or suffocate and its little body was held by a weeping mother. Guilty of nothing, life was suddenly over. I could not look at the parents who had come so far only to find this extra tragedy at the end of a road of tears."

Monseigneur Bruce Kent
War on Want

"In India I visited refugee areas along the entire border of East Bengal-from Calcutta and West Bengal in the west-to the Jalpaigury and Darjeeling districts in the north-to Agartala in the State of Tripura in the east. I listened to scores of refugees as they crowded into camps, struggling to survive in make-shift shelters in open fields or behind public buildings-or trudging down the roads of West Bengal from days and even weeks of desperate flight. Their faces and their stories etch a saga of shame which should overwhelm the moral sensitivities of people throughout the world. I found that conditions varied widely from one refugee camp to another. But many defy description. Those refugees who suffer most from the congestion, the lack of adequate supplies and the frightful conditions of sanitation are the very young-the children under five-and the very old. The estimates of their numbers run as high as fifty percent of all the refugees. Many of these infants and aged already have died. And it is possible-as you pick your steps among others-to identify those who will be dead within hours, or whose suffeirngs surely will end in a matter of days.

It is difficult to erase from your mind the look on the face of a child paralyzed from the waist down, never to walk again; or a child quivering in fear on a mat in a small tent still in shock from seeing his parents, his brothers and his sisters executed before his eyes; or the anxiety of a 10-year-old girl out forging for something to cover the body of her baby brother who had died of cholera a few moments before our arrival. When I asked one refugee camp director what he would describe as his greatest need, his answer was "a crematorium". He was in charge of one of the largest refugee camps in the world. It was originally designed to provide low income and middle income housing, and has now become the home for 170,000 refugees."

Senator Edward Kennedy

"The life, or death, of Bangla Desh is the single most important issue the world has had to face since the decision to use nuclear weaponry as a means of political blackmail. It is that, because never before have the world's poor confronted the world's rich with such a mighty mirror of Man's Inhumanity.

Usually we in the West, who are the rich, can dismiss or rationalize famine, unexpected disaster and even mass extermination by simply noting that the poor, who are characterized by the people of Bangla Desh, are numerous and ought to be pruned. If only, we say, they could organize their own resources and subscribe to decent, Western politics. Surely they are expendable. We even allow ourselves a good snigger at places crying out against odds we cannot comprehend; places like the Congo and the ravaged republic of the Americas. None has followed the Western wisdom of democracy, and so they must suffer. A pity.

Bangla Desh has called our bluff. The people of what was East Pakistan, who represented the majority of the state of Pakistan, voted to be a democracy and to be led by moderate middle-class. Western-styled politicians. Foolishly perhaps, they chose our way in their pursuit of freedom, in spite of problems we have never had to face.

And for this reason alone, they are being exterminated and enslaved in a manner reminiscent of Adolf Hitler, over whom the world went to war. But, of course, he was exterminating Europeans.

We in the West have no intention of going to war over Bangla Desh. Instead, through our elected government, we have contributed what amounts to one week's survival pocket money to the refugees of Bangla Desh, now petrified in India. India must provide the rest.

It is a cliché but it remains the truth of today: that there will be peace and civilization and "progress" throughout the planet only when the rich minority-us-begin to close the gap between ourselves and the poor majority. We have the opportunity of beginning to do that in Bangla Desh: for this is a cause in which we may locate our lost, twentieth century soul. Oh yes, and save some human lives."

John Pilger
Daily Mirror

"The long lines of bamboo huts flattened by rain become longer every day. In these hovels people sleep on the ground, defecate along the paths and giant crows hover above. Fifty children fight over an egg we had given because we didn't have the courage to eat it in front of them. In the mud a woman heaves, groans, and gives birth. The poorest of Norwegian lumberjacks, the most deprived Welsh miner, is a thousand times, ten thousand times richer than the happiest of the ten million refugees. If we can accept the potential death of these ten million refugees it means that we can accept the ten million deaths of Auschwitz. The powers which united to give freedom to the oppressed people in 1944 cannot fail to unite today to save the innocent victims of this tragedy. Their destiny is linked with ours. If we let them die it means our civilizations is already dead."

Claude Mosse
Radio Suisse Romande

"I have been working among the refugees for five or six months. I have seen these children, and the adults, dying. That is why I can assure the world how grave the situation is and how urgently it must help.

The appeal is to the world-and the world must answer."

Mother Teresa