for execution. They were even more surprised when they were led into the presence of the warden and the prison's dreaded Political Commissar and greeted cordially. Would the gentlemen please be seated? Would they care to smoke? They were offered the first cigarettes they had seen in months.

"Is this a cruel joke?" asked the elderly Herr Mende.

The Commissar raised his hands in protest. "A joke? Certainly not! The highest authorities in our state have decided to forgive your crimes. This is a democratic country and you have been given the opportunity to start anew. We are releasing you." And—provided with not only valid identification papers and railroad tickets, but money and a satisfying ration of food for the journey home—the two men stumbled out through the prison gate in a daze.

Luck Was with Them

Their freedom might not have lasted long except for Lindemann's thorough planning plus a miracle of luck. Besides Hans Schmidt, Lindemann had dispatched another friend—Kurt Braun—to Leipzig and Zwickau, so that if Schmidt was picked up by the police Braun might be able to guide Mende and Bergel to Berlin. Braun waited in the neighborhood of the prison for almost 48 hours. How he avoided discovery and detention by the police, he doesn't know himself. How he lived through two days without sleep and with three apples for food, he can't imagine either. He didn't dare go into a restaurant for fear of a police check-up.

Almost collapsing from fatigue and hunger, Braun also finally gave up and boarded a street car for the railroad station. Just as the trolley rumbled away, he took one more look at the prison gate. It had opened and two gaunt men whose clothes hung loosely from their shoulders were coming out. Risking his neck, he jumped from the speeding car. For several blocks he walked behind the two men to make sure they were the right ones—Zwickau changes people's appearances. Finally, with a quick look behind to see whether he was being followed, he sidled up and pressed a slip of paper into Herr Mende's hand. "Follow these directions," he said quietly. "Get to West Berlin. Your families are there."

Fear and suspicion were plain on the men's faces. This might be a police trap. "Please, *please,*" Kurt urged desperately, "do as I say. Lindemann sends his regards and is waiting in Berlin also." With that, he vanished around the corner, leaving the two staring mutely after him.

The next morning Herr Mende and Herr Bergel were safely in West Berlin. Still hardly able to believe their luck, they had found their families and had come to thank Lindemann. "It was a strange interview—between the former convicts and their former prosecutor," Lindemann reminisces happily. "But it was a very satisfactory one, particularly for me." He refused, however, to join in any sort of celebration; he had three more prisoners to free—Schnabel, Poppitz and Schumann. One was in Zwickau Penitentiary, the others in Waldheim Prison.

The honest liberal of today is one who thinks with his heart instead of his head.

HELEN WOODWARD

Schmidt was ready to start for Leipzig with the next batch of release orders, when catastrophe struck. News of the "escape" of Mende and Bergel had leaked somehow, and the West German press and radio blared it out. Lindemann was beside himself with anger and disappointment. "It would have worked once more," he mourned to his fellow plotters. Suddenly he stopped pacing the floor. "And it *will* work once more. Today is Saturday and it's a hot summer week-end. Hans and Kurt—you go to Leipzig at once."

Lindemann's calculations, so cryptically stated, were based on his intimate knowledge of Communist government habits. They turned out to be exactly correct. Saturday in the German Democratic Republic is "political education day"—a sacrosanct Party institution which paralyzes all government business. The chiefs of the various departments intone endless speeches to their staffs, and these meetings may not be disturbed. Immediately afterward, all police and judicial chiefs would leave for their country retreats where they could not be reached until their return to the city around 11 o'clock Monday morning. Lindemann was sure that his plan had more than an even chance.

Eisler's Fury

This time there were no slip-ups. The release orders arrived at Zwickau and Waldheim without delay. Schmidt repeated his first memorable telephone call to the two wardens. On Monday afternoon three bewildered boys, after paternal lectures by their respective Political Commissars, found themselves outside the gates of their prisons and on the way to Berlin in the care of Schmidt and Braun. But it had been a close shave. Just five minutes after the Zwickau gate had closed, a big car roared up to the prison. *Herr Oberstaatsanwalt* Adam himself, flanked by ranking police officers, stormed into the institution.

During the evening hours the pandemonium in East Germany grew steadily. The escape of Mende and Bergel had been discovered late on Saturday by radio monitors. Propaganda Minister Eisler, an unusually hard worker, happened to be at his desk early Monday morning and was informed first. Roaring with rage, he strode up and down his office where a battery of secretaries frantically tried to contact his colleagues. But no responsible police official was reached until Monday noon. The redoubtable Minister of State Security, Wilhelm Zaisser, fumed in Berlin. The entire State Security service and People's Police were unleashed in the biggest manhunt that even East Germany has ever seen. Trains were searched, automobiles stopped, innocent pedestrians dragged off to police stations through the length and breadth of the country. They were just too late, however.

In a comfortable restaurant in West Berlin Lindemann, his helpers and his ex-victims were celebrating. The spare, usually shy young man raised his glass. "We shall have to use other methods in the future," he said. "But I think we can do it again." The East German authorities seem to think so too.

Arts and Entertainments

By WILLIAM S. SCHLAMM

TV Wasteland

Mr. George S. Kaufman had the last word, as usual, and is back in TV. None of his notoriously wicked repartee has ever been so devastating as the joke the industry played on itself when CBS took Mr. Kaufman off the air for suggesting (rather tritely) that the commercial exploitation of Christmas carols was getting tiresome.

For a critic who does not like to shoot at sitting ducks, that affair was doubly embarrassing. One, there could be no intellectual merit, and very little esthetic pleasure, in spanking a group of flustered businessmen who had already stooped to self-flagellation. Two, in adding my feeble voice to the deafening chorus of about 160 million other Americans who were groaning over the imbecile act of cowardice, I could easily have been mistaken for an admirer of Mr. Kaufman's TV efforts which, on the contrary, I find normally an insult to my taste as well as his good literary name.

So, when CBS had fought off the attack of dementia praecox and returned Mr. Kaufman to his position as a TV stooge for Mr. Fadiman's gooey humor on "This Is Show Business," I felt relieved: there was no longer any need to defend an intelligent man against an industry which is clearly beyond the reach of intellectual argument. But now that everybody is back to normal inanity, we might consider what makes the mighty TV industry behave in the pathetic way it behaves.

The reputable businessmen who govern TV are perhaps no more, but they are certainly no less, intelligent than their colleagues who so satisfactorily manage most other branches of American industry. What lures these TV executives with such disturbing regularity into disreputable traps which the same men, if administering any other form of profitable enterprise, would instinctively know how to avoid? It is, of course, that same ol' devil who can make any businessman stumble any time—the balance sheet.

The fundamental reason for TV's outlandish clumsiness is the industry's outlandish financial structure: they are giving to the consumer, *for free,* the most expensive and most wastefully manufactured commodity of the age; which means that TV's captains are the only merchandisers in the world whose total revenue comes from the producer. Compared to that sort of wonderland, Alice's was a cinch of rationality. All considered, TV's managers are doing amazingly well.

But the trouble is, of course, that all *is* seldom considered by us. TV critics (this one included) measure the industry with the outdated yardsticks of a civilization which saw in the paying consumer the supreme judge of the product. And no matter how much that consumer-judge occasionally distressed a sensitive outsider, the rules determining cultural approval were universally known and universally accepted. But completely new rules are emerging in this era of TV, and they are not even known to the experts. Nobody, to be sure, has slyly thought up these rules; in fact, most TV people would reject, and some would not even understand, what I am talking about. Yet the abstruse economics of their industry must result in a total upheaval of consumer-producer relations as we have known them in the markets of culture.

The crux of the matter is the insane costs of a spectacularly perishable product. There are TV shows that cost $100,000 a throw—and it is literally a throw into limbo. Piles of money, thousands of man-hours and (strange as it may sound) several brains are used up in something that will flicker for a moment across the screen—and never be seen again.

The movie industry, too, was determined by freakishly monumental economics; and twenty years ago or so, sensible critics had to adjust their standards to the inexorable fact that this son of Pegasus would prance to the clang of giant adding machines. But what ultimately kept the movies within the traditional realm of art appreciation was the normal market behavior of the product: it might have cost four million dollars to gather two hours flimsy entertainment, but the result was a tangible something that had to be marketed over and over again—a product, therefore, that lived and died on public response.

The TV show, because it is as ephemeral as it is costly, lives on nothing but the response of the paying advertiser. For the convenient cliché that public approval is what the sponsor is buying, and that therefore the public remains the ultimate judge of the show, strikes me as a pathetic self-deceit. So long as the public does not back up its judgment with cash (its only credential for criticism), the public will have no vote. Besides, the non-paying consumer is not only an ineffective but also a corrupt judge: if it does not cost him anything, he will even look at Milton Berle; and so the producer can never gauge Mr. Berle's true market value. All the paying sponsor can really go by is his own judgment. Which means, his own taste.

What I want to say in the aftermath of the Kaufman affair is that I find it irrelevant, if not stupid, to hold against the TV managers their obedient compliance with the sponsors' every whim. This is precisely what they must do, on material as well as moral grounds, so long as the industry retains its fantastic structure. And after two years of suffering TV, and a year of brooding over routes of escape, I can see only one alternative: a TV industry which sells entertainment to the public for bona fide cash, rather than sell indifferent gratis viewers to overcharged advertisers.

Until another technological revolution creates a TV industry which lives on the honest quarters a consumer puts into his TV slot-machine at home, CBS is economically and, indeed, morally obliged to fire Mr. Kaufman whenever Lucky Strike tells it to.