

# KILLING OF BABIES FEARED IN BENGAL

Many Born to Those Raped  
by Pakistanis May Be Slain

DACCA, Bangladesh, March 4 (AP)—Thousands of unwanted babies are about to be born in Bangladesh, and social workers believe many will be killed.

The fathers are Pakistani soldiers, the mothers Bengalis who were raped during last year's Pakistani Army repression designed to break the Bengali nationalist movement.

There are varying estimates of the number of pregnancies, but an organization for women's rehabilitation speaks of as many as 25,000. It says at least 50,000 girls were victimized by soldiers.

"The only way to prevent widespread infanticide is to rescue these girls," said Mrs. Tahera Shafiq, a professional social worker at the rehabilitation group's training center.

## 'Just Not Accepted'

"Girls with children but without husbands are just not accepted by Bengalis. We will have many families trying their utmost to get rid of the child in any way possible."

In cooperation with other groups, the organization is sending teams to seek out pregnant girls and to set up institutions to care for them.

Doctors for one voluntary relief organization at work in field clinics said they had received some reports of baby killings.

Many raped women have been sent away by their parents, some even by husbands, not to return until the birth—and not to return with a baby.

## Damages Family

Among the Bengalis, a girl who is pregnant out of wedlock damages her family as well as herself.

"An older sister might have difficulty getting married because her younger sister has an illegitimate child" Mr. Shafiq explained.

"Add to this the fact that these babies were fathered by Pakistani soldiers, and you can see why the feeling is so strong against them."

Moslem law condemns adultery in women but makes allowances for rape victims, especially in wartime situations.

"But the social custom that has evolved here changed that," Mrs. Shafiq said. Because of shame, some nonpregnant girls also have left home.

A women's home is sponsored as a pilot project by the Government of Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, and by international relief organizations.

A dimpled 15-year-old said that her prospective baby's father was one of the hundreds of soldiers who raped her at a cantonment near Dacca, where she was held with other girls in a brothel for the troops. She doesn't care what happens to her baby and she doesn't want it.

The home's director says: "Most are too far along now for abortions, and we have to convince them that they should go ahead and have their babies."

The home also is trying to provide relief to young widows with children but no jobs and also to girls orphaned by the war. It is caring for 40 women, plus five babies. The home is set up in the expropriated house of Nurul Amin, formerly a Pakistani official in East Pakistan and now Vice President of Pakistan.

Supplies are arriving from international organizations such as the World Council of Churches. The International Planned Parenthood Federation has offered mobile abortion clinics and medical help.