

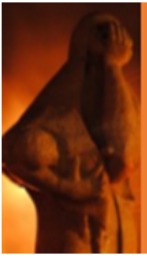
Trade Union Friends of Bhopal (*Bhopal Saathi*)
Campaigning for global health, safety & environmental justice



**We
all
live
in
Bhopal**

- the consequences
of global capitalism
and health and safety
deregulation

#IWMD18



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IWMD Memorial – The Bhopal Disaster is Not Over.

On this, International Workers' Memorial Day, we take a moment to remember those who have lost their lives at work and reaffirm our solidarity with those fighting for the right to health, safety and justice, across the globe.



We want to ask you today to reflect particularly on one night in the city of Bhopal, India when, without warning, 27 tons of a lethal gas spewed out of an under-designed and poorly maintained pesticide factory. It was deadly. Engulfing densely populated residential streets and housing over 5 square miles, the lives of thousands of people, mostly poor people, were lost that night. According to Amnesty International, between 7,000 and 10,000 people died within just three days of the leak, and hundreds of thousands more were poisoned, causing disabling life-long effects.

This disaster could have been avoided. Trade unions at the factory, and local community campaigners, had been highlighting the safety risks for years and had been met by denial and intimidation from the company.

This disaster is not over. The events of that night marked only the start of decades of suffering for the survivors, and their children... And the start of an equally long struggle against the abysmal failure of a state and legal system to support them, or to hold those responsible to account. That was in 1984. 33 years ago. The courageous survivors of that awful night in Bhopal are **still** fighting for justice against the corporate giants responsible for the failings causing this human and environmental catastrophe.

There is a new urgency in this fight. The corporate veil is descending, and the pollution is spreading – more communities (now over 40) are finding their drinking water and soil contaminated by leaks of toxic chemical waste from the site. The legal entity responsible for the factory at the time of the gas release is American-based, Union Carbide Corporation.

For 26 years it has refused to appear in Indian courts to answer charges of manslaughter. It is now owned by monolith corporation, Dow-DuPont which has plans to break Union Carbide up in the next 12 months, potentially putting it out of reach of the courts and of justice for ever.



This matters to us all. If Dow-DuPont, the world's largest chemical company, were allowed to escape accountability for Bhopal it would send a resounding signal that global corporations can totally disregard the impact of their activities on communities and the environment. Indeed, shareholders may require it.

As perhaps the first globalised disaster, Bhopal encapsulates our economic system's disregard for life – both for the living and yet-to-be-born – and the power of transnational corporations over national systems. The health and environmental harms were and are local, but the fundamental causes of the disaster, of the failure to clean up the contamination, and of the absence of justice, are global.

The solution is global too. The community in Bhopal and the support they have won from across the globe, shows the other side of globalisation – transnational solidarity and **its** power. Union Carbide, through Dow-DuPont, must be made to answer the charges against them, for all our sakes.

The fight against global capital will not be won in isolation. This is why The Trade Union Friends of Bhopal is being launched and will join with the Bhopal survivors in the longest fight for justice for them and all victims of toxic globalisation and, for a global system of regulation that puts at its centre, the protection of human life and the environment.

This fight is our fight too, and we cannot afford to lose it.

If you would like to find out more or get involved with the work of the Trade Union Friends of Bhopal, you can find them on Facebook, Twitter and the web, or email them on TUFriendsBhopal@gmail.com.

Thank you.



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