

Bhopal Solidarity Group

On December 3rd, 1984, the worst industrial disaster in history occurred at the Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, India. An estimated 10,000 people were killed and 200,000 people affected by a massive escape of poisonous gas.

On July 10th, 1985, Union Carbide closed the plant in Bhopal and sacked the remaining 600 workers. At no stage did they consider the demands or needs of the workers and gas victims. Nor have they accepted any moral responsibility for the devastation of Bhopal.

The Bhopal Solidarity Group came together to demand that:

- * Union Carbide publicly take responsibility for the disaster.
- * Union Carbide accepts the legitimate demands of the workers and gas victims and turns the factory and premises over to them with a lump sum payment for investment in alternative production of safe, cheap and useful goods.

On July 10th, 1985, we held a successful occupation of Union Carbide (UK) head offices in Sheffield. Our action was in solidarity with the demands of the people of Bhopal and to encourage international action against Union Carbide.

The Bhopal Solidarity Group has worked closely with:

- * Bhopal Victims Support Committee, c/o Southall Monitoring Group, 50-52 King Street, Southall, Middlesex. UB2 4BP.
- * Bhopal Trade Union Solidarity Group, c/o TICL, 54 Ayres Street, London. SE1 1EU.
- * Third World First, (national student movement against poverty and underdevelopment) 29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds LS2 9HD.

The following events are being organised:

Sunday November 3rd - International Conference on Bhopal at County Hall, London.

Throughout November - Speakers tour by representatives from Bhopal.

Saturday December 7th - A march and rally in Sheffield to protest at Union Carbide's actions a year after the disaster.

We feel that the Bhopal gas disaster raises crucial issues for everyone. A major part of our campaign is to involve trade unions, campaigning and community groups and to encourage them to recognise the importance of these issues.

The disaster at Bhopal cannot be dismissed as an isolated incident and it raises many urgent issues: the power and complete lack of accountability of transnational companies in their pursuit of profit; the indiscriminate production of dangerous pesticides and their effect on people and the environment; the health and safety of workers all over the world and particularly the racist double standards applied by transnational companies; the underdevelopment and exploitation of Third World countries by Western countries and Western capital.

Bhopal is a local reality that raises many global issues and emphasises the callousness of a corrupt world system that puts profit before life.

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