

Take a good look. Don't ever say, 'I didn't know it was happening.'

SOMETHING VERY SHAMEFUL is happening in Bhopal and hardly anyone knows about it.

Children are being born dead and malformed in numbers not seen since the spate of horrific births that followed the gas catastrophe of 1984.

A spate of monstrous births

On the freezing night of December 3rd, a leak of deadly gases from a pesticide factory owned by Union Carbide killed thousands in a few hours.

Almost half the pregnant women exposed to Carbide's gases on 'that night' abruptly aborted.

In the months after the disaster rumours began flying around the city about strange and terrifying births taking place in secret.

'My baby was greenish-black,' a woman said. 'It had a soft head, the eyes not quite connected to the sockets. It looked like an alien but the heartbeats were human. I was torn between love and revulsion as life limped on in this creature I had borne and did not know whether to hope it lived or died.'

Official statements sought to downplay the crisis. Senior doctors would not talk to the media. When pregnant women, too terrified to give birth, came to a hospital with urine samples, begging to be tested to make sure their babies were sound, they were driven away by police with batons.

Unbelievable though it sounds, this is all on record. You may look up the sources on bhopal.org.

In July 1985 *Sunday* magazine reported 'shocking accounts by junior hospital staff, midwives and nurses who insist they have never seen any birth-and-death cycle like this before.' (Rina Sarin, 'The Babies of Bhopal', July 1985)

The demon factory

After the gas leak Union Carbide's factory was shut and abandoned with its lethal pesticides still inside. Nearby, tens of thousands of tons of toxic wastes lay dumped in huge 'solar' lakes.

A dozen years earlier, Carbide's own US design engineers had expressed fears that the lakes would leak and contaminate community wells.

They were ignored. Worse, documents relating to the building of the lakes reveal that Carbide would accept some leakage if it saved money.

Just four years after the gassing of Bhopal, Carbide learned that soil and water at its plant site were lethally contaminated. But even when locals complained that their water smelt and tasted foul, that many people were falling ill, that babies were being born damaged, Carbide issued no warning and did nothing to clean up the factory.

The derelict plant was regarded by many as a sleeping demon that one day would again rise up and snatch away their lives and happiness. 'Demon' is not a scientific term, but the people were right.

Destroyed in the womb

In 1999, a Greenpeace study found many wells contaminated with heavy metals and chemicals known to cause cancers and birth defects.

Further studies found the same toxins in the blood and mothers' milk of women unfortunate enough to live downstream of the factory.

In 2006, a team of doctors visiting contaminated areas were startled to discover that almost half the children they examined were brain damaged. They



The arm.

<http://bhopal.org/the-arm>



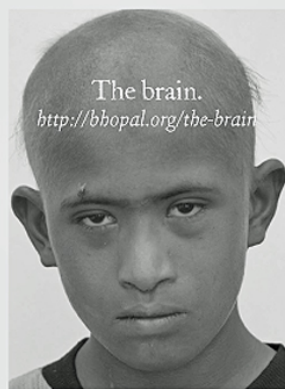
The eye.

<http://bhopal.org/the-eye>



The legs.

<http://bhopal.org/the-legs>



The brain.

<http://bhopal.org/the-brain>



The eternal child.

<http://bhopal.org/eternal-child>



The heart.

<http://bhopal.org/the-heart>



The hands.

<http://bhopal.org/the-hands>

had never before seen so many cases of cerebral palsy and birth defects within a single population.

Still nobody knew how bad the situation was.

Some injuries are too harrowing to show, like the eye engulfed by a raw tumour that left a small girl in permanent agony until it finally killed her.

With the authorities still trying to deny rather than solve the problem, no one has ever bothered to find out how many people were sick, or how many children have been born damaged.

Gassed, poisoned, left to die

With nobody else willing to do the work, the Bhopal Medical Appeal funded a huge, rigorous study covering more than 100,000 people exposed to gas, to poisoned water, and to both, as well as an unexposed control population.

The work is almost finished. Results have to be confirmed and analysed, but indications are that many families have been poisoned twice, first by Carbide's gases, then by contaminated water.

In poisoned areas birth defects are occurring at rates many times the Indian average.

Thousands of children are damaged but get no government help. Union Carbide and its owner Dow Chemical say the dumped wastes, poisoned water and human pain are nothing to do with them.

Well, that's that then. No one is responsible. It is nobody's duty to help the children shown here.

Certainly, it's not our affair. We can look away.

'Savages are always cruel'

So said Dr Johnson, one of the aperçus noted by Boswell, adding, 'We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them.'

He was talking about horses, but what savagery treats sick children with such brutal indifference?

The Bhopal Medical Appeal is an initiative of thousands of British newspaper readers from the *Telegraph*, *Guardian*, *Times*, *Independent* and others.

Outraged by the injury and injustice to innocent people, and finding ourselves unable just to watch them suffer, we came together to offer our friendship and support their efforts to help themselves.

We fund two award-winning clinics in Bhopal. Both were founded by the survivors themselves and are the only places in the city where families poisoned by the water can get free first-class care.

We know (in two cases *knew*) all the children in these pictures, because they come to our Chingari clinic for physiotherapy and speech therapy, social skills training and basic education. Each day we treat about 150 children and many blighted young lives are transformed. Sachin, the boy with the bat wrote a poem wild with joy. Read the poem and the stories on our website, www.bhopal.org.

To those who have read this far

If you are reading this, you are one of a very few - most people won't have read a word of this appeal. This makes you special, a bright hope to families who have much need of friends like you.

In front of you is the chance to help.

Will you join us in our work? Of all the things you can do the quickest is to make a donation, but whatever you do, please don't just turn the page.

TO DONATE NOW PLEASE FREEFONE 0800 316 5577, OR VISIT www.bhopal.org/donate

1. Or send a cheque payable to 'The Bhopal Medical Appeal': £5 £10 £25 £50 £100 £250 £500 £1,000 £3,000 £5,000 Other £.....

2. Please send me a free copy of *The Bhopal Marathon*, an important report funded by the generosity of friends and well wishers in the United States.

4. Please treat this gift of money and future gifts of money as Gift Aid donations. A Gift Aid declaration increases the value of your donation at no cost to yourself by 25p for every £1. You must have paid, or will pay, a sum of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities that you donate to will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year. Other taxes like VAT & Council Tax do not qualify. Please fill in your name and address details (right) and sign.

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BHOPAL MEDICAL APPEAL

Charity Number 117561 Telephone 01273 602728

