"And men shall drink the blood of men" **REPORT BY INDRA SINHA** www.indrasinba.com

THE GOONS HAVE ARRIVED in the alley outside my house. I can hear them. 'Old man, are you in there?' 'Bastard, where's the money?'

I despise these men and fear them. Their eyes are red from drink, they have knives and are willing to use them. Their boss is R.L. moneylender. 'Where's the f***ing money?'

'Have pity,' I plead. 'My grandson has just died.'

'So look on the bright side,' says one. 'No more medical bills.' They know that it was to pay those bills that I needed the loans.

'Learn a lesson, you old git, don't make promises you can't keep.' But I had also promised to take care of my grandson.

The night that ruined our lives

Twenty two years have passed since the poison gas leaked from Union Carbide's factory. I'll never forget that night. I was woken by screams. The air was full of mist that burned. It grew worse and worse. I said, 'Run, or we're done for.' Our daughter Leila grabbed her 18 month old son Habib, but my poor wife fell unconscious. I lifted her on my shoulder. We ran.

The gas was so thick, you couldn't see. My lungs burned up inside. People were dropping dead. I found some water to put on my wife's face. She began vomiting. Greenish stuff with blood. We reached the hospital too late. The gas got there first. As I watched a nurse just collapsed and died. Later that night my poor wife passed away.

Habib had always been healthy, but after the gas he was never right. None of us were. From that night on, pain, breathlessness, fevers, coughs, never left us. Leila and I filed a claim for compensation. We couldn't read or write so we had to pay someone to do the form. Union Carbide said that we were pretending to be sick. They would expose our lies and we would be punished. In the end we got some money. It wasn't enough to cover our medical costs but it was supposed to last all our lives.

No money, no treatment

Despite being ill we worked very hard. I sold peanuts from my bicycle. Leila rolled leaf cigarettes. She could make 1,000 in a day for which she got 35 rupees (42p). Habib grew up thin and weak. He found a job at a tea stall, twelve hours a day for 70 rupees (85p). After some time Habib began to be in a lot of pain. He hid it so as not to worry us. In the end he was in agony. We took him to a doctor. She said we should get an X-ray, plus blood and urine tests. But we had no money. Too bad, said the doctor. I'm not a charity. No money, no treatment. We were scared of moneylenders. Who wouldn't be, the things you hear, but what choice had we? R.L. offered a loan of 5,000 rupees ($\pounds 60$). We had nothing worth mortgaging, so the interest would be 10% a month. The tests showed diabetes. Habib began having insulin injections, and got better. After a year the money ran out. His feet swelled. We took a second loan, also of 5,000 rupees. Another year and that too was gone. After some weeks without insulin Habib fell unconscious and was in a coma for six days. We took a third loan, again of Rs 5,000.

take whatever they want. Leila had a good brass pot. They took that. I explained that I couldn't sell peanuts as I can no longer ride my bicycle.

'Well then you won't miss it.'

It's Union Carbide who should pay our medical costs, but in this world there is no justice for the poor. We are caught in the moneylender's trap, but he's just a leech sucking blood from wounds made by the company. There is a prophecy that a day will come when men will drink the blood of men. In Bhopal, that day is here.

Habib should not have died

The doctor who saw Habib might not have been a charity. But we are.

Had Habib's family known of our Sambhavna clinic, which provides free firstclass medical care to survivors, his diabetes could have been controlled. He'd be alive today.

With 120,000 people in Bhopal seriously ill two decades after 'that night', we need to get word out to the furthest reaches of the community that people should come to us.

'What? All free? Injections free? Medicines free? Free X-rays? Don't have to pay the doctor?"

'No,' we say. 'Everything's free and you are most welcome.'

Free treatment for the poorest

The Bhopal Medical Appeal was launched in 1994 when a man from Bhopal came to Britain to tell people

Our poor boy is gone but the debt remains

In September 2004, Habib complained of severe pain in his legs. He said he was thirsty. Leila went to fetch water. When she came back he was on his face unconscious. I was not there and Leila did not have enough money for a rickshaw fare to a hospital. She was worrying about transport, crying, when Habib came to his senses and asked for food. Leila gave him some milk. A little later he went limp. He stopped breathing.

Our poor boy is gone but the debt remains. It will never reduce. It will be round our necks till the day we go to join him.

My own health is now bad. I can't earn, I'm weak, can't stand for long. We can't pay the interest on the loans. R.L.'s goons come to the house and about the calamitous condition of the Bhopal survivors.

Most had never had any proper medical treatment. People were refused treatment for lack of money, or kept waiting for hours and then sent away with a prescription for aspirin. Doctors often refused to examine low caste patients whose touch would 'defile' them. Now they can come to us.

On the 10th anniversary of the disaster we launched the Appeal with a newspaper advertisement like this. Within two days we had enough money to buy a building in Bhopal, recruit doctors and other staff. Today the Sambhavna clinic has 36 staff, about half of whom are themselves gas-affected. Upwards of 20,000 people have received free medical care. We have pioneered new therapies by blending state-of-the-art modern medicine with traditional Indian herbal medicine and yoga. Combining insulin treatment with yoga has proved particularly good at controlling diabetes.

Save lives, starve the moneylenders

When medicine is free there's no need for moneylenders, and it doesn't cost a great deal to provide free medical help in Bhopal.

Habib died because his family could not afford interest payments of \pounds_{18} a month or repay a total debt of \pounds_{180} . If you think that's a pitifully small sum, the same money would cover a third of the salary of the yoga therapist whose treatment could have saved his life.

Make a donation and you won't just save lives. You'll save some of the world's poorest people from the slavery of debts they should never have had to incur. They are so grateful for your help. They have no one else.

Make a donation, or volunteer in Bhopal or London, please support this good work in any way you can and as generously as you can afford.

FREEFONE 0800 316 5577 TO DONATE NOW WITH A CARD or visit www.bhopal.org/donations

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'There may be no justice in the world, but there are good people, and that alone keeps us alive' - BHOPAL SURVIVOR

1. I'd like to give $\pounds 5 \square$ $\pounds 10 \square$ $\pounds 20 \square$ $\pounds 50 \square$ $\pounds 100 \square$ $\pounds 250 \square$ $\pounds 500 \square$ $\pounds 1,000 \square$ $\pounds 3,000 \square$ $\pounds 5,000 \square$ Other.... Here's a cheque payable to PAN-UK(Bhopal Medical Appeal) / Please charge my credit/debit card. Valid from Expiry date / Issue no. (Switch/Solo only) Card No

4.

- Please Gift Aid my gift. (This increases its value at no cost to yourself as we are able to claim back the tax you've already paid on it. Please tick the box if you can confirm that you've paid UK Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax.)
- Please contact me about making a standing order. I would like to receive email updates about Bhopal -(no more than one email every three or four months).

Please fill in your details a	and sign where indicated
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Address	
	Postcode
Signature	Date
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4 • Please post the completed form to: Gua0904 Pesticide Action Network/Bhopal Account 49 Effra Road, FREEPOST, London SW2 1BZ

No stamp needed but if you use one it saves us the cost. You can also donate direct to:

PAN-UK/Bhopal Account No 61752312, NatWest Bank, Sort Code (60-03-36), 504 Brixton Rd, London SW2 8EB

Bhopal Medical Appeal

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