

all these undesirable emotions. They drew up their own rules for democratic adultery (Dr. Mead describes them in Chapter XII) which are simultaneously a paradigm and a parody of the results of theoretical planning. The Manus rules for adultery have a sort of family resemblance to the East African ground-nut scheme or Lysenko's market gardening in the Arctic circle.

If, as is suggested by these data, models are essential for successful transformation, then pilot schemes and institutional inventions take on a greatly enhanced importance for the guidance both of "under-developed" and "over-developed"

countries; if change is the more successful if it is as complete and rapid as possible, if progress is an escalator rather than a ramp, then our views of the momentum of progress will need considerable revision. At the moment these are only suggestions, founded on the analysis of the experience of one small group in New Guinea; when other groups are similarly re-studied these suggestions may be modified or abandoned. The great merit of *New Lives for Old* is that it opens up a whole new field for observation, experiment and speculation, a field of the greatest relevance to our present preoccupations.

Geoffrey Gorer

INDIA TO US

THAT old saw about England and America being divided by a common language—might it not be more aptly applied to India? Perhaps the greatest single influence working for a genuine misunderstanding (which is not the same thing as a genuine disagreement) between India and the West today is the fact that the Indian ruling classes—the government officials, the publicists, the intellectuals—speak to the world in English. In the case of England and America, the two nations do, after all, know rather a lot about one another, and have some sense of the material and human realities behind their respective rhetorics. But practically every thinking person in the West must often feel, more or less obscurely, that he apprehends almost nothing of Indian realities. Our press blandly ignores them: it is so much easier to summarise an official handout (in English) of what Mr. Nehru or some other dignitary said at some meeting than to try to grasp what is going on in the minds of the masses who listen (*and think*) in Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Gujarati, etc. We are, in our impatience and ignorance, tempted to believe that we have seized the substance behind these words; and the Indians believe so too. From this, all sorts of confusions may follow.

Some of these confusions are splendidly illustrated in four dialogues (in English) between the French journalist Tibor Mende and Mr. Nehru, which took place and were recorded in New Delhi a little less than a year ago.* M. Mende, who has settled comfortably on the Left Bank of European history, is under the distinct impression that Mr. Nehru is a fellow-colonist. The purpose of the interviews, it would seem, is to

demonstrate to the world at large that what Mr. Nehru thinks is what M. Mende has been saying all along; and there are times when this strategy of unanimity is little short of breathtaking in the boldness with which common sense is subordinated to common opinion. M. Mende, for instance, who has the highest esteem for everything that might be described as "anti-colonial," is eager to refute any suggestion that India is in any way interested in replacing Western political dominance of world affairs with an Asian dominance. Isn't it true that India seeks only a "gradual levelling of existing inequalities" which may lead to a "new form of global order"?—and Mr. Nehru promptly agrees that he is for "equality" and against "dominance." But is it inherently plausible that 380 million Indians wish for nothing more than equality with 50 million Englishmen or 40 million Frenchmen? Of course, it all depends on what one means by "equality" and a "new global order." England not long ago thought that five British battleships as against three Japanese made for naval "parity." The differential was necessary so that England could carry out its obligations towards the preserving of international peace and order. It is hard to imagine that such differentials will cease to be considered necessary in the future, or that other nations will not wish to accomplish their version of this same mission, after their own fashion.

M. Mende's idea of a "question," then, is to state his point of view and ask Mr. Nehru to restate it. The method works, up to a point. M. Mende's political outlook, being "neutralist" and pro-Nehru, is inevitably not uncongenial to Mr. Nehru. Nevertheless there are several places in these conversations when this perfect congruence begins to slip and waver, and then one

* *Conversations with Mr. Nehru.* By TIBOR MENDE. Secker and Warburg. 10s. 6d.

does get a fleeting glimpse, behind the cloud of a *lingua franca*, of lurking realities.

SUCH a glimpse is most clearly obtained in the fortunes (one might also say vicissitudes) of the word "democracy." It does not need many moments' reflection to conclude that in a country like India, with its particular history, religion, and customs, the liberal conception of democracy as developed in Western Europe in the past three centuries might not be relevant. However, democracy is a *good* word; Mr. Nehru has lived in a milieu where its use is prescribed for *good* people; and he employs it with a possessive—indeed, tenacious—familiarity. M. Mende is somewhat more cautious: "democracy" has lost some of its glamour in Parisian Marxist circles, and he can actually conceive of limiting it in the interests of Planning, which is for him even more of a Good Thing. But here he cannot carry Mr. Nehru along with him, for Mr. Nehru sees nothing problematical about democracy as he understands it.

"Considering the influence of this large organisation: of the Congress; and considering the influence I have, I would say that there is very little that we cannot get through here through the democratic process. . . . Here, so far as the people are concerned, they want to go as far as you can take them. They won't obstruct the way. . . . A popular dictator, if he has the people with him, can get laws passed by democratic means even though on a particular law the people's opinion may not be so keen. But he has enough following and people will say, all right, if he says so it might be good. But, what I mean is that the process remains democratic."

Well, one does not want to quibble about words, and Mr. Nehru presumably knows better than any Westerner what kind of government the Indian people like and need. But it is useful to be alert to the probability that the same word—"democracy," for instance—can mean different things in New Delhi and London or Paris*; and that the very premisses of Mr.

*In a new biography of Lokamanya Tilak, Gandhi's predecessor as a popular nationalist leader, the Indian author, after quoting Gandhi's tribute to Tilak as "the Democrat of Democrats," remarks: "It was Tilak's invariable practice never to make a decision without giving his party the opportunity of discussing the issue in a democratic way." Tilak, for whom Keir Hardie had a great admiration, opposed legislation to abolish child marriage, established two new Hindu communal festivals (one of them in honour of Shivaji, founder of the Mahratta Empire), and believed fervently in the superiority of Hindu religion and culture over all others. (See *Lokamanya Tilak*. By D. V. TAHMANKAR. John Murray. 21s.) One may be allowed to wonder if he and Keir Hardie ever did understand one another.

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JONATHAN CAPE

Nehru's political philosophy, his ideas of the Good Society and the Good State—and doubtless the premisses and central ideas of Indian political thinking as a whole—might themselves be different from those prevailing in the West. Thus, when Mr. Nehru says that he approves of Communism “as an ideal,” many a Western liberal could say the same thing in all good faith; but it would not, in fact, be “the same thing” at all. For what Mr. Nehru intends to express by this commonplace is a fundamental hostility to the liberal capitalism of the West, both as an ideal and working system—a hostility that has its own specific roots deep in Indian attitudes:

“I think that the American people have many admirable qualities. Yet I am not interested in many aspects of American life. For instance, I am not interested in providing every person in India with a motor-car, with a washing-machine or a refrigerator. The thing just does not come into my head at all. It is not that I am against material comfort, but I am not sure that it is too good to have too much of it.”

It is clear that Mr. Nehru's ideal communism is very different from the Soviet ideal, which dreams with an American fervour of motor-cars and washing-machines. Nevertheless, it is easy to see how, paradoxically, he could be impressed by the very *failure* (in its own Western terms) of Russian Communism and offended by the very successes of American Capitalism. The austere poverty of the Russian system, its contempt for the petty comforts of its subjects, commends itself to him. So does its selflessness, its discipline, its anti-individualism, its conformism,

its glorification of the State. When Mr. Nehru states:

“We are against concentration of power, political or economic. Therefore, we think in terms of, what may be called, the basic industries, under State control,”

he is not guilty of any logical inconsequence: he simply does not share that nervousness before the powerful State which practically all Westerners, moulded by a peculiar liberal tradition, intuitively feel. Political power in the East is not haunted by a bad conscience; it believes in itself and naturally approves of all that flows from and towards itself; and it takes for granted its own moral superiority over the self-seeking individual. There is much to be said, and much that has been said, for and against such an attitude towards power; but more important than anything one can say, is to recognise that it exists.

For various reasons, it is this objective existence of Asia we find so difficult to recognise. Like M. Mende, eastwards we project all our frustrations and our longings. India to us is not an independent nation with its own life, its own ambitions, its own purposes. Rather we prefer to see it as a nebulous “underdeveloped country” moving ineluctably towards a predetermined harmony with the West. It is not to us a separate geographical and historic entity, but a dream-world populated by disembodied “progressive” intentions. This is, for all its seeming benevolence, a thoroughly patronising view of course. It is the way parents indulgently regard their children—until the children grow up and, with a few abrupt movements, dispel all misty illusions with an assertion of their otherness.

Irving Kristol

THE FANTASTIC HERO

FOR about eighty years now the Wild West in general, and the cowboy in particular, have been enjoying an extraordinary vogue in America and Europe. One hack-writer produced 200 dime-novels on Buffalo Bill alone; and since then, according to Mr. Frantz and Mr. Choate,* the torrent has not abated. In 1951, one-fifth of Hollywood's 2,400 films were about cowboys; 500 towns in the United States “staged approved rodeos offering 1,750,000 dollars in prizes”; by 1952 Hopalong Cassidy “was being pictured on

63 television stations, heard over 152 radio stations, and read avidly in the comic strips of 155 newspapers”; while the Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and other cowboy entertainers have also been prodigiously successful. There are hundreds of dude-ranches in the western states, and they have even spread eastward to the outskirts of New York itself.

In terms of literature, this passion for the West has had disappointingly thin results. There have been a few good novels, such as *Shane*, but they owed their principal reputation to their filmed versions. In fact, the Wild West is the preserve of popular, non-literary culture. It is a Never-Never Land of the mass-audience, of a different

* *The American Cowboy: the myth and the reality*. By JOE B. FRANTZ and JULIAN E. CHOATE, JR. Thames and Hudson. 15s.