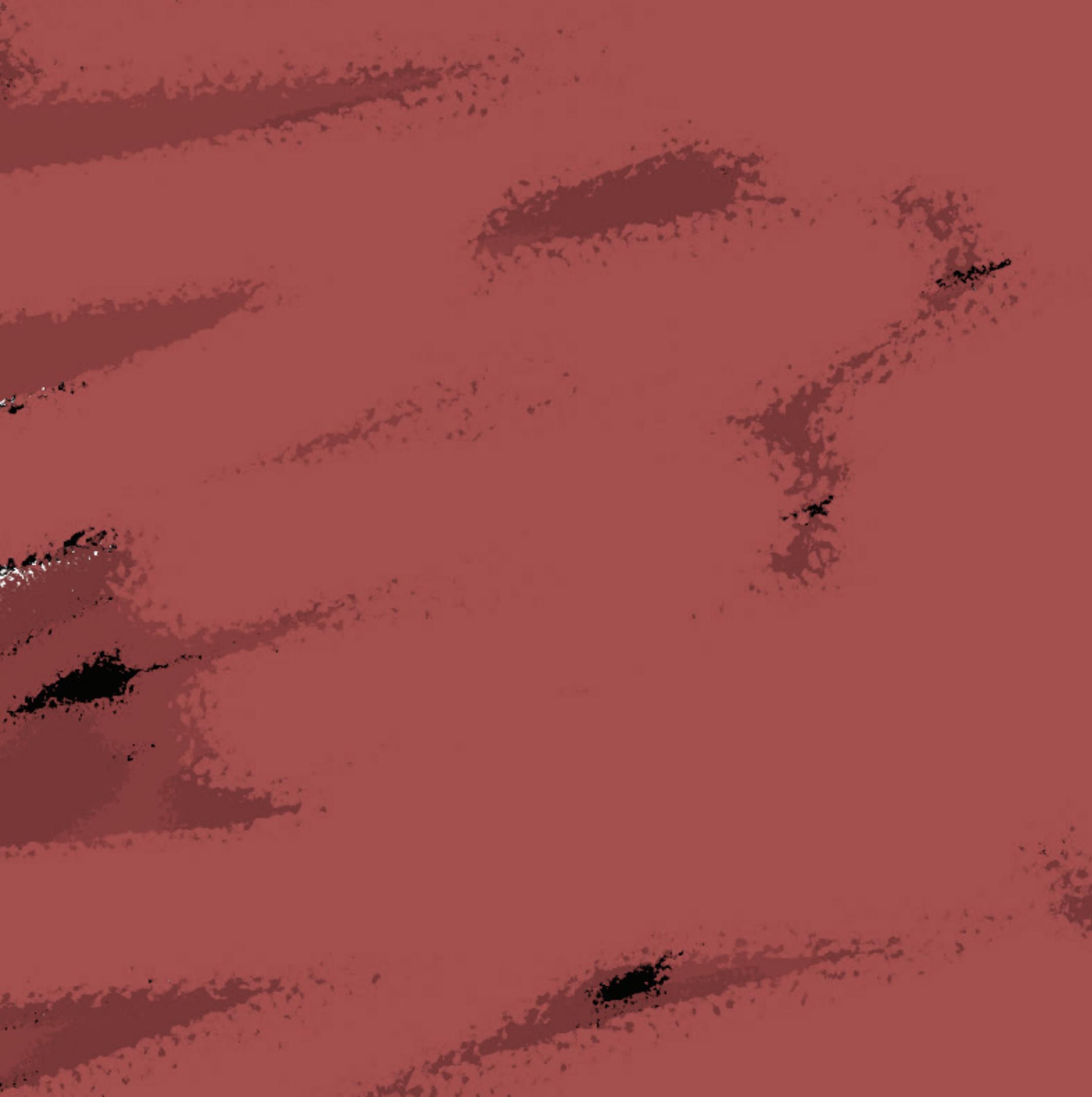
Top: An aghast Sheikh Hasina at a press conference a day after the 21st August Grenade attack.
Bottom: Awami League leaders and members of her personal security wing shield Sheikh Hasina during the grenade attack on an AL rally in the city on August 21, 2004.



Top: Police taking Sheikh Hasina into custody after the then caretaker government filed false corruption cases, July 17, 2007.

Bottom Left: Sheikh Hasina waving to a rapturous welcome from party activists and supporters after being released on June 11, 2008

Bottom Right: Sheikh Hasina won the 9th general election and became Prime Minister for the second time on December 29, 2008, with a landslide victory.





Politics of
Development

In the national election of 29 December 2008, the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina registered a landslide win with two thirds majority in Parliament. Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the second time as she took oath on 6 January 2009. This was followed by a successive term after the elections of 5 January 2014. During these two terms, she fulfilled her pledge to the nation to hold to account the war criminals of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War by forming the International Crimes Tribunal. Most of the notable war criminals have been tried and sentenced by this Tribunal. She also pledged to build a 'Digital Bangladesh', a technologically advanced country. Within the next ten years, she fulfilled her promise by introducing digitisation in every aspect of public and private lives. Digitisation has transformed people's lives and livelihoods, commerce, social and public services. Bangladesh now has 163 million mobile users, 103 million internet users, more than 1 million ICT sector freelancers and 5,275 Digital Centres which offers more than 200 digital government services.

Under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, Bangladesh has shown that economic growth can be accomplished side by side with social and human development. Bangladesh has become one of the fastest growing economies of the world, with average

GDP growth of 8% for the last three years. The coronavirus pandemic has hit the global economy hard. Despite that, Bangladesh achieved 5.24% GDP growth in 2020. Before the 2008 election, Sheikh Hasina promised to turn Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021. This was achieved within six years in July 2015. Since 2018, Bangladesh for the first time fulfilled the criteria for graduating to a 'developing country' from a 'least developed country'.

Millions of people have been lifted out of poverty in the last ten years as a result of Sheikh Hasina's policy of leaving no one behind. Poverty rate has decreased to 20.5% in 2019 from

31.5% in 2009. More than 145 social safety projects are being implemented by her government with annual allocation of more than 11 billion dollars. Between 2010 and 2020, the per capita income of Bangladesh has increased from 759 dollars to more than 2000 dollars. Bangladesh was once a food deficient country. The country is now self-sufficient when it comes to producing its own food grains, despite its decreasing land resources and huge population. Within a decade, food grain production has been increased from 27.2 million metric tonnes to 40 million metric tonnes. Bangladesh is now 3rd in rice production, 3rd in inland fish production and 3rd in vegetable production.

As a result of Sheikh Hasina's progressive policies, Bangladesh now leads South Asia in women's economic, political and social empowerment. In 2006, Bangladesh was 91st in the world in the WEF Gender Gap Report. In 2019, the position of Bangladesh has improved to 50th in the world. With a focus on "Education for All", Sheikh Hasina has invested heavily in education and thereby achieved tremendous feats in educating the people. Her initiatives like stipends, scholarships, free books, free mid-day meals, and multimedia classrooms has vastly improved Bangladesh's standing in all major educational indicators like increasing primary school enrolment rate, cutting down drop out rates, ensuring

gender parity and so on. "Electricity for All" was another political commitment of Sheikh Hasina. Within the last ten years, 97% of the population has been brought under electricity coverage. Apart from traditional energy sources, Bangladesh has also prioritised the development and usage of renewable energy sources like solar power as well as nuclear power. Power generation capacity has been increased to 23,436 MW in 2020 from 4,942 MW in 2009. On the international stage, Sheikh Hasina has been trusted voice on such issues terrorism and violent extremism, women empowerment, climate change, migration, international and regional peace, knowledge and technology transfer.

Photo:
Prime Minister Sheikh
Hasina and her sister
Sheikh Rehana at
Kutupalong, Cox's
Bazar visiting a
Rohingya camp



Her work in sheltering a million forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar in Bangladesh has also brought her global acclaim. In 2019, the Foreign Policy Magazine listed her as one of the top global thinkers for her work with the Rohingyas. For her work with the environment and climate change, Sheikh Hasina won the highest environmental accolade of the UN, Champion of the Earth in 2015. She has also fought terrorism with an iron hand during these terms. Under her leadership, Bangladesh is no longer considered a safe haven for transnational separatists and

terrorists, a notoriety gained during the BNP-Jamaat government. Bangladesh was also praised for the successes shown under Sheikh Hasina's leadership in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Now, Bangladesh is striving to achieve the next set of global development goals, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, Bangladesh signed the landmark Land Boundary Deal with India on 6 June 2015 and through international arbitration secured its sea boundary with neighbours India and Myanmar.



Sheikh Hasina visits construction of Karnaphuli River underwater tunnel (Chattogram, 24 February 2019).



On Path to
Prosperity

Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the fourth time on 3 January 2019, having won a landslide election on 30 December 2018. Her focus is on finishing the mega infrastructural projects and setting the agenda for the next sets of long term development goals. Sheikh Hasina has recently unveiled her government's Perspective Plan 2021-2041, which envisages turning Bangladesh into a developed country by 2041. In the current situation, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has led Bangladesh's fight against the coronavirus pandemic from the front. From revamping the healthcare system to carrying out one of the

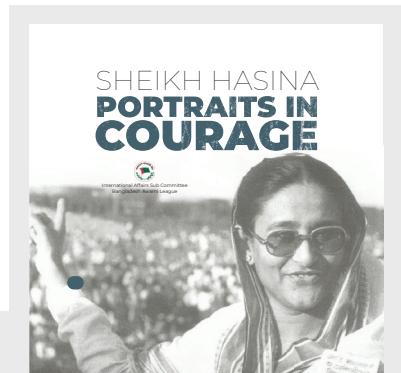
largest humanitarian relief operations of the country, Sheikh Hasina has shown the requirements of a leader in a tough situation. She has so far announced 19 stimulus packages worth more than 12 billion dollars to offset the adverse impacts of the pandemic on the economy. Her government has also announced a national budget worth more than \$67 billion designed to handle the economic, health and social challenges thrown by the coronavirus pandemic. She has also deployed her entire party machinery to stand besides the people hit hardest by the lockdowns imposed to contain the pandemic.

*Photo:
Sheikh Hasina became
Prime Minister for the
fourth and consecutive
third time in December
2018.*





Amid COVID-19 pandemic, Sheikh Hasina continues to work tirelessly to ensure people's safety and security, both social and economic.



International Affairs Sub Committee
Bangladesh Awami League

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