

We got through a fair bit of work in the past year, with some very positive results, even though we are always conscious of how much more there is to be done and of how slowly some projects move forward. The delegation of October 2000 contributed substantially in a number of ways.

### Visits.

One highlight has to be the visit to Scotland of President Thabo Mbeki in June, just before the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formal constitution of the Anti-Apartheid Movement Scottish Committee. It is fair to say that the visit happened primarily because of Glasgow Caledonian University's strong and constructive links with South Africa, which arose mainly from AAM and ACTSA connections, so ACTSA was delighted to be heavily involved in the GCU leg of the visit. We also played a less conspicuous part in the Science Centre and Scottish Parliament visits, which will have long-term effects on links with S. Africa.

Kader Asmal and other senior figures were part of the President's delegation but were inevitably overshadowed by their boss. Graça Machel came a week after Thabo Mbeki to receive an honorary degree from Glasgow University and took the opportunity to unveil a portrait of her husband Nelson Mandela at Glasgow Caledonian University, where ACTSA members were again among the guests. Dullah Omar also came to Glasgow, in September, and met with some ACTSA representatives.

### Campaigns.

As we had planned, our most high profile campaigning work over the year was on the two key legal cases in which ACTSA nationally was deeply involved, and on which we worked quite hard in our own small patch.

In March there was the stunning surrender by 39 pharmaceutical companies who had been attempting to enforce legally their monopoly in the supply of HIV/AIDS medication in South Africa at prices of their choosing. There is no doubt that the effect of the international furore on their public image was what led to the humiliating climbdown. This legal victory did not in itself solve the AIDS crisis, of course, but did remove one serious obstacle, with effects far beyond South Africa. The subsequent agreement at the World Trade Organisation meeting in November that the developing world's interpretation of the international drug patent rules was the correct one took the victory a stage further.

Here in Scotland we assisted in putting pressure on the drug companies through a demonstration at the GlaxoSmithKline plant in Irvine on the day the court case opened (with good local publicity), through a letter to the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry in Edinburgh on the same day, through encouraging letters of protest to GSK and pressure from political and other contacts, and through wide distribution of a briefing paper and of a leaflet-cum-postcard to the UK Government on the matter.

The other campaign with a legal aspect was, of course, the one for justice for all those so badly damaged by the asbestos-mining activities of Cape plc. Good links have been established with campaigns on asbestos issues in Scotland and in South Africa, greatly assisted by last year's visit to asbestos-affected communities and campaigners in Northern Province by one section of our delegation.

ACTSA Scotland's banner was at the Clydebank Asbestos Group's demonstration about the Chester Street Insurance scandal, two of the platform speakers there had been on the ACTSA delegation, and two messages of support came from South Africa. A demonstration specifically on the South African case was organised at the Cape factory in Springburn in April by the West of Scotland Hazards Group, with a strong ACTSA input, and we participated also in a meeting on international asbestos issues in Glasgow City Chambers, organised by Clydeside Action on Asbestos. Some thousands of leaflets were widely distributed on the Cape case, on Norwich Union's involvement, and on Montpellier's role in the final stages. A financial appeal for support groups in South Africa for asbestos victims has been worked on, and should be formally launched in the near future, with support from the STUC.

There have been suggestions all this week that a settlement of the case is imminent and I had hoped to be able to include that result in this report, but the lawyers are still talking. It does seem clear that the company at last is serious about trying to reach an acceptable settlement, which is a sea-change from the bluster we had heard until recently.

The asbestos issue was one aspect of the very strong ACTSA presence at the STUC in Aberdeen, where there were constant references to the October 2000 delegation throughout the week, reinforced by

two contributions from Cheryl Carolus which made their usual deep impression. Interest in a possible women's delegation to South Africa was prompted by Cheryl's speeches, and is being followed up.

On the debt and tourism issues, we have kept in touch with Jubilee Scotland and Tourism Concern respectively, though neither campaign has been a major part of our work this year. ACTSA nationally have just produced a briefing in conjunction with Jubilee-Zambia, which we are distributing.

### Projects.

The Book Appeal has continued, with a lot of books being fetched in but sorting still a bit slow at our depot at the Mitchell Library, and the major developments over the year have related to Community HEART. ACTSA Scotland's longstanding arrangement with the Scottish Co-op. for gathering books through local shops was extended in February to Community HEART and the Co-operative Group throughout the U.K., and then again in the autumn to two large independent co-operative societies which had not previously been part of the scheme, Scotmid and the Lothians/Borders/Angus society. Public launches were held of both these developments. A letter in "The Herald" to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soweto shootings (signed by a long list of celebrities present at the Thabo Mbeki visit), and a renewed mention of our appeal in the newsletter of the Justice and Peace Commission, both brought in quantities of books and some money. Connections have been made with library organisations in Scotland which we hope will lead to constructive training links with the library service in Eastern Cape.

Funds raised for the Phelophepa Health Train were sent to the Canon Collins Trust, after a display cheque was presented to President Mbeki during his visit.

### Links.

Interest in links between Scotland and South Africa remains strong, and some very useful things have happened though there have also been frustrating delays.

Glasgow Caledonian University's links go from strength to strength, as already mentioned, and have spread far beyond the original relationship with University of Transkei. Further Education connections have also developed through the Tirisano Fellowship scheme for F.E. middle managers.

Our own Education Sub-committee has been meeting again, after a period of dormancy, and has mainly been working to turn previous expressions of interest into something more concrete. The strengthening interest of the Scottish Executive in international links for schools generally should help in this, and should survive the recent political reshuffle. Discussions at the Scottish Parliament are still at an early stage. The proposed Renfrewshire/Umtata link ran into political difficulties the first time round, but is to be broached again. The Scottish Co-op's involvement in a castor project in Stutterheim is interesting.

Plans for an appeal for Blythswood Institution in Transkei, one of the original Scottish schools, have been assisted by the formation in South Africa of a support-group for the school's redevelopment.

### Zimbabwe.

We have kept in touch with the newly-formed Scotland-Zimbabwe Group, which has grown out of the Britain-Zimbabwe Society. In October Margaret Ling, Chair of BZS, spoke at our Scottish Committee and commended ACTSA's national policy paper on Zimbabwe. In November we were pleased to welcome Godfrey Kanyenze, Chief Economist of the Zimbabwe TUC, to Scotland for a brief visit. He spoke about ACTSA's Farm Trade campaign as well as events in Zimbabwe. Some very practical results should come from the discussions he held here, in support of the ZTUC and its members.

### Information.

We have had stalls at events from Kelso and Irvine to Aberdeen and Inverness, and several points between. We have kept in touch with other internationally-minded people and organisations in Scotland, and our website continues to show our face and attract responses. The ACTSA supporters' group in Ayrshire is now well established. The Anti-Apartheid Movement archives have supplied material to the Scottish Parliament for Thabo Mbeki's visit, and to Prof. Roger Fieldhouse for a book.

I say every year that there is much more to be done than we can possibly do with our existing human resources, and that is as true as ever. We are still no nearer to being redundant.

