

BOOK REVIEWS

Against the World. By Douglas Brown, (Collins, 30s, 222 pages)

Mr. Brown has written a sympathetic, if at times rather patronising, study of the white South African: Afrikaner and 'British', Christian and Jew, and the tensions that have for centuries existed between them. Leaning over backwards to be truthful and objective in his early chapters he presents both an appalling picture of seventeen million disinherited Africans and coloureds undergoing successive and legalised deprivations of liberty and rights, and an account of the historical and social reasons why the other three and a half million are unable to forgo the smallest of their privileges for fear they will lose them all. The white South African, he says, is quite prepared to shake hands with a non-white if he is travelling abroad: it is only on home territory that contact with a different skin colour is a threat.

It is not until the final chapter that Mr. Brown's contortions in the name of objectivity land him flat on his back. Having described the legal parties in South Africa as either entrenched in their opposition to any amelioration of the position of Africans or, in the case of the Progressive Party, as unrealistic; saboteurs as 'crazed'; those who leave South Africa because they cannot live in such a society as rats leaving an extremely seaworthy ship; those who safely outside the Republic urge sanctions as suffering from a 'colonial guilt-complex run mad', he leaves us with a startling final sentence. 'We are all in debt, and had best leave it to the white South Africans to settle theirs.' Nothing he has told us of them has implied the least inclination on the part of any legal organisation or individual to hand over more than a charitable ticky.

Mau Mau Detainee By Josiah Mwangi Kerikuki (Penguin, 4s6d, 224 pages)

This paperback appearance of a book that did not receive the attention it deserved when it was first published should be read by all Amnesty members especially British ones. Introduced by Margery Perham, it tells soberly of the author's experiences as a detainee without trial of the colonial regime. Here is a stimulating and reflective testimony to the 'occasional barbarities' that sully the whole record of colonial rule.

The Accused By J.A. Coutts (Ed.) (British Institute Studies in International and Comparative Law No.3. Stevens & Sons. U.K. price 65s. 282 pages).

Criminal procedure varies more from country to country than criminal laws and probably affects the liberty of the subject to a greater extent than the laws themselves. Thus murder is everywhere a crime, but a man suspected of murder may be kept in prison for many months without being charged while his case is being investigated; he may be tried by a jury or by legally qualified judges; he may be given or refused legal aid; his guilt may be decided by those who know nothing of his previous crimes; the papers prepared by the prosecution may be the basis of the finding of the Court rather than the oral testimony of witnesses; the defendant's lawyers may never have met the witnesses; for the defence before the trial, nor be allowed to cross-examine witnesses for the prosecution.

"The Accused" contains surveys of criminal procedure in a large number of countries and will be of value to anyone concerned with a trial taking place in a country with which he is not familiar. Perhaps the best chapters are those on Germany, Poland and South Africa.

Justice in Jerusalem, The Trial of Adolf Eichmann. By Gideon Hausner (Nelson, U.K. Price 45s. 528 pages)

"The bulk of the German intellectuals went along with the Nazis in 1933, sought leading positions and publicly upheld the ideology of the new power"...

"The world was content to leave the Jewish question alone as Germany's internal affair. No foreign entanglements or international difficulties followed upon the virulent anti-Jewish measures in Germany. The diplomats of the Third Reich were put to no embarrassment on this score; its emissaries were received everywhere with full honours"...

Cont.....

Weizmann, March 1, 1953: "Expressions of sympathy without accompanying attempts to launch acts of rescue become a hollow mockery in the ears of the dying"...

Our human language has not been shaped to describe the planned murder of millions of people or the mind of an Eichmann. Everyday words, even those of Gideon Hausner, Eichmann's prosecutor, are insufficient.

Say: "Six million people were murdered". Say: "Adolf Eichmann was one of us". Say the words slowly. Is it possible to comprehend their meaning?

The dying died. It is history. But the murders and the persecutions continue. Today's concentration camps can be mapped, the executioners and torturers identified. We are denied the excuse of ignorance. We must choose what to do.

Thirty years ago, intellectuals and politicians and citizens chose to acquiesce. We have executed Eichmann, a criminal of their generation. Our contemporary criminals are still at large.

And "Their emissaries are received everywhere with full honours!"

The Trial of Obafemi Awolowo By L.K. Jakande (Secker & Warburg, 42s, 354 pages).

Lateef Jakande's book on the trial of Chief Awolowo is unusual insofar as Jakande himself was tried and convicted in the same treason trial. Both men were close associates within the Action Group, the party in power in the Western Region when Nigeria gained Independence in 1960. This would naturally lead one to expect a biased account, but Jakande makes no attempt to conceal from the reader his attachment of Chief Awolowo and the Action Group, and the book remains a worthwhile account of one of the most important treason trials in the new Africa.

For the general reader, less interested in the legal questions and arguments raised, this book will prove interesting reading for a number of reasons. The instability and corruption in many African states has tended to put the Judiciary in an awkward position relative to the Executive. Nigeria has not evolved a one party system but was, and is, the scene of continual accusations of corruption in high circles. This trial concerned one of Nigeria's most important politicians; the leader of the Opposition to the Balewa Government in the Federal House, and former Premier of the Western Region. Jakande shows how the balance between Judiciary and Executive worked in Nigeria during the first few years of Independence.

For someone with a general interest in Nigerian politics, this book will give an insight into the divisions that existed between the Action Group leaders and among the Yoruba of the West and demonstrates the extent of the frustration felt under the Independence Constitution which appeared to give dominance to the conservative North. It will also be of interest to those who remember the legal battle around Chief Anthony Enahoro's extradition from this country, for he was one of the accused at Awolowo's trial.

"Stalin" By Issac Deutscher. (Penguin Books 1966, 10s 6d, 644 pages)

This book is a detailed history of Stalin's life but it also gives revealing glimpses of events in Russia at critical moments in his career. There is for example an account of the restriction of the Jewish minority's rights after the last war. Those who want to find out more about the historical background to Russia will find this book most useful.