FILE NAME: Asbestos in India (IND)

DATE: 1979

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Book Excerpt [Reference to British Asbestos Mines in South Africa]

A Dutton Asbestos: Killer Dust
BSSRS Publ. Ltd. UK (1979)

for almost all their

December 1976 (in an
s and alternative ma-
s quite likely that many
stos can continue to be
to health.'

Engineer April 1977,
material', wrote: 'Over
has been considerable
aspects of using asbes-
orating asbestos. Much
rmed, often of a con-
given rise to anxiety,
blic, who are often the
me or in their vehicles.'

77, 'Do we still need
research can be safely
anies, who are working
ements...the economic
os is a strong one.'

d Design June 1977,
isal': 'The position has
sed...fears have largely
news features.'

away from the 'profes-
get even worse. Thus
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zards of asbestos in an
Smither – Cape's own

its search for profit the
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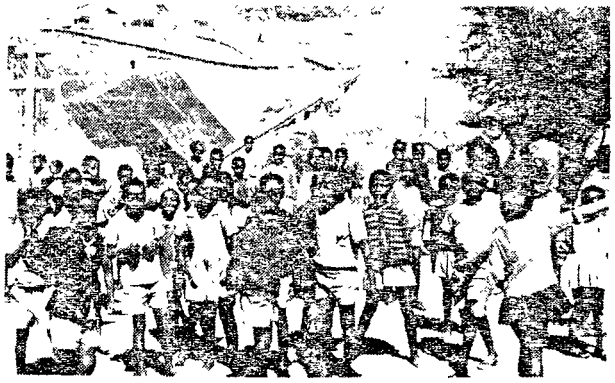
n asbestos, Dr R.S.J.
Department of Mines,
ıtingly high' levels of
s. By August 1977 he
itions in the asbestos
are under effective

Conditions in asbestos mines in 1949 were described by a US doctor, G.W.H. Schepers[5]

During 1949 I made the first official governmental radiological and clinical survey of the asbestos industry in the North Eastern Transvaal. At that time, industrial hygiene in one of these mines and asbestos works was simply deplorable. Exposures were crude and unchecked. I found young children, completely included within large shipping bags, trampling down fluffy Amosite asbestos, which all day came cascading over a hefty whip. I believe these children to have the ultimate dust exposure. X-rays revealed several to have radiological asbestosis with Corpulmonale (failure of the right side of the heart) before the age of 12. Why Dr Sluis-Cremer did not see them 10 years later is fairly evident. There was probably not one of them still alive...
To gain a true perspective he should have seen those mines in 1949. In the valley where the mill was located asbestos dust rolled through like the morning mist, and I had a hard time keeping my staff in working trim because of itching skins caused by asbestos adhering to our clothes. Even the food at the local hotel was gritty with dust.

control'.[6] But figures he released of dust analysis done by his department as late as 1976 showed that the dust level in the mines varied from 1 to 9 fibres per ml (over 4 times the safe level allowed in the UK – see p.119). As the Annual Report of the South African Government Department of Mines for 1973 commented: 'Current concentrations (of asbestos dust in the air) still represent a health hazard and further improvements must be brought about'. In 1975 Rodney Cowton, a journalist with *The Times*, approached the two major British asbestos companies with mines in South Africa – Turner and Newall and Cape Industries – asking what they were doing. Both companies claimed it was their policy to bring their operations throughout the world to British standards. 'Both claimed to be making some progress in this direction but neither would give a target date for the fulfilment of that policy,' he reported.[7] Meanwhile blue asbestos, under a voluntary ban by the asbestos industry in the UK because of its dangerous nature, is being mined more than ever by Cape's in South Africa. One law for the white and another for the black?

5 *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol 132, 1965, p.246.
6 Letter to BSSRS, August 1977.
7 *The Times*, 20 January 1975.



Playing next to an African asbestos mine.