

# Assam atrocities spark call for relief at Dal

By Ken Burke

The recent massacre of about 1500 people in the Indian state of Assam has prompted a call for relief funds from the Maritime Muslim Student Association (MMSA) here at Dal.

The massacre, mostly against muslim immigrants, occurred at the same time as controversial elections for the Assam state and central Indian parliaments. Killing broke out in several villages where scenes of death and devastation reported by witnesses seem nightmarish.

There were scores of bodies — some decapitated or hacked to bits — lying about the streets and fields, decomposing. The majority of them were women, children, or the elderly. According to a report in "USA Today," "Children with slit bellies and men with hacked bones were offered tincture of iodine and tetanus shots as the only help."

Both political motives and Hindu-Muslim religious tension have been fingered as the cause of the bloodshed.

Reza Rizvi, secretary of the

Islamic Information Foundation, a non-political charitable organization, explained that such massacres take place when a disturbance breaks out, begun by either Muslim or Hindu group, which later degenerates into mass killings. He indicated that the group in the minority in such a blood bath would become the greatest victim to the killings. In Assam, as in most parts of India, the Muslims are the minority.

The violence is also directed towards Muslims on the whole because of the situation in Assam

with regards to immigration and population figures. The total population of Assam is 20 million, of whom 6 million are Muslims. A great number of these muslims are immigrants from Bangladesh, where a bloody civil war drove millions from a starving, bloody country. There are currently 100 million Muslims in India, making up 15% of the total population.

There was concern expressed that the immigrants would submerge and subvert the Hindu culture.

These immigrants' existence prompted the massacres. The All-Assam Student Union (AASU) were pushing to have voting rights rescinded for the immigrants, and when this failed, they and others called a boycott of the elections. Many Hindu people followed the boycott and never voted. But the Muslim people turned out and voted in numbers, giving Indira Ghandi's ruling party an overwhelming majority of the open seats. The killing began as voter turnout became known.

Rizvi said the massacre was not unusual, save in its enormity, to day-to-day occurrences in Assam and other areas in India. According to figures of the Indian Home Ministry, hundreds of people have died in anti-muslim riots in India over

the last ten years, although Muslim organizations claim the actual figure is far higher. In 1981, it is officially noted that 359 anti-muslim riots occurred in the country, resulting in 523 deaths.

Rizvi placed the blame of the massacres on past religious hatred, a fear of Muslims growing to control the government and fear of a growing Islamic presence in the region.

Rizvi said the riots were sometimes begun by Muslims against Hindu, and others have said muslim (native) against Muslim (immigrant) massacres have also occurred. The open factor is the nature of the village's population. Whoever is in the majority is likely to do most of the killing, he said.

The MMSA, in affiliation with the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada, have an India relief fund committee set up. Rizvi said the organization is providing information to keep Muslims aware of what's happening, sponsoring children, and collecting donations for relief supplies.

"We can ask for monetary donations," he said, adding that the MMSA should be contacted for information on events concerning Indian muslims. The MMSA's phone number is 445-2494.

## Mosey readies therapists

by Liz Townsend

Dr. Anne Cronin Mosey, professor of Occupational Therapy at New York University, recently came to Dalhousie University. Dr. Mosey is a leader as a theoretician in this field and has published four books related to occupational therapy.

Mosey was brought to Dalhousie from March 17-19 to offer two seminars and a workshop all designed to bring theory, as learned in school, closer to practice as it is in the field. The School is trying to close the gap of what is learned in

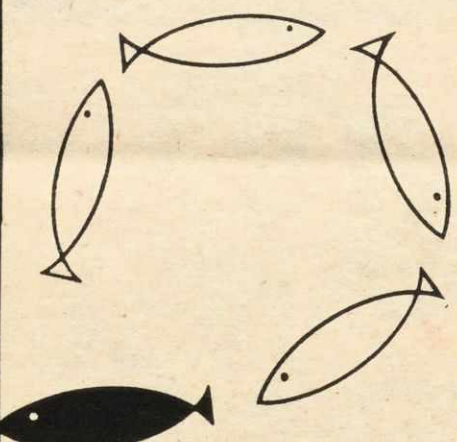
school being not applicable when students go into the real world.

Dr. Mosey held a half-day seminar with students and faculty each and a 2-day workshop with 56 therapists from all over the Atlantic region. Since these therapists will be supervising students when they go into the field in May, it was seen as important that the therapists be up to date and in tune with theory being taught to students.

The occupational therapy students currently enrolled in the new program at Dalhousie have been making their presence felt in a variety

of ways on campus since the School of Occupational Therapy opened in September. They've been active in intramural sports, the health professions revue "For the Health of It" and a host of other activities.

The workshop and seminars were received with high enthusiasm, and therapists generally indicated that they felt prepared to help students. Therapists and students who would be matched in field placements even had a chance to get to know each other.



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