

"CARD SCHEME" NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 1965

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

12, Crane Court, Fleet Street, (Please note new address)
London, E.C.4.

We have now come to the time when we send you the third "Monthly Newsletter", together with the details of your three prisoners for this month. We hope that you are beginning to feel that you are taking part in a worth-while endeavour, and we ask you to realize that you should not feel discouraged that you receive no reaction to your cards; we do not expect individual answers, but hope that by now you are feeling that the overall effect of your work is bearing fruit. Imagine the effect on a Minister of Justice of receiving a hundred cards in a short space of time about one certain person, especially when he knows himself that the charges against that person are tenuous.

We have received enquiries from people keen to take part in this scheme from various non-English-speaking parts of the world, and are not sure in some cases whether the enquirers speak or understand English. As you can realize from the size of the Kit, it took some time to prepare, and equally, will take some time to be translated and typed into various languages. Therefore, for the meantime, we will be sending out Kits and Monthly Newsletters in English, and hope that those who receive these and do not speak English will forgive us, and will be able to send out Kits and Newsletters in other languages, as we have volunteers working on translations at the moment.

There have also been queries about the language in which to write cards. Unless members are quite competent in a certain language or have friends who know it pretty well, these should be in English. It would be very good if cards could be written in the relevant languages, but a really thorough knowledge is necessary if this is to be done.

We have also had enquiries as to whether air mail should be used, and we would prefer this, as time is such an important factor.

Our information this month on your three prisoners is rather full, and on the reasons for their detention, and, once again, we have chosen three countries which are covered in your Kit. The details of these three prisoners are overleaf, and we would wish you good-luck in your work on their behalf; and would also like to thank you for your help and support, and for the encouragement that this gives us here at Central Office in our work for those imprisoned for their beliefs.

DENIS BRUTUS (South Africa).

Denis Brutus is a coloured school-teacher and a well-known poet. He has been banished under various legislative acts since 1958, which has meant that nothing he has said or written has been able to be reproduced in any book, journal or newspaper; nor can he move out of the district to which he was banned, nor associate with more than two persons at any one time. He, therefore, finds it extremely difficult to get work of any sort.

In 1963 he left Johannesburg in an attempt to leave the country, but was arrested by the Portuguese police in Mozambique, and handed over to the South African authorities. The attitude of the police over Denis Brutus was exceptionally hard, and this is probably due mainly to the fact that he was responsible for organising the South African Non-Racial Olympics Committee, which, in 1964, could claim some part in the action of the International Olympics Committee, who refused to allow South African participation in the Games unless they organised their athletics on a non-racial basis. South Africa, as an exceptionally games-conscious country, was very sensitive to this type of activity.

In January, 1964, Brutus was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, on five charges, including: breaking his banning order, leaving the country without a passport or exit permit, etc. While in prison, he was very badly treated by his warders, and, as a consequence of this, and of his shot wound, was taken to hospital.

Following the appointment of a new Governor of Robben Island Prison, Brutus was better treated. He was released in July of this year, and, two days before the date of his release, he was served with a House Arrest Order. This means that except for working hours, (not including Sundays), he is unable to leave his house.

His other banning orders were re-imposed when they lapsed in August of this year. An appeal was made to the Minister of Justice that Brutus should be allowed to attend Mass, (he is a devout and practising Roman Catholic), but this was refused. A report of this was issued in the South African Sunday Express on 18th July.

The banning orders are imposed in the terms of the Suppression of Communism Act. No reason has been given nor is there any appeal, so that no action can be taken in the Courts. The accusation of Communism seems particularly ridiculous in this case, since Denis Brutus is known to be a practising Roman Catholic.

contd.

Denis Brutus contd.

Cards expressing your concern, (not aggressive) should be sent to:

Mr. Vorster,
The Minister of Justice,
Department of Justice,
Veritas Buildings,
Pretoria.

JOSE LIMA DE AZEVEDO (Brazil).

In 1961, when the Angolan independence movement got its big start, 26-year-old Jose Lima de Azevedo, native Angolan, was in his first year of a course in Economics at the University of Porto, in Portugal. He and many other students, became involved in the independence movement, as a result of which, they were open to arrest and persecution by the Portuguese authorities.

Jose Lima de Azevedo left Portugal and was finally given a scholarship to study Economics at the University of Brazil, in Rio, where he arrived in March of 1962. There he met other Africans Portuguese and Brazilians, who were inflamed over the question of African independence, and took an active part in the independence movement. However, the Portuguese political police seemed to operate almost officially in Brazil, and after the April 1st. revolution in 1964, which established a right-wing military regime, they operate even more actively.

Jose and many of his friends were arrested 'on suspicion', and, after a few weeks, he was released, but freedom lasted only six weeks. He was again arrested, and later released. On 13th August, 1964, Lima alone was arrested, although no formal charges are established against him, and the regime suspect him of being pro-Communist. He himself professes to be a devout Roman Catholic and anti-Communist.

He has been moved from jail to jail, although there has never been a written order by any authority, nor have any charges been made against him. He has been kept incommunicado for months, and has not even been allowed to see his lawyer during that time. Nothing has been found to convict him, or any of the others who were first arrested with him.

The Military Court denied authorization for his preventive arrest, and declared itself incompetent to judge the case. It was passed onto the Ninth District Criminal Court, which found no case and refused the preventive arrest order. The case was then closed on November 17th, but nothing was done to release Lima from jail.

Jose Lima de Azevedo contd.

Proceedings were taken up by the Minister of Justice to deport him, and the hearings for deportation orders began on 27th November, 1964, but Lima's lawyer stated that there was nothing to defend him for, as there was no case. The Prosecution had its say in private, and the case was closed, but Lima de Azevedo still languishes in prison.

There are many reports that he has been tortured, and is still suffering from eye trouble due to this. His prison conditions are bad. There is a great deal of international sympathy for this case, and more than one African Ambassador in Rio has appealed to the Foreign Minister for clemency, and some have even offered him asylum in their countries.

Your appeals should go to:

The Minister of Justice,
His Excellency Milton Campos,
Rio de Janeiro,
Brazil.

You should write in Portuguese if possible; if not, in English.

'KID' GAVILAN (Cuba).

'Kid' Gavilan is the former World Welter-weight Boxing Champion. He is serving a 5 years sentence in a La Havana prison, on charges of 'conspiring against the state'. This is a meaningless charge, since a mere suggestion of distrust of the state made between two friends can count under this heading.

Friends in Miami say that the 'Kid' was arrested in March, 1964, while he was preaching in the Mariano district of La Havana. Since he retired from the boxing ring, he was known to have become an active participant in the religious movement of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

This case must be well-known, not only among Cuban national and ex-patriate circles, but also in the sport-loving world at large.

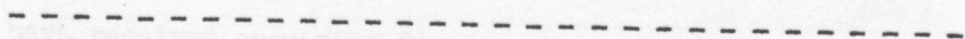
'Kid' Gavilan contd.

Cards should be sent to: (not in aggressive terms)

Raoul Roa,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Calzada 360,
Havana,
Cuba.

You may also, if you wish, write to the 'Kid' himself, in:

La Cabana Jail,
Havana,
Cuba.



from various non-English speaking parts of the world, and are not sure if some cards written in non-English speak or understood English. As you can see, we will take some time to be translated and typed into various languages. Therefore, for the meantime, we will be sending out cards and monthly newsletters in Spanish, and hope that those who receive these and do not speak English will forgive us, and will be able to read our cards and newsletters in other languages, as we have volunteers working on translations at the moment.

There have also been queries about the language in which to write cards. Unless members are quite confident in a certain language or have friends who know it pretty well, cards should be in English. It would be very good if cards could be written in the relevant languages, but a really thorough knowledge is necessary if this is to be done.

We have also had enquiries as to whether the mail should be used, and we would prefer this, if time is found as important factor.

Our information into South American prisons is rather full, and as the reasons for their detentions, and, more often, we have names three countries which are covered in your kit. The details of these three countries are overleaf, and we would wish you good luck in your work on their behalf, and would also like to thank you for your help and support, and for the encouragement that this gives us here at Central Office in our work for these imprisoned for their beliefs.