

The Asbestos War

Guest Editor

LAURIE KAZAN-ALLEN

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That asbestos is still being sold despite overwhelming evidence linking it to debilitating and fatal diseases is testament to the effectiveness of a campaign, spear-headed by Canadian interests, to promote a product already banned in many developed countries. Blessed by government and commercial support, asbestos apologists have implemented a long-term coordinated strategy targeting new consumers in Asia, the Far East and Latin America. At industry-backed “conferences” and on government-funded junkets, they spin a web of deceit, telling all who will listen that “chrysotile (white asbestos) can be used safely.” The fact that Canada exports over 95% of all the chrysotile it mines suggests that while chrysotile is supposedly safe enough for foreigners, it is not safe enough for Canadians. Asbestos victims in many countries have struggled to gain public recognition of the human cost of asbestos use. In recent years, nongovernmental organizations working with these groups have created a global anti-asbestos virtual network; with the commitment and support of thousands of “virtual members,” this network challenges industry’s propaganda and exposes the forces that support its cynical attempt to offload this dangerous substance on developing countries. *Key words:* asbestos; industry; victims’ rights; globalization; developing countries.

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Although the asbestos industry’s disregard for occupational and public health has been well documented, the precise moment when the pursuit of profit became imbued with a military fervor has not been pinpointed. That a state of war has been declared, however, is clearly shown by an e-mail circulated by the Asbestos Institute (AI), Montreal, dated

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February 8, 2002: the subject heading is: “WAR report.”¹ Following the collapse in Western demand for asbestos, producers have mounted a global campaign to protect remaining markets and develop new ones. Access to generous funding from their supporters has enabled pro-chrysotile lobbyists to bombard government officials and journalists in the developing world with offers of “technical assistance” and free trips to Canada; a well-oiled propaganda machine reassures civil servants and consumers that asbestos can be used “safely under controlled conditions,” despite a vast amount of scientific and medical evidence which proves otherwise.

The public debate on asbestos has been skillfully manipulated by industry “experts” who appear on the scene as if by magic in times of trouble. In March 1999, just as U.K. and European Union policymakers were revising proposed asbestos directives, a trade mission arrived in London offering “vetted” journalists² the opportunity for an “open and frank briefing” on chrysotile. According to literature obtained at that time, this event was held under the auspices of: “The Asbestos International Association for Environmental and Occupational Health Protection.” Judging by the lack of media coverage, the visit of Vangala Patabhi of Hyderabad Industries (India), Edward Chindori-Chininga, Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Mines, Environment and Tourism, Andre Brochu, a trade unionist from Quebec, and Bob Pigg, President of the Asbestos Information Association, was not a success. After one hundred years, the battle for Europe had been lost.

The objective of this series of articles in the *IJOEH* is to provide a public forum in which asbestos victims and their representatives can detail the repercussions of asbestos misuse in their countries, reveal the important work of victim support groups, report on current scientific research, and discuss the work of ban-asbestos campaigners. The papers in this journal address a question posed by industry 30 years ago: “Where would we be without asbestos?”

A GLOBAL INDUSTRY

From the beginning of the 20th century until the outbreak of World War II, world production of asbestos rose by 2000%. Output continued to grow steadily, peaking in 1975 at 5 million tons. Despite a slight downturn, annual production remained at over 4 million tons until 1991. In 2001, 2 million tons of chrysotile were mined.³ With so much at stake, asbestos companies worked together to protect their “magic mineral,” disparaging safer alternatives and attempting to silence critics. Anti-asbestos campaigners were condemned as being alarmist, misinformed, irresponsible, and commercially motivated. It was claimed that an “almost world-wide anti-asbestos psychosis” had been “stirred up” and sustained by multinational producers of non-asbestos alternatives:

How many victims has the anti-asbestos hysteria claimed? How many asbestos-free brakes have caused fatal accidents? How many buildings have collapsed after a fire because the asbestos was removed, or because of a refusal to use it? How many people have been stricken with often fatal disease due to a lack of safe drinking water, because “benevolent” individuals demanded the installation of asbestos-free pipes, which were so expensive plans for water systems were cut back by half?... Chrysotile asbestos can save lives.⁴

In 1999, the Collegium Ramazzini, hardly “ban-asbestos zealots,” issued a “Call for an International Ban on Asbestos”:

To eliminate the burden of disease and death that is caused worldwide by exposure to asbestos, The Collegium Ramazzini calls for an immediate ban on all mining and use of asbestos. To be effective, the ban must be international in scope and must be enforced in every country in the world... Multinational asbestos corporations present a deplorable history of international exploitation.⁵

Philip Landrigan, the Collegium’s President, condemns the “double standards” of industries which manufacture hazardous products such as asbestos:

It is quite hypocritical of those industries to relocate to the least-developed nations and then to claim that workers there can work safely with toxic materials such as asbestos. Anyone who has travelled in the poor nations of South America, sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia will have seen workers using asbestos in the most uncontrolled conditions, for example, cutting asbestos-concrete pipes with circular saws or trowelling asbestos insulation on to walls in the complete absence of any form of respiratory protection. The argument that workers can be protected against asbestos in nations that have no legal infrastructure in occupational health is a cruel joke.⁶

INDUSTRY MOBILIZES: CANADA TRIES TO SET THE AGENDA

As the commercial exploitation of asbestos increased, so did the knowledge of its lethal effects. Factory inspectors, doctors, scientists, and epidemiologists tried unsuccessfully to warn those in charge. The fact that these warnings went unheeded is due, in no small part, to reassuring reports, position papers, and statements issued by asbestos industry representatives: when the use of amosite and crocidolite became indefensible, these materials were sacrificed in the name of chrysotile. As the momentum to ban asbestos grew, many governments took unilateral action.⁷

By the 1980s, Canadian asbestos stakeholders were amongst those most committed to the long-term survival of chrysotile. In 1984, asbestos mine owners in Quebec and representatives from the Canadian and Quebec Governments set up the Asbestos Institute (AI) to promote “the safe use of chrysotile asbestos in Canada and throughout the world.” Between 1984 and 2001, the institute received a total of \$54 million from three equal donors: the Federal Government, the Quebec Government, and the asbestos industry.⁸ Drawing on these funds, the AI conducted a global campaign targeted at national governments, trade unions, decision makers, civil servants, journalists, scientists, doctors, and consumers.

The AI is the nexus of a web of organizations which includes: the Asbestos Cement Product Producers Association (ACPPA), the Asbestos Information Association/North America (AIA/NA), the Association of Asbestos Cement Product Producers (AACPP), and the Asbestos International Association (AIA).⁹ Painstaking research conducted during 2002, revealed links between the AI and these groups:

- Denis Hamel, an AI Director, is the Director of the ACPPA;
- the office address for the ACPPA, the AIA/NA, and the AACPP is the same postal mail box in Arlington, Virginia; they share the same phone and fax numbers in Montreal;
- Bob Pigg, the President of the AIA/NA, is also President of the AACPP and was Director General of the AIA (one of the four sponsors of the Asbestos Institute Web site).

The use of “independent” bodies to corroborate industry’s propaganda is not new. In the United Kingdom, the Asbestosis Research Council (ARC) fulfilled a similar role more than 30 years ago. The carefully crafted impression of an autonomous science-based organization could not have been further from the truth; the ARC began and remained commercially motivated:

the ARC was run by industrialists and not by scientists... Strategy was set by the management commit-

tee, which in turn responded to the wishes of the sponsoring directors ... these men did not see the ARC as fundamentally a council for scientific research. Ultimately, it was an attempt to capture the scientific agenda and influence public policy.¹⁰

AI AND THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT: AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

A briefing by federal officials reveals the intimate connection between the Government and the AI:

By supporting the Asbestos Institute, the Government of Canada continues to pursue its goal of promoting safe use of chrysotile, and of other minerals and metals, in other countries. For example, during 1999–2000, the Asbestos Institute led 16 missions to 12 Latin American, African and Asian countries to give seminars and workshops on the safe use of chrysotile to representatives from governments, industry, unions, universities and the media.¹¹

AI personnel take part in the planning and running of trade and diplomatic missions to pressurize foreign governments:

plans [were made] for the federal government, through its embassies, to organize and participate in 16 pro-chrysotile asbestos conferences and lobbying missions in Chile and other foreign countries. Much of the federal participation involves lobbying foreign trade officials to back off potential import bans, and to convince health departments of foreign governments that the research into the dangers of chrysotile asbestos is inconclusive and that science does not support an outright ban on all forms and uses of asbestos.¹²

The underlined portion of the preceding statement is, according to another government document, a gross underexaggeration:

In cooperation with key stakeholders the Government of Canada is continuing to monitor and intervene in markets such as Brazil, Chile and Vietnam where bans are being considered... [When Argentina banned asbestos] Canadian Embassy officials in Buenos Aires in coordination with NRCan and the Asbestos Institute... made presentations to the Argentinean Ministry of Health, and to the Economy, Industry and Mines Department.¹³

According to Journalist Jim Young, AI Director Denis Hamel “travels all over the globe to promote ‘safe use’ and combat what he calls the zealotry of ‘green evangelists’ calling for bans. He has logged more than 100 such ‘missions,’ promoting the Institute’s voluntary agreement signed by buyers of Canadian asbestos.”¹⁴ The Institute has provided:

financial aid for the creation of a dozen national industry associations in as many countries. These

associations distribute health and safety information to their members, organize training seminars, coordinate dust-monitoring activities with the Asbestos International Association, coordinate government–industry relations and monitor developments.¹⁵

Leaving no stone unturned, the AI participates in a federal program to bring foreign journalists to Canada, hoping they will return home singing the praises of chrysotile:

When Chilean journalist Raul Sohr phoned the Canadian embassy in Santiago last year [1998], he got a lot more than he bargained for. “I was only asking for information on Canadian asbestos,” he said. But a helpful embassy official said the Canadian government would fly him to Canada, all expenses paid, and organize an information program... He was handed “\$1,500 in travellers cheques” [upon arrival] to help cover the cost of hotels and meals [by a representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs]. The air ticket, worth \$1,750, was paid for by the Department of Foreign Affairs account at Rider Government Travel Service on Metcalf St. in Ottawa...

There were five other Latin American journalists from Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Panama, as well as a representative from the Colombian Asbestos Producers’ Association [on the journalistic junket]... All the journalists were given little packets of travellers’ cheques on arrival.¹⁶

After the visit of six Moroccan journalists to Canada on May 17–23, 1998, a letter was sent from the AI to Gilles Mahoney, in Quebec’s Ministry of Natural Resources, asking him to pay his Ministry’s contribution to this event, which was itemized as: \$1,272.42 for one plane ticket and \$900 per diem.¹⁷ On May 30, 2002, the Chair of the Board of the AI signed a contribution agreement with the Canadian Government for the receipt of \$500,000 over two years. The purpose of the donation was to help the AI “promote the safe use of chrysotile at the national and international level.” Appendix A of the agreement lists eligible activities:

- advance missions in target countries;
- technical missions in target countries;
- national seminars (1or 2 days);
- specialist training programs (in Canada or abroad);
- labor seminars;
- missions from consuming countries;
- monitoring missions;
- communication activities (including “visits by journalists, scientists and decision-makers from consuming countries”).¹⁸

THE LOSS OF EUROPE

Although unilateral bans had already been adopted by nine European countries (Iceland 1983, Norway 1984,

Denmark 1986, Sweden 1986, Austria 1990, The Netherlands 1991, Finland 1992, Italy 1992, and Germany 1993), when France announced its decision to ban asbestos (July 1996), the AI went into meltdown:

The following actions are being taken in order to minimize the impact of the French decision in Europe and at the international level:

At the request of Israel, AIA will be convening a meeting of the Governing Council in the very near future. The European Advisory Council of AIA has developed and is now implementing a strategy aimed at avoiding the adoption of an asbestos ban at the level of the European Union. For your information, The European Commission (DG III) is convening a meeting on July 26th, to gauge the reactions of other member states to the French decision.

The Asbestos Institute will be meeting with the Governments of Canada and Quebec this week...

From the urgency and detailed response of the AI, it is clear that the wider implications of the French ban were clearly understood: France today, Europe tomorrow. What made matters worse, from the Canadian viewpoint, was that France had been a close ally in the chrysotile campaign. The year before the ban was announced, France imported 29,978 metric tons of Canadian chrysotile, 6% of Canada's annual exports; France was Europe's leading consumer, with Spain a very weak runner-up.¹⁹ French politicians and civil servants, no doubt much encouraged by the industry-backed Permanent Committee on Asbestos, had led the resistance to EU restrictions on chrysotile. The surprise adoption of French Decree 96-1133 (as a result of intense campaigning by French anti-asbestos groups, which is discussed later), prohibiting the import and use of chrysotile and all chrysotile-containing products as of January 1, 1997, was thus viewed as a gross betrayal by the Canadian Government and other asbestos stakeholders.

On June 20, 1997, a Canadian request was submitted to the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade that France rescind this "irrational and disproportionate" ban. Behind-the-scenes attempts at resolution failed, and on May 28, 1998, the Government of Canada lodged an official request with the WTO for consultations with the European Commission, the body with exclusive jurisdiction in international trade matters for Member States, "concerning certain measures taken by France for the prohibition of asbestos and products containing asbestos." To make a long story short, Canada lost! The WTO Dispute Settlement Panel (September 18, 2000) and Appellate Body (March 12, 2001) both accepted that: chrysotile is an established carcinogen, there is no safe threshold, and "controlled use" is not an effective alternative to a national ban.

With French influence in the European Union (EU) lost, Canada's remaining chrysotile markets in the EU were doomed. EU trade and legal policies favor harmonization; the French ban meant there were nine EU countries that had banned asbestos and six that had not. The anti-asbestos forces now had a majority voice in the European debate which led, in 1999, to the adoption of an EU ban. Europe was lost, but the war continued.

THE BATTLE FOR CHILE

Early in 2001, the Republic of Chile gave notice that the import and use of asbestos would be banned by July 2001. On June 29, 2001, the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, personally telephoned the Chilean President Ricardo Lagos in an attempt to persuade him to abandon the prohibition on chrysotile. In an official statement, Chrétien admitted that he "spoke with President Lagos and forcefully made the Canadian case—based on clear scientific evidence—that chrysotile asbestos can be used safely." As the use of asbestos in Chile was declared illegal by Presidential Declaration on July 12, one must assume that President Lagos had not been convinced by Chrétien's arguments. Even after losing this skirmish, however, the Canadians did not cease their interference in Chilean affairs. Louis Perron, a Senior Policy Advisor to the Canadian Government,²⁰ explains why:

in our view Chile is the stumbling block: if we cannot persuade them to the merits of controlled use, I don't think other Latin American country [sic] will follow. We cannot really affect the situation if there is little support from the local industry.

For the documentation of what happened next, one must thank Canadian researcher Ken Rubin, whose applications under the Access to Information Act have brought to light many revealing documents. An e-mail on March 20, 2002, from Margot Edwards, the Commercial Officer at the Canadian Embassy in Chile, to Elizabeth Rohr, in Quebec, says:²¹

Canada (mainly Quebec), as a major exporter of Asbestos to Chile, has undertaken (through NRCan and PMO Office) extensive lobbying in Chile in order to promote safe use of Asbestos in lieu of total ban. Several Government of Canada missions have taken place followed by extensive exchange of technical information. A seminar on the safe use of asbestos and its effects on human health is being organized jointly by the Canadian and Chilean Governments. It will take place in June in Santiago.

The Canadian title of the seminar, *Asbestos: Its Potential Effects on Human Health and How to Ensure its Safe Use*, was unacceptable to the Chileans who changed it to: *The Use of Asbestos and its Effects on Human Health*.²² The Chilean organizers also objected to the revised title of

a presentation on day 2: *Tools to Ensure the Safe Use of Asbestos and Other Industrial Fibres: ILO International Convention, ISO Standard 7337 and Codes of Practice*, insisting it be returned to the original title: *International Legislation and Conventions on Asbestos*. At a meeting on March 18, a Canadian suggestion for a presentation entitled *Occupational Health and Safety: The Role of Unions in the Canadian Chrysotile Asbestos Industry* had been rejected. When the Canadians tried to reinsert this subject onto the agenda, the Chilean representative insisted it be replaced by a talk on the Chilean Occupational Health and Safety Regime. Canadian plans to invite a guest speaker from Mexico for the session *Occupational Health and Safety: the Mexican Government's Approach to its Asbestos Manufacturing Industry* were quashed by Milenko Skoknic, from Chile's Directorate General of International Economic Relations, who wrote: "We feel that it is not suitable to include a Mexican guest speaker on this occasion, as this seminar is strictly a bilateral event." The seminar took place in Santiago, Chile, on June 12 and 13, 2002, in a room that accommodated 24 people. The Canadian delegation of eight was composed of: Denis Hamel from the Asbestos Institute, Marie Larue and Alain Auger representing the Government of Quebec, Serge Trudel from the Quebec Worker Federation, and Aleksander Ignatow, Louis Perron, and Gonzalo Munoz representing the Government of Canada. An e-mail from Munoz to Perron dated May 20, 2002, is indicative of the Canadians' attention to detail:

I suggested Milenko to use the same room in which we met last year, in order to have controlled admittance to the seminar, avoiding any external intervention from uninvited ONGs (NGOs).²³

While the names of the Chilean delegates are not known, the correspondence provided by Ken Rubin suggests that fewer than 15 representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of External Relations and the National Environmental Committee attended.²⁴

The ultimately futile attempt by asbestos interests to affect developments in Chile was both expensive and embarrassing. On July 12, 2001, Bill Schiller's article, "Chilean Ban to Boost Asbestos Woes," was published in the *Toronto Star*. Schiller detailed:

documents obtained under Freedom of Information laws [which] show Ottawa—working with the industry's lobbying arm, the Asbestos Institute (AI)—is waging an all-out diplomatic offensive that has been turning personal when foreign officials won't be persuaded.

The journalist quotes from a January letter sent by Clément Godbout, a director of the AI, to Pierre Pettigrew, Canada's International Trade Minister, which "launched a general attack against the Chilean govern-

ment and a personal attack on Chilean Health Minister Michelle Bachelet. The AI letter accuses Chile of having a 'cavalier' attitude toward Canadian officials and urges Pettigrew not to tolerate it." The next day's editorial in the *Toronto Star* stated:

Not only is it embarrassing to see Chrétien shilling for the asbestos industry, it raises troubling questions about Canada's respect for the health and safety concerns of other countries.

"From Coast to Coast," a program shown by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, interviewed Bernardo Reyes from the Institute of Political Ecology, Chile. Reyes described the anti-asbestos campaign including the July 12 demonstration in front of the Presidential Palace and the presentation to Hughes Rousseau, Canada's interim Ambassador to Chile, of a letter to Prime Minister Chrétien. The letter, signed by Sergio Chapa, the President of the Committee of Asbestos Victims, Manuel Baquedano, the President of the Institute of Political Ecology, presidents of Chile's four main trade unions, and the Secretary General of CUT, Jose Ortiz, asked why

is it necessary to place pressure on developing countries and on poor nations to accept a mineral that has been scientifically proven to pose a great threat to those who handle it? Risky and toxic products for Canadians will have an even greater impact in developing nations with poorly developed health and safety regulations and enforcement mechanisms.

INDUSTRY'S GLOBAL STRATEGY

While the intervention in Chile failed, many others have not. In the face of overwhelming scientific evidence, epidemiologic studies, medical research,²⁵ and public sentiment, the asbestos industry has prospered. This has not happened by luck or coincidence; it is the result of a well-resourced and coordinated campaign by a multitude of global asbestos interests. If this sounds more like a scenario for a cheap TV movie than a realistic appraisal, let me explain. On November 24 and 25, 1971, the First International Conference of Asbestos Information Bodies took place in London. It was attended by 34 delegates from the national associations listed in Table 1.

Papers circulated at the meeting provide a fascinating insight into the predominant issues being considered by the industry at that time. One of the main themes was "Attacks on Asbestos and Our Defenses"; ways of manipulating national governments and influencing public opinion were outlined. In Holland, death by committee was an effective way of bogging down proposed restrictions. When a French delegate asked A. R. Kolff van Oosterwijk "Is there a general public consciousness of the 'risk' (of asbestos) in Hol-

TABLE 1 First International Conference of Asbestos Information Bodies

Belgium	Commissie Voorlichting Asbest/ Comite d'Information de l'Amiante (Asbestos Information Committee)
Denmark	Danish Asbestos Information Group
Finland	Finnish Asbestos Information Group
France	Chambre Syndicale de l'Amiante (Asbestos Syndicate)
Germany	Wirtschaftsverband Asbest e.V. and Wirtschaftsverband Asbestzement e.V. (Asbestos Trade Association and Asbestos-Cement Trade Association)
Holland	Commissie Voorlichting Asbest/ Comite d'Information de l'Amiante (Asbestos Information Committee)
Italy	Associazione Nazionale degli Industriali Amiantieri (National Association of the Asbestos Industry)
Norway	Norwegian Asbestos Information Group
Sweden	Swedish Asbestos Information Group
United Kingdom	Asbestosis Research Council (ARC), Asbestos Information Committee (AIC), Hill & Knowlton (UK) Ltd. (Public Relations Company)
United States	Asbestos Information Association/ North America

land;” he answered: “I think NOT.” In the United Kingdom “regular informal discussions between various members of the Factory Inspectorate” and civil servants in the Home Office, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Health and Social Security, the Customs and Excise Department, and the Department of Employment ensured that industry’s proposals were incorporated into official doctrine. In his paper A. A. Cross, Chairman of the Environmental Control Committee of the ARC, proudly boasted:

They [the Factory Inspectorate] have also sought the co-operation of the Council (ARC) in developing improved procedures and products, for example, they sought our advice on the question of sprayed asbestos with the result that all sprayed asbestos insulation contractors in the United Kingdom have now accepted as standard procedure the predamping of asbestos fibre which, as a result of measurements taken by Government Officials, has been reclassified by them and other Government Departments as a low risk operation.

“Action Taken in the United Kingdom to Defend Asbestos” was the title of the presentation by Mr. W. P. Howard of the AIC. Dividing the industry’s strategy into positive action and defensive steps, he cited:

Positive Action

Advertising campaigns

- 1970 SLOGAN: “Where would we be without asbestos?”
FOCUS: Safety at sea, the safety of buildings and safety on the road.
MEDIA COVERAGE: *The Financial Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Scotsman*, *New Society*, *Management Today*, *New Scientist*, *Engineering*, *Engineer*, *Building*, *Architects Journal*, and *Shipbuilding*
- 1970 THEME: New asbestos regulations
FOCUS: Information on implementation available in ARC literature
MEDIA COVERAGE: Journals read by industrial safety officers
- 1971 SLOGAN: “Asbestos—it’s a natural.”
FOCUS: Safe use of asbestos in brakes, fire protection, and marine applications
MEDIA COVERAGE: *The Financial Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Scotsman*, *New Society*, *Management Today*, *New Scientist*, *Engineering*, *Engineer*, *Building*, *Architects Journal*, and *Shipbuilding*

Public relations

- 1970 FILM: Why Asbestos?
DISTRIBUTION: 86 copies with English commentary sold (52 in the U.K., 34 abroad); French and German versions of the film were planned
LITERATURE: A 4-page leaflet entitled *Why Asbestos* accompanied the film
- 1971 FILM: Fire at Work
SPONSORS: AIC, manufacturer of fire equipment and manufacturer of ventilation equipment

Press

- 1971 ARTICLES: Feature produced in collaboration with the press association on how asbestos saves lives
DISTRIBUTION: Publication of the industry-produced article in the columns of 17 British newspapers (as a news item, not an advertisement!)
OFF-SHOOTS: Other articles such as “What would we do without asbestos,” which appeared in the *Leicester Mercury*

Defensive Action

MONITORING: Local newspapers scanned for references to inquests on workers who died from asbestos-related diseases
MAPPING: Map of the U.K. plotted with a dot for each “press reference to a coroner’s report in a local newspaper”
COUNTER ARGUMENT: Production of “an armoury of literature which deals with some of the recurrent criticisms,” including: Asbestos—Safety and Control, Asbestos—Public Not at Risk, and

Asbestos Bodies—Their Significance

MEETINGS: Assembly of an AIC Speakers Panel “whose members have now addressed 70 different groups of safety officers... We have addressed some 80% of the safety officers in the country.”

BODY LANGUAGE: Television training for senior directors in the asbestos industry

GROUPS: Setting up of a new Building Materials Study Group to ensure that “architects and builders did not suffer from any misunderstanding of the facts surrounding the use of asbestos.”

PUBLIC RELATIONS: The London office of the AIC is located in “the offices of our public relations consultants, Hill & Knowlton. In the last two years alone we have answered over 1,000 such [public] enquiries.”

REBUTTAL OF PRESS CRITICISM: “At least once a month we find that some newspapers or magazines are saying foolish and misleading things about asbestos products.”

The concluding remarks of Howard were prescient:

we must project the same positive message in each of our respective countries. This is because the problem is becoming more and more an international one. Science knows no frontiers nor do modern media or communications... We saw yesterday how our American friends defeated a ban on asbestos in brake linings. The stand made by one’s [sic] country’s asbestos industry must be supported by the others.

The proactive campaigns mounted by industry groups in the United Kingdom and the United States were presented as templates for other national associations by the conference Chairman, Mr. M. F. Howe, who warned delegates that:

sooner or later the tempo will increase in all areas. In my opinion, it will be sooner rather than later. I would earnestly counsel all of you to prepare now for greater Government interest and intervention, and for much stronger publicity attacks. You will find, as we and our American colleagues have found, that time is not on your side.

A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN THIRTY YEARS!

It is illuminating to compare the attendance and themes of the First International Conference of Asbestos Information Bodies with those of a more recent asbestos get-together: the 58th Governing Council Meeting of the Asbestos International Association, June 2002—also held in London.²⁶ Whereas all 34 delegates to the 1971 event came from Europe or North America, the majority of delegates to the 2002 meeting in London were suppliers and consumers from Latin America, Asia, and the Far East. This shift in geographic participation reflects the collapse of Western demand and the increasing importance of asbestos

consumption in emerging markets. At the 1971 conference, there was heavy U.K. involvement:

- it was chaired by a representative of the British AIC;
- 9 of 34 delegates (26%) were British;
- 6 of 13 presentations (46%) were made by British speakers.

At the 2002 shindig, the sole remaining British voice was that of John Bridle, who, since he “retired from the asbestos cement industry in 1999 [the year the U.K. banned chrysotile] after 38 years working at all levels of the industry” has been spreading the pro-chrysotile message. In recent years, Bridle has been acting as the U.K. technical consultant to the Asbestos Cement Product Producers Association (ACPPA), “an international organization with representation in 16 countries” which is “dedicated to supplying scientific information for the safe handling of Chrysotile.” As mentioned earlier, the ACPPA shares a Virginia mailbox and Montreal phone lines with two other asbestos industry bodies and its Director is a Director of the AI.

In the UK Situation Report on Chrysotile, written on May 13, 2002, Bridle noted:

Since the last meeting in Quebec 2001 we have been concentrating on trying to get the authorities to give details of their science that shows chrysotile to be a danger. They have failed in a spectacular fashion... On Feb 19 this year we helped produce a TV 10 min slot that went out on News 24 on the BBC world service every hour throughout the day... Around the same time we were on a major national radio news program with the HSE... As a result of that we have increased publicity and with Bookers help in the Sunday telegraph [sic] have now got the European MEPs asking questions and getting no proper answers.

It is clear from the 2002 country reports that the threat from the ban-asbestos campaign is being closely monitored. Ramzi Khalaf from Gulf Eternit Industries reported “no accountable media attack in recent months that would merit attention” in the United Arab Emirates. Although asbestos consumers in Cuba (Grupo Industrial Perdurit) are concerned about “the world attack on asbestos,” the demand for asbestos-cement pipes, sheets, and water tanks for housing projects remains constant. According to Miguel Guerra from Doment, S.A. in the Dominican Republic, the national market for asbestos products is declining due to rising demand for alternative products even though there have been “few attacks to [sic] asbestos.” In Panama, the situation has “improved” since 2001, when newspaper articles were published attacking asbestos. In Ecuador, the company Eternit Ecuatoriana has had 28 years of experience in asbestos cement production. A bullish Eternit spokesperson believes offence is the best defense and suggests that the company:

unite the group of victims who have fell [sic] from weak cellulose sheets placed in roofs, so that they may tell their story... Other countries, like Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, could have additional information on these accidents.

While the EU deadline for phasing out the use of asbestos in Member States is less than two years away, the asbestos industry in Portugal remains in a state of denial. The country report from the representative of the Associacao das Industrias de Produtos de Amianto Crisotilo (AIPA/Association of Chrysotile Product Producers) gives no indication that the industry is living on borrowed time:

Media

Some news related with asbestos' dangers came up on the news. All of them had been contested by the AIPA. In each case a previous contact was made with the journalist responsible by the news and afterwards a written mail was send [sic] contesting their statements.

Trade unions

Nothing special to point out.

Contacts

Several contacts were made with the Representatives of Portuguese Affaires on Environment, Work and Economy in order to point out AIPA's position about the issues linked to waste, workers protection and asbestos products industry.

It is no coincidence that national associations in three of the world's largest asbestos-producing countries are devoting time and money to combating the "propaganda" threats to their industries. Y. A. Kozlov, the President of the Russian Asbestos Association, reported ongoing plans to counteract the anti-asbestos campaign that include:

- the allocation of \$68,000 for an international conference in June, 2002, in Ekaterinburg on: "Safety and Health in the Production and Use of Asbestos and Other Fibrous Materials";
- obtaining government endorsement for the use of asbestos and asbestos cement building products;
- participation at conferences and exhibitions;
- commissioning of scientific, medical, and biological research;
- initiating a pro-asbestos media campaign in Russia and abroad.

Predicting a rising demand in Russia for asbestos products, Kozlov expressed concern about the impact of the World Trade Organization's decision on chrysotile, the EU asbestos ban, and the decision of

the International Maritime Organization to ban asbestos in shipbuilding. Canadian asbestos producers are aware of the hypocrisy inherent in their claims for the "safe use of asbestos" and the almost total lack of asbestos use in Canada. If asbestos is safe enough for Vietnamese, Brazilian, and Japanese workers, health and safety campaigners ask, why isn't it safe enough for Canadian workers? AI Director Denis Hamel brought glad tidings to the conference:

the Quebec Government, responsible for public infrastructure, [has] announced that the use of chrysotile reinforced-asphalt would multiply by 6 the annual consumption of chrysotile. That is compared to last year, in 2002 a total of 100,000 tonnes of asphalt will be installed.

New AI initiatives include: a 16 page brochure, "Saving Lives with Chrysotile Asbestos" ("a direct response to the anti-asbestos lobby") and a regular newsletter available in English, French, and Spanish. The speaker from Brazil was also optimistic about a new industry initiative claiming that the Instituto Brasileiro da Crisotila [Brazilian Chrysotile Institute] "will have great possibilities in making the outright defense of Chrysotile Asbestos in Brazil." The asbestos situation in Brazil "can be considered much better in comparison with one or two years ago."

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS . . .

One industry strategy not mentioned in the papers from the 1971 or 2002 meetings is the use of legal and physical attacks on individuals or groups who are considered a threat. When former asbestos miners in Western Australia (WA) began to organize, they faced hostility from the company that had operated the Wittenoom mine, its parent company, their insurers (the State Government Insurance Office), and WA bureaucrats, to name but a few. The self-help group they started, the Asbestos Diseases Society (ADS), was subjected to:

an extraordinary dirty tricks campaign run against it and its members. There have been burglaries (Rino Pedrotti's house was broken into the day of his funeral), documents have been stolen, and there have been all sorts of anonymous threats. A few years ago, victims were trailed by private detectives, and there was an amazing extortion attempt: someone delivered to the Perth Daily News a tape-recording threatening to assassinate the entire Western Australian Cabinet unless each Wittenoom victim was paid \$3 million. The finger of suspicion, of course, was pointed at Robert Vojakovic (the ADS President), and the police raided the society's office and the homes of some of its committee members.²⁷

The publication of the book *Asbestos Killer Dust—A Worker/Community Guide* by the British Society for Social

Responsibility (BSSRS) in 1979 led to a lawsuit against its author Alan Dalton. Dr. Robert Murray, the TUC's former medical adviser, sued over comments about "his pro-industry views" and failure as a Factory Inspector "to police effectively" the operations at Cape's asbestos factory in Hebden Bridge. Historian Geoffrey Tweedale explained:

Murray sued Dalton, who under English libel law had to satisfy a jury that his statements were true. He failed and Murray was awarded £500. Dalton's supporters would later point to Murray's subsequent activities—as an expert witness for Turner & Newall and as a defender of the use of asbestos—as proof of the truth of the contentious statements. However, this did not help Dalton at the time: he was ordered to pay Murray's legal costs and the £30,000 bill crippled the BSSRS.²⁸

In March 1994 the holding of an international seminar, *Asbestos: Controlled Use or Total Ban*, in São Paulo, Brazil, led to violence when Bento Menguine, a trade unionist who had worked at the Eternit asbestos cement factory in Curitiba for 12 years, was kidnapped and beaten; his life and the lives of his family were threatened because of his opposition to asbestos. The Permanent Committee on Asbestos, France, and the Canadian Ambassador to Brazil opposed the seminar, which had been organized by the Brazilian Labour Ministry and the trade unions CUT and Força Sindical.²⁹

In early 2001, plans were being finalized to hold a symposium entitled "Banning Asbestos in India" in New Delhi on February 2, 2001. This event was to be part of the four-day national meeting of the Indian Association of Occupational Health (IAOH). On January 5, 2001, the Asbestos Cement Products Manufacturers Association in India sent a registered letter to Dr. Tushar Kant Joshi, the Chairman of the IAOH Scientific Committee, which threatened that failure to comply with the demands of the manufacturers would result in "suitable remedial measures which includes seeking injunction against IAOH for holding workshop on the above topic (Banning Asbestos in India)." Industry spokesman Mr. A. K. Sethi wrote: "It is well known ... that if the Asbestos is used in safe manner it is not harmful."

Despite the threat by the manufacturers' association, an injunction never materialized. Unfortunately, the industry was not alone in trying to silence the doctors; pressure on Dr. Joshi was also exerted by Dr. P. K. Sishodiya, the Director of Mines Safety in Dhanbad, who, in a letter dated January 11, 2001, warned: "it will be inappropriate for IAOH to pre-judge issue and organise a workshop Banning Asbestos in India... I am of the opinion that we should avoid using the title 'Banning Asbestos in India.' I hope you will agree with the suggestion and do the needful." Many IAOH officers and members were critical of Dr. Joshi's actions, accus-



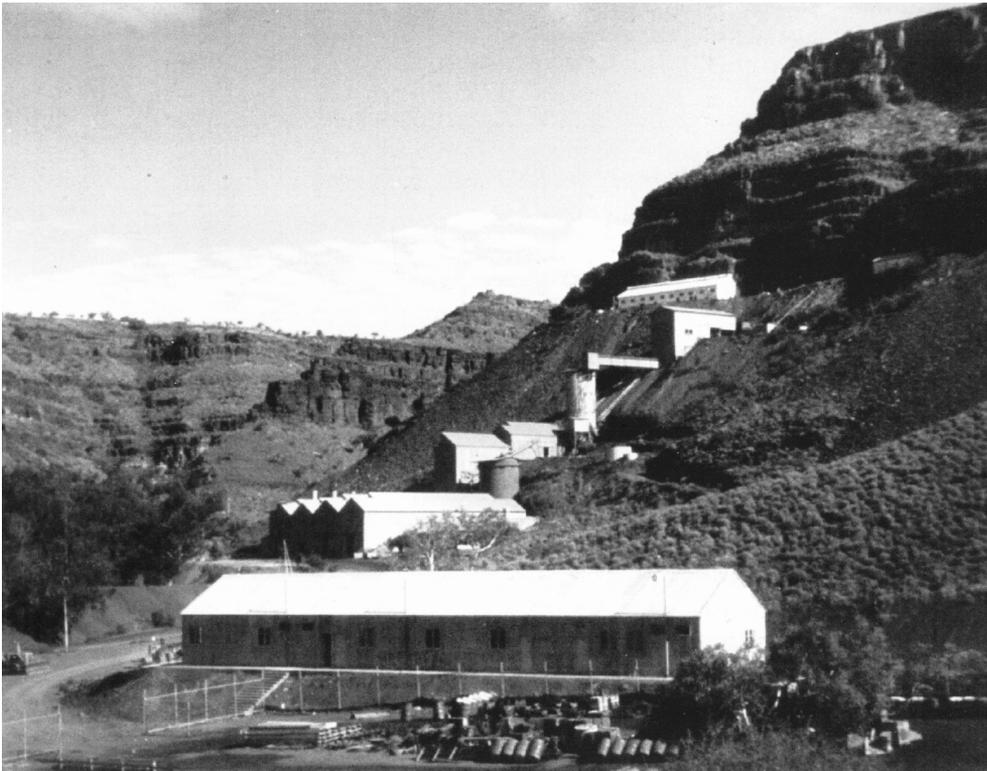
Fernanda Giannasi, Global Asbestos Congress, Brazil, September 17, 2000 (photo by Eduardo Metroviche)

ing him of sensationalizing the issue and of having commercial links with the steel industry. Nevertheless, Dr. Joshi led the calls for "a ban on all activities relating to mining, manufacture, use and trade in asbestos." It is not an exaggeration to say that these events marked the beginning of the public debate on asbestos in India.

Shortly after losing the skirmish in India, asbestos industry forces made a sneak attack on another front. On April 23, 2001, AI Director Denis Hamel denounced Engineer Fernanda Giannasi to the Brazilian Minister of Labor. Hamel wrote to Francisco Dornelles:

It has come to our attention that one of your inspectors, Mrs. Fernanda Giannasi, who is Coordinator of the Citizens' Virtual Network for an Asbestos Ban in Latin America, is using her position in your ministry to promote her views, which are contrary to the stated policy of your country... We wonder if this person is officially mandated by your Ministry as a spokesperson on asbestos related matters, taking a position contrary to the official Brazilian policy... we respectfully request that your ministry take the necessary measures so that Mrs Giannasi no longer abuses her professional responsibilities to promote her personal activities.³⁰

Fortunately, the existence of this letter was leaked and a huge international outpouring of support for Ms. Giannasi resulted; the Asbestos Institute did not succeed in its attempt to marginalize this much-respected public servant. A few months later, Ms. Giannasi was a successful finalist in the prestigious Claudia Award for Brazil's Woman of the Year and was elected a Fellow of the renowned Collegium Ramazzini; these honors are indicative of the popular and professional esteem in which she is held. Clearly, Director Hamel's opinion of Ms. Giannasi's professional conduct is not widely shared.



The infamous Wittenoom mine and mill. Below, race day at Wittenoom—residents and mine workers compete to be the first one to fill oil drums with blue asbestos.



THE EMERGENCE OF VICTIM SUPPORT GROUPS: THE ENDGAME BEGINS³¹

Throughout most of the 20th century, industry retained a stranglehold on knowledge about the hazards of asbestos:

Scientific information was shut up in a world of specialists... In effect, prior to these years (from the 1920s to the years 1960–1965), all the known facts were produced by industry, in close collaboration with the scientific and research world. Knowledge remained in the limited domain of specialists.³²

In the United Kingdom, the existence of an “information vacuum” was exploited by negligent employers, who continued to deny compensation claims from injured workers. Marginalized by ill health and disadvantaged by financial deprivation, potential U.K. asbestos claimants stayed away from the courts: “In 1982, Turner & Newall conceded they were receiving [U.K.] claims at the rate of rather less than 100 a year.”³³ One of the first people to speak out for asbestos victims in Britain was Nancy Tait, whose husband Bill died of mesothelioma in 1968.³⁴ Lack of cooperation from the medical establishment and government agencies frustrated Nancy’s attempts to gain official recog-

dition that her husband's illness had been due to occupational exposure to asbestos. Bill had been dead for four years when the Department of Health and Social Security finally admitted the connection. Dr. Tait put her experience to good use through SPAID, the Society for the Prevention of Asbestosis and Industrial Diseases;³⁵ this was "the first organisation in the world to tackle the issues relating to asbestos use."³⁶ Nancy began her campaign for a U.K. ban on chrysotile in the 1970s in her booklet: *Asbestos Kills*, and in written evidence to the Advisory Committee on Asbestos, she pointed out:

The dangers of white asbestos are seriously underestimated in this country. Too often, one hears from industry, local authorities, fire prevention officers, unions, general practitioners, contractors and their operatives and the media: "It is only white asbestos."

Richard "Dick" Jackson began work in the Hull dockyards as an asbestos lagger in 1947. From 1965 to 1985, he worked as an asbestos sprayer, later commenting: "Looking back I am surprised how many schools, hospitals, and food premises we sprayed." He first became aware of the occupational hazards of asbestos in 1970; six years later, three co-workers at J. W. Stanley, a fifth of the company's workforce, died of asbestos-related diseases. In 1983, Dick set up the Hull Asbestos Action Group; his motto was: "Prevention is better—there is no cure." An effective victim-support worker who helped many widows obtain compensation for their husbands' asbestos-related deaths, he was also a tireless campaigner for a global ban on asbestos. Seven months before he died of mesothelioma, Dick was one of three European participants at the seminar in Brazil: *Asbestos: Controlled Use or Ban?*³⁷

Asbestos workers in Australia and the United States also began to organize in the late 1970s. A group of former asbestos miners from Wittenoom, Australia, started to meet regularly in 1979 to discuss issues of compensation, medical treatment, and the support needs of asbestos sufferers. From a handful of members and a few cardboard files, the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia has grown into a professional operation with more than 8,500 members and eight full-time staff in its Perth offices. On December 17, 1979, the White Lung Association was founded in San Pedro, California, with the mission "to educate the public to the hazards of asbestos exposure." Most of the founding members were shipyard workers who had observed first-hand the ubiquity of asbestos use in the workplace.³⁸ Support came from "thousands of asbestos victims. Meetings often overflowed the halls and churches where they were held. Demonstrations, strikes and walkouts were frequent in these early years." The following year, the Asbestos Victims of America was started to provide public education about asbestos and to assist asbestos sufferers with medical, social, and legal needs.³⁹



Asbestos ecumenical service, November 29, 2002. Robert Vojakovic, President of Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia, speaks to the congregation at St. George's Cathedral, Perth, Western Australia.

"Scotland has a long association with the asbestos industry," so wrote historians Ronald Johnston and Arthur McIvor in their paper, "Incubating Death: Working with Asbestos in Clydeside Shipbuilding and Engineering, 1945–1990."⁴⁰ John Todd started work in the Clydebank shipyards, helping put steel around asbestos-covered pipes in the engine and boiler rooms of the R.M.S. *Queen Mary*. His father, two uncles, and a cousin worked with him; they all died from asbestos-related disease.⁴¹ In the mid-1970s, John, who had been diagnosed as having asbestosis in 1971, began a personal campaign to expose negligent employers, compile lists of the injured, and get compensation for the victims. John told a journalist:

But the injustice of it all really gets me down. I spend so much time fighting for compensation for the families of victims. Doctors will say asbestosis in a quiet room alone with you, but it is a different story when it comes to putting it as the primary cause of death on a certificate.⁴²

An ad hoc committee was formed with the help of the Scottish National Party; its aim was "to focus attention on the problem and bring pressure to have the danger wiped out." As a result of increasing support for this grass-roots social movement, the Glasgow-based group Clydeside Action on Asbestos (CAA) was set up;



Maiden voyage of R.M.S. Queen Mary, May 27, 1936 (courtesy of Lloyd's List)

it quickly became a focal point for asbestos disease sufferers on Clydeside, many of whom worked in the shipyards, heavy industry, or the local asbestos factory. Despite a serious lack of resources, CAA volunteers provide moral support and practical assistance to members of the community. In 1993, CAA worker Joanne Lenaghan wrote: "our volunteers have taught themselves to understand the nature of asbestos, its medical effects and how to achieve compensation from the social services and the courts."⁴³ CAA has initiated many campaigns of national importance, including protests against the Compensation Recovery Unit, the Industrial Disablement Benefit Scheme, and the Scottish legal system.

Italian workers and asbestos victims in Casale Monferrato began to campaign against conditions in the local Eternit asbestos factory during the 1980s; this unrest eventually led to the formation of the first branch of a national association, the Associazione degli



Mrs. Hana Ouhashi, widow of asbestos victim from U.S. Navy base in Japan (photo by Akira Imai)

Esposti all'Amianto/Association of (Those) Exposed to Asbestos (AEA), on March 18, 1989. The AEA proclaimed: "We are an Italian organisation who fight against the use of asbestos in the workplace and in the surroundings. We are mainly composed by workers and citizens who want to ban the [use of] asbestos everywhere." In the mid-1990s, branches of the AEA were started by shipyard workers and railway workers in Monfalcone and Padua, respectively. A few years later, a branch of the AEA was begun by port workers and stevedores from Trieste. Other branches of AEA are in Milan, Bologna, Genoa, and Florence.

In the next 40 years, Japanese deaths from malignant mesothelioma "will be 49 times higher" than in the 1990s, reflecting the ubiquitous use of asbestos in construction and manufacturing during the 1970s and 1980s. Researchers at Waseda University's School of Science and Engineering report that the mortality rate for men born between 1951 and 1960 is six times as high as that for men born 20 years earlier.⁴⁴ High levels of asbestos-related disease have also been observed amongst shipyard workers, many of whom were employed at U.S. Navy bases such as the one in Yokosuka. In 1982, doctors working at a hospital in Yokosuka City "conducted follow-up studies on pathological anatomy of 848 patients who died in [the] past five years, and found that one-third of them died from lung cancer due to asbestos exposure (military base and shipbuilding workers etc.)."⁴⁵

Since 1987, the Ban Asbestos Network Japan (BANJAN) has been working to raise awareness of the hazards of asbestos, support asbestos victims and their families, and campaign for stricter regulations, including a national ban.⁴⁶ At BANJAN's International Conference on the Total Elimination of Asbestos Use (1998), Sugio Furuya reported on campaign activities and strategies for achieving a Japanese ban. Conference delegates condemned the Canadian action at the World Trade Organization against the French asbestos ban and called on the Japanese Government to end the use of asbestos in Japan. When Japan's Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare announced plans in June 2002 to implement a unilateral ban on chrysotile, a BANJAN spokesperson urged the Government to also establish measures for monitoring the country's asbestos situation and to introduce better systems of diagnosis, medical treatment, spiritual care, and compensation for asbestos victims and their families.

BANJAN works closely with the Japan Occupational Safety and Health Resource Center (JOSHRC, 1990) and Japan Citizen's Network for Wiping out Asbestos (ASNET, 1988). Initiatives to assist victims, monitor environmental contamination, and generate public awareness taken by these groups include:

- JOSHRC: the operation of the Asbestos-Occupational Cancer Hotline 110 (1991 and 1992);

- ASNET: publication of a book *Asubesuto nante Iranai* [*We Are Opposed to Asbestos*], 1990), sponsorship of meetings in Tokyo, Kure [Hiroshima], and Osaka, 1993⁴⁷;
- ASNET: the international appeal for masks to protect Kobe residents after the 1995 earthquake: “Residents of Kobe City and Nishinomiya City are [being] exposed to the density of asbestos in the air about 50 times as high as that in Tokyo”⁴⁸;
- BANJAN: publication of BANJAN Information (in Japanese) two or three times a year.

During the 1990s, social mobilization of asbestos victims increased: in the United Kingdom groups were started in Cheshire, Clydebank, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Plymouth, and Sheffield. Across the English Channel, ANDEVA, the French National Association for the Defence of Victims of Asbestos, was created. Although support for this association came from a range of groups and institutions, the spark that lit the fire came from two sources: asbestos textile workers, mostly women, campaigning for asbestos compensation, and teachers and students protesting against the presence of sprayed asbestos fireproofing throughout Jussieu University. The success of ANDEVA is based on its roots as a social movement; there are currently 8,000 members of 20 local ANDEVA branches. Acting as an umbrella group, ANDEVA supports victims in bringing compensation claims, lobbies politicians, develops new initiatives for dealing with the medical establishment, social security institutions, the civil service, employers, and others, and campaigns for an end to double standards such as the switch to non-asbestos technology in France (which followed the national asbestos ban) and the export of dirty technology by French multinationals to developing countries.⁴⁹

Also at this time, new groups in Australia and New Zealand sprang up. On May 15, 1990, a decision to set up a support group in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, was made at a public meeting attended by 100 asbestos victims, family members, and supporters; the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia opened an office in a Sydney suburb, from which a campaign to improve the financial and medical plight of asbestos sufferers in NSW and to publicize ongoing asbestos risks to the community has been run. Three years later, a group was formed by community members in the State of Victoria: the Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support Inc. (GARDS). GARDS volunteers hold monthly meetings, make home visits to asbestos sufferers, and attempt to raise the profile of local asbestos problems. GARDS officials have worked closely with legal and medical specialists to highlight members’ needs, change restrictive legislation, and improve community health services. The goals of the Asbestos Diseases Association of New Zealand are equitable compensation for asbestos sufferers and a national ban on



Sugio Furuya (BANJAN) addresses the Global Asbestos Congress, September 2000

asbestos.⁵⁰ Ed Grootegoed, the association’s welfare and investigating officer, documents and publicizes asbestos contamination on demolition sites and waste ground in the Auckland area. He says:

More people are being exposed to it now than ever before because the material that is still in use is deteriorating, and where it has been dumped, the ground has not been cleared up properly. In Penrose there are hundreds and thousands of tonnes of asbestos waste. Every time a digger gets in, up it comes.⁵¹

Since 1995, the Dutch Committee of Asbestos Victims has been fighting for justice and compensation for injured people occupationally, domestically, or environmentally exposed to asbestos. One of the aims of the committee is to shorten the “legal agony of mesothelioma victims.”⁵² To this end, committee members negotiated with employers’ organizations, insurance companies, the Government, and trade unions to create national institutes to pay asbestos compensation. The



Annie Thebaud-Mony, ANDEVA and BAN, addresses the Hellenic Asbestos meeting, Athens, Greece, October 2002 (photo by Hein du Plessis).



Blanquia Garcia Alvarado, AEXNIC, addresses the Asbestos Workshop in Bahia, Brazil, June 19, 2002. On her right is Dr. Hermano Castro, chairperson of the session.

Eternit asbestos company, responsible for many of the Dutch asbestos victims, also had commercial operations in Brazil. For over fifty years, Osasco, an industrial suburb of São Paulo, was the center of the country's huge asbestos cement industry. Former workers from the local Eternit factory founded the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed (ABREA) in 1995.⁵³ There are also branches of ABREA in Rio de Janeiro and São Caetano do Sul; plans are under way for new groups in Bahia and Recife. Before ABREA, influential industry spokespeople controlled the national debate on asbestos, reassuring workers and the public that Brazilian asbestos was safe. Nowadays, newspaper reports feature comments from ABREA members and supporters who tell the unwelcome truth: in Brazil, thousands of people have died and continue to die from occupational and environmental exposures to asbestos.

As federal and regional governments in Canada continued their slavish support of the asbestos industry at the tail end of the 20th century, the high price paid by Canadian workers continued to be ignored.⁵⁴ In Sarnia and Lambton County, Ontario, the incidence of mesothelioma rose throughout the 1980s.⁵⁵ Jim Brophy, Director of the Windsor Clinic of Occupational Health for Ontario Workers, was concerned about this trend: "if we want to deal with the cancer epidemic, we have to get into primary prevention. And one of the best primary preventions I can think of is a ban on the exposure to asbestos." In June, 1998 Brophy was one of a dozen signatories to a letter sent by the Windsor Cancer Prevention Coalition to Herb Gray, MP, Deputy Prime Minister. The letter criticized the "Canadian government's defence of the asbestos trade." The authors wrote:

Canadian workers are not immune to asbestos diseases. Teachers, airline flight attendants, office workers, building trade workers, chemical manufacturing workers and workers in the asbestos trades have died and are dying in this community.⁵⁶

One year later, the Victims of Chemical Valley (VOCV) was set up in Sarnia by surviving spouses of petrochemical workers from the Holmes Foundry and Owens Corning factory to raise the profile of occupational diseases, including those related to asbestos exposure, in Ontario.

Mobilization of asbestos victims in Nicaragua and Peru is a recent development. In 1998, a group of 120 former workers from Nicalit, a company which has been manufacturing asbestos cement products in Nicaragua since 1967, got together to discuss the asbestos deaths of co-workers. They decided to form an association: Asociación De Exabajadores De La Nicalit (AEXNIC). In June 2002, Blanquita Garcia Alvarado, the Secretary of AEXNIC, told delegates to the Asbestos Workshop of the Second Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health—Integrating the Americas about the widespread effects of occupational exposure to asbestos in Nicaragua. The Peruvian speaker at the same workshop, Eva Delgado Rosas, explained that in Lima an NGO supported by asbestos victims, former asbestos workers, academics and occupational health professionals, was trying to raise awareness of asbestos problems and promote a national ban.⁵⁷ Actions taken by the group in Lima, Asociación Frente al Asbesto—Programa de Estudios del Asbesto y Riesgos del Trabajo (AFA-PEART/Asociación Against Asbestos—Program for Study of the Occupational Risks of Asbestos), include:

- lobbying Parliament to adopt legislation prohibiting asbestos;
- pressing for epidemiologic research on the incidences of asbestosis, mesothelioma and pulmonary cancer;
- monitoring the health of populations living near asbestos factories;
- ensuring that action is taken to assist asbestos victims to gain compensation;
- working with international movements for a global ban on asbestos.

It is clear from a situation report on Peru compiled by Mark Strasser, a member of the Canadian delegation in Lima, that AFA-PEART will face stiff opposition from local asbestos interests:

I have just met Juan Benavides, General Manager of Frenosa (brakes), and Luis Gamarra, General Manager of Indutex (asbestos concrete). Mr. Jose Valle (indicated below) sits on the board (or is the owner) of both companies that manufacture products using asbestos. They have confirmed that there are no current attempts to ban the importation of asbestos to Peru...

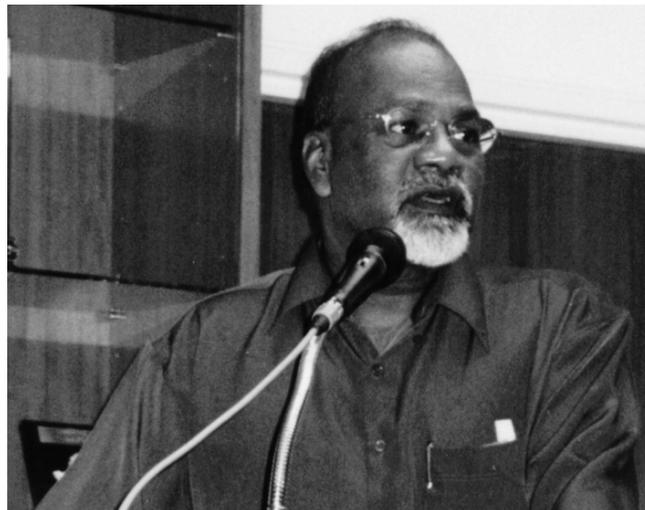
Mr. Benavides and Mr. Gamarra have plans to be proactive in promoting asbestos in Peru. They are looking into the possibilities of organizing a seminar-type event in Peru in conjunction with the Canadian Asbestos Institute and/or organize a mission to visit Canada.⁵⁸

In Chile, the Association of Asbestos Victims (ACHVA) worked closely with trade unionists, academics, campaigners, NGOs, and government ministers to achieve a national ban on asbestos in 2001. Unfortunately, the speed of progress in other areas has been significantly slower; ACHVA campaigns to raise the profile of asbestos issues and obtain compensation and medical treatment for injured workers. The self-help group was started by asbestos-injured workers from the Pizarreno asbestos factory who were unable to obtain compensation from their employer, a member of the Eternit Group. The support of the association has broadened and members now include local people and workers from other companies. In October 2002, Jaime Gatica, legal counsel to ACHVA, reported that, after a three-year wait, a survey of a school close to the Pizarreno factory was finally carried out by the local authority. The school building, the grounds around it and the village were found to be contaminated with asbestos. The school was closed as the funds required for decontamination were not available.

The impetus for the formation of the Belgian Asbestos Victims' Association (ABEVA) was the tragedies suffered by two families: the Jonckheeres and the Vandenbrouckes. Françoise Jonckheere died of mesothelioma in 2000; his father had died of mesothelioma in 1999. Luc Vandenbroucke, the brother of ABEVA's first chairman, was 49 years old when he died of mesothelioma in 1999. In 1995, he brought the first civil case in Belgium against an employer for occupational asbestos exposure. The case was lost in the lower court and again on appeal. Since 2000, ABEVA has been working to change a national system that bars the vast majority of asbestos claims.⁵⁹

In April 2002, after several meetings to discuss asbestos issues took place in New Delhi, a new campaigning group, the Ban Asbestos Network India (BANI), was formed. These events did not pass unnoticed. An e-mail on May 2, 2002, from Martin Barratt, the third Commercial Secretary at the Canadian High Commission in India, to officials in Canada notes:

I met with Brigadier Sethi of the Asbestos Information Centre (AIC) on May 1, 2002. He informed me that the seminars held from April 11 to 13 were not organised by the Indian Government but rather by NGOs. The first, on April 11, was organised by Toxic Links, and the second, on April 12 and 13, by the Indian Association of Occupational Health (IAOH). Toxic Links invited Dr. Barry Casselman [sic] of the U.S., author of "Asbestos—Medical and Legal Aspects," and Ms. Fernanda Giannasi of Brazil, Co-



Dr. Jayabalan, medical consultant to CAP, addresses medical colleagues, November 2002, Penang, Malaysia.

ordinator for the Latin America Ban Asbestos Citizen [sic] Virtual Network, to be the main speakers. Brigadier Sethi told me that the AIC were not invited to either event although they had asked for an opportunity to make a presentation.

The outcome of the April 11 meeting was the establishment of a new NGO to be called the Ban Asbestos Network of India (BANI). There have been a number of articles published, in addition to the one noted below, including one editorial. Most of the articles have headlines similar to the *Times of India* story saying that experts are calling for the banning of asbestos in manufacturing, mining, etc. All the stories refer to the number of Western countries which have allegedly banned asbestos and note that most asbestos imported from [sic] India comes from Canada...

Brigadier Sethi advised me of a much more serious and potentially damaging issue. Some NGOs in West Bengal have filed a claim in the High Court, Kolkata asking the Court to issue an injunction against the use of Asbestos... It is entirely possible that the High Court could issue the injunction and stop the use of asbestos. Eventually the matter would reach the Supreme Court but there is no predicting the outcome. . . .

I think that it may be necessary at some point to prepare an advocacy campaign to counter the arguments of the NGOs.

In Malaysia, the Consumers' Association of Penang has influenced the national debate in a positive way through medical meetings, high-level discussions, and an effective media campaign.⁶⁰ It is generally agreed that a pro-ban consensus exists amongst civil servants, politicians, and industry in Malaysia; a unilateral ban is expected shortly.

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT COALESCES

As pockets of resistance grew, the first steps were taken to forge international links. Individuals and members of groups that had been campaigning against asbestos in Europe first gathered together in Strasbourg on June 12–14, 1991, at the European Parliament. Amongst the groups represented were: the Italian Association of Those Exposed to Asbestos, the Hull Asbestos Action Group and two environmental defense groups: the Comité Mac Zéro from Switzerland and the Ateliers du Tayrac from France. Yves Frémion from the French Green Party organized the meeting with the assistance of the Italian Group. A press release issued on June 14, 1991 called for:

- an immediate ban on the mining and use of all asbestos;
- a public information campaign and procedures for medical surveillance;
- compensation for victims;
- research into safer alternatives;
- the adoption of a policy of just transition;
- decontamination of affected sites.

The decision to form a “federation of international groups” was made. Patrick Herman, one of its founding members and a leading anti-asbestos campaigner in France, believed:

The originality of the Ban Asbestos Network is its ability to bring together persons and groups that haven’t customarily worked together. It is possible, in this manner, to develop a global view of the problem and to have a global response.

The second meeting of the Ban Asbestos Network (BAN) took place in 1992 in Strasbourg. Delegates debated the feasibility of extending BAN’s contacts to Eastern Europe and the developing world. In April 1993, the presence of Fernanda Giannasi, an engineer employed by the Ministry of Labor in São Paulo, Brazil, at the meeting in Milan reflected the widening of the federation’s horizons. Other important speakers at this meeting were:

- Dr. Lorenzo Tomatis, Director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer;
- Dr. Franco Berrino, Director of the Division of Epidemiology of the National Institute for the Research of Cancer in Milan;
- Dr. Henri Pezerat, Director of Research of CNRS, National Center of Scientific Research (Paris);
- Dr. Annie Thébaud-Mony, Research Director at INSERM National Institute for Health and Medical Research (Paris).

According to Patrick Herman:

The Milan Reunion was revealed to be an important movement in the construction of an international social movement against asbestos, both by the number and quality of people present ... However, equally large themes were tackled: the legal action against Eternit in Casale Monferrato; the discussion of substitution of materials and the end of contaminated places; the problem of care, rehabilitation and indemnification of victims; and the experiences of the struggle in different countries.

A crucial decision taken in Milan led to the international seminar Asbestos: Controlled Use or Ban in São Paulo in March 1994. BAN was represented by Fulvio Aurora (Italy), Patrick Herman (France), and Dick Jackson (U.K.). Three hundred delegates heard presentations and participated in roundtables focused on three main themes:

- **chrysotile:** the carcinogenic properties of chrysotile were analyzed, calls for less scientific denial and more epidemiologic data were made;
- **asbestos victims:** urgent action was needed to obtain compensation and medical treatment for asbestos victims;
- **global action:** the struggle to achieve safety at work and a global ban on asbestos could be achieved only with international cooperation.

The São Paulo Declaration, which resulted from the seminar, “made reference to Ban Asbestos and the Federation of European Associations which evolved as a worldwide information network.”⁶¹ Six years later, Fernanda Giannasi, reflecting on the achievement of the São Paulo seminar, noted that the:

Ban Asbestos Network [was] a virtual citizenship network created in 1994 to connect people interested in exchanging differing experiences and to fight for a world free from the commercial use of asbestos.⁶²

During 1995–96 BAN continued broadening its activities through discussions with scientists, doctors, trade unionists, politicians, ecologists, victim support groups, and other public interest groups. The hypocrisy of companies that converted to non-asbestos technologies in Europe while continuing to profit from asbestos in the developing world was exposed. On May 22–23, 1996, BAN members from the United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, France, and the United States participated in discussions in Strasbourg about plans for a European asbestos ban. Industry reaction was predictable:

The movement Ban Asbestos is led by extremists, who plainly do not comprehend the actual uses of asbestos, or the consequences for society that follow their action. The position adopted by that movement bore witness to a simplistic point of view... To demand a ban on asbestos purely and simply can only be considered as an irresponsible demand on social and eco-

conomic plans. What is the price of fanaticism of Ban Asbestos for society? In one word, it would be horrible.

The years of campaigning were finally beginning to erode industry's control of the asbestos agenda. In 1995, French members of BAN joined with asbestos victims, workers' groups, academics and trade unions to set up ANDEVA, the first French asbestos victims' group. ANDEVA very quickly became a national voice, asking uncomfortable questions such as: why did asbestos levels remain unregulated in France until 1976? By stimulating public and media awareness of the repercussions of the long-term use of asbestos in France, the anti-asbestos campaigners were able to create a climate in which an honest debate was possible, thereby increasing pressure on the government, which, contrary to general expectations, decided to ban asbestos as from January 1997.

During the WTO case brought by Canada over the French ban, the growing importance of the Ban Asbestos Network became apparent. In July 1999, BAN was one of only four non-government organizations that attempted to participate in the deliberations of the WTO Dispute Settlement Panel.⁶³ Sixteen months later, when Canada appealed the WTO rejection of its case, BAN was part of a coalition of:

organisations concerned about the deadly effects of asbestos, environmental protection and sustainable development (which) sought to provide expert legal analysis informed by individuals and groups whose interests are directly affected by the risks associated with the use, sale and international trade in asbestos.⁶⁴

Other signatories to the application to submit an *amicus curiae* brief to the Appellate Body were: Greenpeace International, World Wide Fund for Nature—International, the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development, the Center for International



Banner at the Global Asbestos Congress, September 17-20, 2000, OSASCO, Sao Paulo, Brazil (photo by Eduardo Metroviche)

Environmental Law, and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat, a new nongovernmental organization.

The International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) was established in 1999 after consultation with BAN members and other campaigners. Faced with an avalanche of information coming from a rapidly growing network of individuals and groups involved in the international movement against asbestos, as well as from legal, medical, and industry sources, it was decided to create a permanent body to monitor such information and respond to the particular concerns of network

ABREA members at the Global Asbestos Congress, September 2000 (photo by Eduardo Metroviche)





European Asbestos Seminar. Delegates at the European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium, June 8, 2001.

members. In this capacity, IBAS has marshalled international support for campaigners under attack by industry or government agencies and assisted national health and safety workers in combating well-funded vested interests. The Secretariat has also sought to raise the profile of victims' groups worldwide and regularly disseminates valid legal and medical information, including the status of compensation claims, and news of important current developments. While significant information is gleaned from external sources, the network membership remains paramount in this respect; in particular, reports from network members have been vital in revealing local industry initiatives and tactics that would, without doubt, be utilized elsewhere.

Working closely with members of BAN and national groups such as ABREA in Brazil, IBAS has also emerged



Eva Delgado Rosas (left) and Fernanda Giannasi at Latin American Asbestos Meeting, Buenos Aires, Argentina, October 1-3, 2001.

as a potent means to facilitate international activities. One of the first products of this collaboration was the: The Global Asbestos Congress—Past, Present and Future, a landmark event held in Brazil in September 2000. One hundred international and more than 300 Brazilian delegates gathered in Osasco for three days of plenary, workshop, and roundtable sessions. The significance of the conference was reinforced by the participation of the International Labor Organization, international and national trade unions, victim-support groups, and occupational and environmental health associations. Since Osasco, conferences and meetings held in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, England, Greece, Holland, India, Italy, Malaysia, Scotland, and Singapore have created a public space to explore national asbestos issues and increased the pressure for international action.⁶⁵ The work of IBAS is coordinated by Laurie Kazan-Allen, who, as the editor of the *British Asbestos Newsletter*, has been reporting on asbestos issues from the victims' perspective for more than ten years.⁶⁶

The global campaign to ban asbestos has brought together thousands of asbestos victims, campaigners, and activists from scores of countries. It has given visibility to a problem not mentioned on the balance sheets of asbestos companies: the human cost of asbestos. While industry reaped the rewards, others paid for the commercial exploitation of asbestos with their health and ultimately their lives. Participation in a "grass-roots" virtual network has empowered formerly isolated individuals and groups; together they have taken on powerful and well-resourced asbestos interests and won many victories. The campaigners are seeking justice for themselves, their loved ones, and their neighbors; they are not motivated by greed, their work

is not backed by a war chest of \$54 million Canadian dollars. Their objectives are simple: to assist those already injured and to protect future generations from the horrific deaths wrought by asbestos. As Dick Jackson said: "Prevention is better—there is no cure."

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

A recent manifestation of the global movement against asbestos was the workshop *Another World Asbestos-Free is Possible*, which was held January 25, 2003, at the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Subjects under consideration included:

- the worldwide struggle to ban asbestos;
- compensation for asbestos victims;
- defense of health as a fundamental human right;
- asbestos: a question of public health and environmental right.

Engineer Fernanda Giannasi, the workshop organizer, reports:

The WSF is like no other event I have been to: the fusion of knowledge, ideology, experience and language set amidst a clash of colors and rhythms produces a unique atmosphere—somewhere between Woodstock and a scientific conference. Members of ABREA, the Brazilian Asbestos Victims' Group, and their supporters marched behind banners calling for a global asbestos ban and justice for asbestos victims.



Professor P. Behrakis, President of the Hellenic Thoracic Society, opens the Hellenic Asbestos Meeting in Athens, Greece, October 30, 2002 (photo by Hein du Plessis)

Thousands of people signed our petition for a global ban and this document has now been sent to Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the new President of Brazil and the head of the Workers' Party.

The Asbestos Workshop was one of the most prominent events included in the Health, Environment,



Demonstration in Porto Alegre (photo by Fernanda Giannasi)

Work and Society sessions. Discussions amongst asbestos victims, campaigners and representatives from social movements in Europe, Latin America and the U.S. focused on the nature of global society in the 21st century and the need to develop appropriate countermeasures if we are to protect fundamental human rights. Workshop delegates agreed that changes in the global economic and social order can only be achieved through concerted action; strategies are being finalized for a global campaign to expose asbestos multinationals and support asbestos victims. Our motto remains: Another world is possible.

Endnotes and References

¹ A copy of this e-mail was obtained by Ken Rubin, a researcher who made applications in 2002 under the Canadian Access to Information Act for documents detailing government asbestos activities and links to the Asbestos Institute (AI), a pro-chrysotile lobbying group. This was not the first time such militaristic language had been used to describe industry's efforts to protect global asbestos markets. The following extract from the AI document, "Saving Lives with Chrysotile Asbestos" is another example: "The partners who make up the Institute consider it necessary to set the record straight in the light of the ruthless war that has been waged against this natural substance that boasts such sought-after properties... [there is a] fierce commercial war that pits chrysotile asbestos against industrial interests... This war is being waged most bitterly in developing countries that are building or rebuilding, countries where chrysotile asbestos can make a real difference in the development process."

² When I requested an interview with the team as the Editor of the *British Asbestos Newsletter* (BAN), my request was turned down.

³ Buckingham DA, Virta RL. Asbestos 2001 Annual Review. USGS Mineral Industry Surveys. 2002.

⁴ Asbestos Institute. Saving lives with chrysotile. Web site: <www.chrysotile.com>.

⁵ Collegium Ramazzini. Call for an International Ban on Asbestos. *Int J Occup Environ Health*. 1999;5:247-48.

⁶ Landrigan P. Letter to the editor. *Can Med Assoc J*. 2001; 165:1191-2.

⁷ A comprehensive list of countries that have banned asbestos can be viewed on the IBAS Web site: <www.ibas.btinternet.co.uk>.

⁸ E-mail to Gilles Mahoney from the Asbestos Institute. Questions and Answers—Chrysotile Asbestos (Briefing Paper for MP Gérard Binet, Frontenac-Mégantic,) November 28, 2001.

⁹ Kazan-Allen L. Connecting the Dots. *British Asbestos Newsletter*. 2002;48:2-3.

¹⁰ Tweedale G. Science or Public Relations?: The inside story of the Asbestos Research Council, 1957–1990. *Am J Ind Med*. 2000;38:723-34.

¹¹ E-mail to Gilles Mahoney from the Asbestos Institute. Questions and Answers—Chrysotile Asbestos (Briefing Paper for MP Gérard Binet, Frontenac-Mégantic), November 28, 2001.

¹² Baxter J. Ottawa encourages use of asbestos in federal buildings. *National Post*. December 31, 2002: A1,A7.

¹³ Author unknown. Briefing Note: Anticipated Oral Questions. January 18, 2002. Files A0000763_1-000000 & A0000763_2-000000.

¹⁴ Young J. Cancer for sale: Canada's asbestos crusade. In *These Times*. September 5, 1999;23:20:10-2.

¹⁵ <<http://www.chrysotile.com>>.

¹⁶ Schiller B. Ottawa woos foreign journalists. *Toronto Star*. March 20, 1999:A 21.

¹⁷ Letter by unknown representative of the Asbestos Institute to Gilles Mahoney, July 9, 1998.

¹⁸ Files from Canadian Government: A0000808_11-000000, A0000808_12-000000, A0000808_13-000000, A0000808_14-000000, A0000808_15-000000, A0000808_16-000000, A0000808_17-000000.

¹⁹ According to the Asbestos Institute Web site, accessed on September 28, 2000, in 1995, Canadian chrysotile exports (in metric tonnes)

to Europe were: Spain 13,800, Belgium 6,936, the U.K. 8,430, Portugal 4,185, and Ireland 2,970.

²⁰ Perron L. E-mail to Luis Cejudo (Mexico). June 5, 2002.

²¹ Elizabeth Rohr is a Senior Policy Advisor—Americas Branch, International Relations Division, Environment Canada, Quebec, Canada.

²² Skoknic M. Letter to Dr. Richard T. Haworth, Assistant Deputy Minister, Minerals and Metals Sector, Natural Resources Canada; May 24, 2002. Files A0000856_3-000000 & A0000856_4-000000.

²³ Munoz G. E-mail to L. Perron. May 20, 2002. File A0000852_1-000000.

²⁴ Skoknic M. Letter to Dr. Richard T. Haworth, Assistant Deputy Minister, Minerals and Metals Sector, Natural Resources Canada; May 24, 2002. Files A0000856_3-000000 & A0000856_4-000000.

²⁵ On February 21, 2002, a United Nations Committee concluded that because of the health hazards, future sales of chrysotile should be subject to comprehensive global trade restrictions.

In May 1999, the Collegium Ramazzini, one of the most prestigious institutions dealing with matters relating to human health, called for an international ban on asbestos.

In 1998, the International Programme on Chemical Safety, operating within the World Health Organization and International Labor Organization framework, concluded that "Exposure to chrysotile asbestos poses increased risks for asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma in a dose-dependent manner. No threshold has been identified for carcinogenic risks."

In April 1998, the Institute for Environment and Health produced a report entitled "Chrysotile and Its Substitutes: A Critical Evaluation," which said: "The continued use of chrysotile in asbestos-cement products is not justifiable in the face of available substitutes."

In June 1996, the French Medical Research Council published a report "Effects on Health of the Main Types of Exposure to Asbestos," which concluded that all asbestos fibers are carcinogenic.

Various scientific papers published in the last few years confirm the toxicity of chrysotile. These include: Cancer mortality among workers exposed to amphibole-free chrysotile asbestos, by E. Yano et al. (2001); Asbestos tissue burden study on human malignant mesothelioma, by Y. Suzuki and S. R. Yuen (2001); Retrospective view of airborne dust levels in workplace of a chrysotile mine in Ural, Russia, by S. V. Kashansky et al. (2001); Carcinogenicity of asbestos: conflicting evidence, conflicting interests, by S. Chaturvedi and S. Chaturvedi (2001); Relative risk of mesothelioma among railroad machinists exposed to chrysotile, by T. F. Mancuso (1998); Carcinogenic implications of the lack of tremolite in UICC reference chrysotile, by A. L. Frank (1998); Exposure-response analysis of risk of respiratory disease associated with occupational exposure to chrysotile asbestos, by L. Stayner et al. (1997); Chrysotile asbestos is the main cause of pleural mesothelioma, by A. H. Smith and C. C. Wright (1996).

²⁶ The 58th Governing Council meeting of the Asbestos International Association was held at the London Marriott Hotel on June 10–11, 2002.

²⁷ Hills B. *Blue Murder*. Sun Books. 1999:87.

²⁸ Tweedale G. *Magic Mineral to Killer Dust*. Oxford University Press, 2000: 248-9.

²⁹ Herman P. *Ban Asbestos: A Worldwide Network against Asbestos*. Sourcebook on Asbestos Diseases. Michie, 1997:113-44.

³⁰ Hamel D. Letter to Francisco Dornelles, April 23, 2001.

³¹ The choice of groups discussed in this section is solely dependent on information available; failure to mention specific groups is no reflection on the quality of their work or effectiveness. While much has been accomplished by groups in South Africa such as the Newweg Asbestos Committee, Concerned People Against Asbestos, Mafefe Asbestos Health Workers' Association, the asbestos group in Mathabatha, and the Malokela Occupational Health Committee, detailed information about the operations of these groups has proved elusive.

Another problem is language: information about the work of the Swiss groups: Verein fur Asbestopfer [Society for Asbestos Victims/ Web site: <<http://www.asbestopfer.ch>>] and Verein fur Asbestopfer

und Angehörige [Society for Asbestos Victims and Relatives; e-mail: <sekretariat@asbestopfer.ch>] was not available in English.

Although practical considerations necessitate concentration on the work of victims' and community groups at this time, important contributions made by individuals and organizations such as Dr. Irving Selikoff in the United States and the British Society for Social Responsibility, the Hazards Movement, and the now defunct Peoples Asbestos Action Campaign in the United Kingdom are acknowledged.

³² Herman P. Ban Asbestos: A Worldwide Network against Asbestos. Sourcebook on Asbestos Diseases. Michie, 1997:119.

³³ Wikeley NJ. Compensation for Industrial Disease. Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1993:37.

³⁴ Tweedale G. Magic Mineral to Killer Dust. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001: 241.

³⁵ In 1996, SPAID became OEDA: Occupational and Environmental Diseases Association. Its Web site is: <<http://www.oeda.demon.co.uk>>.

³⁶ Tait N. OEDA Newsletter, Summer 1996; issue 1:8.

³⁷ Dalton AJP. The Obituary of Richard ('Dick') Jackson: Anti-Asbestos Campaigner.

³⁸ Fite J. White Lung Association: Asbestos Must Be Banned Throughout the World. Annals of The Global Asbestos Congress (CD), produced by IBAS, 2001:3.8.

³⁹ Web sites: <<http://www.ochsner.org/>> and <<http://www.health.gov/nhic>>, accessed February 22, 2003.

⁴⁰ Johnston R, McIvor A. Incubating death: working with asbestos in Clydeside Shipbuilding and Engineering, 1945–1990. Annals of the Global Asbestos Congress (CD), produced by IBAS, 2001:15.5.

⁴¹ Kazan-Allen L. Interview of John Todd. February 12, 1991.

⁴² Reid Malcolm. Death Wish . . . John—the doomed vigilante—wages war on asbestos. The Evening Times, April 2, 1976.

⁴³ Lenaghan J. Victims Twice Over. Clydeside Action on Asbestos, 1993.

⁴⁴ Author Unknown. Asbestos deaths seen likely to soar. The Asahi Shimbun (Newspaper). April 3, 2002.

⁴⁵ Furuya S. Asbestos Issues in Japan. Working Environment and Pollution Problems, JOSHRN Newsletters. 1993: number 4.

⁴⁶ Furuya S. Ban Asbestos Network Japan (BANJAN) and Japan's Citizen's Network for Wiping Out Asbestos (ASNET). Annals of the Global Asbestos Congress (CD), produced by IBAS, 2001:3.2.

⁴⁷ Nukushina J. Asbestos Problems in Japan and the ASNET. November 2, 1993.

⁴⁸ Nukushina J. Japanese Appeal on Behalf of Earthquake Victims. March 7, 1995.

⁴⁹ ABREA Web site: <www.abrea.com.br>.

⁵⁰ Author unknown. Booklet: Asbestos Diseases Association of New Zealand. 2000.

⁵¹ Brown-Haysom J. Fighting the immoral fibre. Safeguard Magazine. 2001:69,40-3.

⁵² Ruers B. Dutch Committee of Asbestos Victims. Annals of the Global Asbestos Congress (CD), produced by IBAS, 2001:3.6.

⁵³ ABREA Web site: <www.abrea.com.br>.

⁵⁴ Canada is currently the world's second biggest exporter of chrysotile. Chrysotile production is based mainly in the eastern townships of Quebec.

⁵⁵ Morden P. Mesothelioma threatens the life of Lynn Henderson. The Observer, May 8, 1998:1.

⁵⁶ Letter from Windsor Cancer Prevention Coalition to Herb Gray, MP. June 19, 1998.

⁵⁷ Statistics presented from Peru by Eva were shocking; in the year 2000, medical examinations of 197 asbestos and former asbestos workers found that 60% of them had asbestosis, and the health of a further 39% provided cause for concern. The General Hospital in Lima has diagnosed 133 cases of mesothelioma.

⁵⁸ E-mail from Eric Robinson to the Asbestos Institute. January 23, 2002.

⁵⁹ Kazan-Allen L. European Asbestos Seminar Report. IBAS Web site: <www.ibas.btinternet.co.uk>.

⁶⁰ Kazan-Allen L. Asbestos Issues in Australia and Southeast Asia. IBAS Web site: <www.ibas.btinternet.co.uk>.

⁶¹ Herman P. Ban Asbestos: A Worldwide Network against Asbestos. Sourcebook on Asbestos Diseases. Michie, 1997:113-44.

Laurie Kazan-Allen, Guest Editor, with Dr. Greg Deleuil, Medical Adviser to the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia (left), and Adrian Budgen from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors (right), May 7, 2003, outside the House of Commons, London, after the seminar Asbestos Perspectives, held under the auspices of the Asbestos Sub-Committee of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health. Laurie is the Founder and Co-ordinator of the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS), an independent body set up in 1999 to campaign for a global ban on asbestos and justice for all asbestos victims. She operates the IBAS Web site, an international resource, which disseminates information through a "Virtual asbestos network," publishes original papers, and has helped organize asbestos conferences, meetings, and seminars in England, Brazil, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, Greece, Holland, Belgium, and Slovenia. As editor and publisher of the *British Asbestos Newsletter*, Laurie has been writing about international asbestos issues for more than a decade. Issues of this quarterly publication are available on the BAN Web site. She is an adviser to the U.K. All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health and a Research Associate at the European Centre of Occupational Health, Safety and the Environment of the University of Glasgow, Scotland. Her work has been published in the U.K., the U.S., Italy, France, Belgium, Brazil, and Japan.

