bFing

AMIR WHO'S EIGHT sadly holds up his hands. His fingers are joined together as if he's had an accident with a tube of superglue.

'Who called you such a thing?"

'A lady in Hamidia Road. She looked at me and said, "Ugh, too many monsters".'

'Why do you listen? Don't cry!' says his mother. Herself near tears, she asks furiously, 'What was she thinking, that woman? That he wouldn't hear? He wouldn't follow? His hands are that way so he must not have a brain?'

When she has calmed down she says that she no longer goes to family weddings: many people, even relatives, feel uncomfortable about having a malformed child at the festivities. 'In case it attracts ...'

She breaks off. 'That woman, you know what, I think she was scared. She knows the next one could be hers.'

'This is the way the world ends'

Amir is one of hundreds born damaged in a certain cluster of neighbourhoods in Bhopal. What all have in common is that they are near Union Carbide's haunted, derelict factory.

On a cold night 22 years ago, the factory sent a cloud 500 times deadlier than cyanide rolling out over the sleeping city of Bhopal.

In scenes from an apocalypse, thousands stumbled in blind terror through unlit alleys. Urine and faeces ran down their legs as the gas unstrung their nervous systems and ate the lining of their lungs. People drowned in their own

bloody fluids and by morning their bodies filled the streets. (For survivor accounts of 'that night', please visit www.bhopal.org.)

At least 8,000 died. Nearly half of all pregnant women aborted. The months that followed saw a spate of 'horrific births', but despite desperate pleas from doctors in Bhopal, Union Carbide refused to divulge information about the leaked gases – it was apparently a 'trade secret'.

PRESENCE OF TOXIC INGREDIENTS IN SOIL/WATER SAMPLES INSIDE PLANT PREMISES The matter has assumed significant importance in view of recent reports in local and national news papers. The seriousness of the issue needs no elaboration. It is earnestly suggested that the subject be given due consideration and studies initiated without further delay If the situation so requires, the work may be carried ou primarily for our own understanding of the situation, in the first phase. In the following paragraphs

the first phase. In the following paragraphs a summary of preliminary work carried out in 1989 is described.

Analysis of samples drawn by plant personnel in June-July 1989. Samples drawn in June-July '89 from land-fill areas and effluent treatment pits inside the plant were sent to R and D. They consisted of nine soil/solid samples and eight liquid samples. The solid samples had organic contamination varying from 10% to 100% and contained known ingredients like name that an applications in substantial quantities.

Majority of the liquid samples contained naphthol and/or Sevin in quantities far more than permitted by ISI for onland disposal. All samples caused 100% mortality to fish in toxicity assessment studies and were to be diluted several fold to render them suitable for survival

(no more than one email every three or four months).



Carbide and its new owner Dow Chemical are still refusing to share the results of studies into long term medical effects of the gases. Meanwhile 20,000 people have died from their injuries.

'They knew we would be poisoned'

Of all the heartless things that Union Carbide did, the cruellest was to leave Bhopal without cleaning its factory. In 2002 the Guardian wrote, 'The state of the Union

Carbide plant is a disgrace. When the company finally left the city in 1999, it left behind around 5,000 tonnes of process and waste chemicals; toxins that have leached into the soil and water in and around the factory.'

In rusting drums and torn sacks, Carbide left chemicals known to cause cancers and birth-defects. Toxic sludges were bulldozed into pits that each monsoon became overflowing lakes.

The unforgivable thing is that by the time it left Bhopal in 1999, Union Carbide had known for a decade that soil and water at its site were lethally contaminated (see secret memo, left), yet it never once warned people living nearby of the obvious danger to their drinking wells.

Among these people were many families already decimated by the gases of 'that night'. They would be poisoned again, and this time the horror would extend to their unborn children.

Malformations and brain-damage

Amir's family lives in Blue Moon Colony between the factory and the 'swamp', as the waste pits are called. Here, as in other areas, Carbide's toxins are in wells, in people's blood, in the breast milk of nursing mothers. Every other person you meet is sick. Children are born damaged not in ones or twos but in numbers that appal visiting doctors.

Not far from Amir lives Samir, whose face is pulled awry, matter leaking from his eye. There's Salman, blind since birth, Shanu who has a livid crusty tumour for an eyeball, Shyam Babu who is out of his mind, Faujia who eats mud, Suraj who's brain damaged.

Their poisoned wells stink of chemicals, a sheen like a dirty rainbow lies on the water, and yet nothing is done. The factory must be cleaned, and safe water piped to these people. But who will do it? The poor have no power and few friends.

For three years, local politicians have ignored an order from India's Supreme Court to provide clean water. And although "polluter pays" laws apply in India as in the United States, Dow Chemical (recently fined \$325,000 for bribing Indian officials) refuses either to clean the factory or to produce Carbide to face criminal charges in the Indian court it has ignored for 15 years.

It isn't Amir who's the monster.

If we don't help, no one will

If this story appals you, please don't turn the page. The Bhopal Medical Appeal was started in the UK by ordinary people who were as sickened as you are by the continuing suffering in Bhopal.

We couldn't wait for the politicians and corporate lawyers to finish arguing while people were dying, so we decided to do something about it ourselves.

In 1996 we opened a free clinic in Bhopal where the poorest people are welcomed with respect. More than half the staff are either gas- or water-affected (in a few cases both). The Sambhavna clinic offers a unique mix of cutting-edge modern medicine, traditional Indian herbal treatments and yoga. We've given free medical care to more than 20,000 people with consistently good results. For this work the clinic has won the Margaret Mead Award, given to small groups that make a big difference in the world.

We have to help these people, because no one else will. Those damaged by the contaminated water have had no compensation. No one has been prosecuted for poisoning them. Ours is the only clinic in Bhopal that gives them free treatment. Please help with a donation. In this city, a modest sum goes a very long way.

£35 is all it will cost us to heal Amir. His operation is in a fortnight's time. We asked a very happy small boy if he had a message for the readers of this appeal.

He thought a moment, then said: "Thank you for helping me. Lots of children are still sad. I don't know your name, but I think you are probably very nice."

Probably. So here's your chance to prove it.

An independent charity registered in England & Wales, No 1117526

Kindly administered by the Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN-UI

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

	I cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of the innocent victims of Bhopal which has been going on 22 years too long			
L.	I'd like to give £5	Please charge my credit/debit card. Valid from /	Please post the completed form to: Pesticide Action Network/Bhopal Account	
2•	Card No 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	Expiry date / Issue no. (Switch/Solo only) Please fill in your details and sign where indicated Name	FREEPOST LON 100406, London EC2B 2BR No stamp needed but if you use one it saves us the cost. You can also donate direct to:	
	already paid on it. Please tick the box if you can confirm that you've paid UK Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax.)	Address	PAN-UK/Bhopal Account No 61752312, NatWest Bank, Sort Code (60-03-36), 504 Brixton Rd, London SW2 8EB	
3.	Please contact me about making a standing order. I would like to receive email updates about Bhopal -	SignatureDate	Bhopal Medical Appeal	

Email.