

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

September 2021



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 12

Issue 5

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 12

Issue 6

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

— The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

A TRANSACTIONAL RELATIONSHIP: US-INDIA PARTNERSHIP IN PERSPECTIVE

The recent visit of PM Modi to the United States comes in the wake of long-term engagement between India and the US and the deepening of ties between the two countries in the last few years. Beyond the rhetoric of democratic cooperation, the main takeaways from the visit lie in the affirmation of collective counter-terrorism strategy, cementing a collective position on key issues like Afghanistan and Indo-Pacific and cementing the future pathway for the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or the Quad grouping. With no breakthrough on trade agreement and a merely rhetorical affirmation of common interests, the visit brings into focus the transactional and superficial nature of Indo-US relations. Specifically, when contrasted with the series of four framework agreements signed between the two countries as a part of their bilateral '2+2' dialogue and the 2008 nuclear deal, the substantive outcomes that should have flowed from the India-US relationship appear comparatively diminished.

A WIDER GLOBAL AGENDA

PM Modi's US visit spanned his address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), his first in-person summit meetings with President Joe Biden and Vice-President, Kamala Harris, the first in-person Quad summit, bilateral meetings with his Australian and Japanese counterparts, and meetings with US business leaders. The visit was significant as it provided a platform for India at the United Nations and with its bilateral partners, to clearly project India's national interests and soft power. It was also important in that it highlighted India's growing influence on the global stage, as the visit included

bilateral meetings with the US President and Vice-President and with other leaders of the Quad. Pakistan's Imran Khan, among various other country heads, has not even had a direct conversation with President Biden yet – not even a phone call, even though various other top officials of the US administration have engaged with their Pakistani counterparts. Thus, the US tilt towards India and a sharp break in US-Pakistan relations due to the conclusion of the US-led Afghanistan invasion, has set the stage for fresh impetus to be given to US-India ties.

Key issues in Mr. Modi's visit mainly spanned developments in Afghanistan, Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism in India, and a collective agenda for the Indo-Pacific. These issues were expressed within a clear framework in Mr. Modi's UNGA address. The speech – full of clarity and impact – saw Mr. Modi reclaiming democracy from the West, asserting that India is the mother of democracy which is strengthened by its diversity and that every sixth person in the world is an Indian so that when India grows, the world grows and transforms with it. This was significant, as, in the past diplomatic forums, Western countries have rarely missed an opportunity to preach to India about democracy, human rights and secularism. At a time, when the US's misadventures in Afghanistan resulting in the legitimization of one of the world's biggest Islamist terror groups, have turned the philosophy of 'human rights' on its head, India's reclaiming of the 'democracy' rhetoric from the West becomes opportune.

Mr. Modi expanded this theme by touching upon the dangers facing humanity in the form of terrorism – indirectly touching upon its sponsorship by Pakistan – and called for maritime security, combating climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting India's achievements in each of these areas. Specifically in the areas of climate change and COVID-19,

India had much to showcase, having been on track to meet its Paris Climate Agreement commitments and with the pandemic well under control in India. Veiled references to China and Pakistan were evident in his remarks, especially in the context of changing regional developments portended by the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

However, going beyond this diplomatic rhetoric, the concrete outcomes from PM Modi's US visit were limited.

QUAD, AUKUS AND REALPOLITIK

This was clearly visible in the first in-person Quad summit that was held in the US. Given the changing regional scenario and the failure of multilateralism espoused by institutions like the United Nations, India sees Quad as a particularly useful short-term mini-lateral grouping. Compared to its inception in 2004 for coordination on disaster management, Quad has, since 2017, come a long way. Throughout all the areas of discussion in Quad, the founding principle of upholding a free and open Indo-Pacific continued to be its main thrust, although a direct reference to China and its ambitions in the Indo-Pacific was avoided. The key deliverables agreed to in the Summit include –

- First, a key issue of the agenda was to discuss the developments in Afghanistan. The Quad members reaffirmed coordinating common diplomatic, economic and human rights policies on Afghanistan and deepening of counter-terrorism cooperation in Afghanistan, consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2593 (passed on August 30th 2021 under India's Presidency) which called for a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan and for the country to be not used as a base for terrorism.

~~• Second, Indo-Pacific which has been a de-facto mainstay~~

of the Quad grouping was discussed. This involved Quad members declaring support for the European Union's Indo-Pacific strategy released in September 2021, and, at Japan's behest, support for the recent announcement of the trilateral military pact between the US, Australia and the UK (AUKUS) which enables sharing of nuclear submarine technology with Australia.

- Third, climate change has been a key part of every Quad meet. On climate change, the Quad leaders committed to updating their climate targets in line with more ambitious targets (including 'intent' to work towards mid-century Net Zero Emissions reduction targets) before the upcoming climate change conference in Glasgow later this year.
- Fourth, vaccine supply has been an issue that Quad countries have consistently worked upon. While production of vaccine supply for Indo-Pacific is to take place in India, distribution and storage would be handled by Australia and Japan. India affirmed that it would begin supplying Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccines by the end of October 2021. Quad aims is to produce at least 1 billion India-manufactured vaccines by the end of 2022. The Quad also welcomed India's announcement that it would resume vaccine exports from November 2021, which it had briefly paused due to the raging second wave in the country.
- Fifth, the Quad launched a new infrastructure partnership for the Indo-Pacific region – a partnership for assessment of infrastructure needs that would work in coordination with the Blue Dot Network. The Blue Dot Network is

a private-sector-led initiative involving the US, Australia and Japan to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative.

- Finally, cooperation on critical and emerging technologies saw some headway being made at this summit, emerging as an important agenda for the Quad. Its working group was set up in March this year, focusing on areas such as technical standards, 5G diversification and deployment, technology supply chains, and advanced communications including Artificial Intelligence.

The aim is to develop common protocols and standards for technology deployment and becomes significant in the wake of politics over 5G trials in various countries revolving around the question of excluding China due to its technological surveillance. In India also, while China played a major role in 3G and 4G roll-out in the country, in 5G trials Chinese telecom firms would be excluded, as per Indian official indications. Among other things, India has put strict curbs over rising Chinese control over the Indian technology sector over the past one year. The aim to develop technology supply chains is also aimed at China, although not explicitly stated. A vital part of this is to develop semi-conductor supply chains, for which India is already in talks with Taiwan, given the latter's role and lion's share of global production.

These initiatives of the Quad indicate that the grouping covers a comprehensive agenda for the Indo-Pacific, going beyond maritime security. Indeed, security, strategy and defence arrangements are, for now, excluded from the Quad. The domain of maritime security is much more exclusive and includes bilateral and trilateral naval exercises (such as Malabar exercises)

including non-Quad members and through mechanisms like the 2+2 bilateral tracks. Other trilateral security mechanisms like Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) trilateral is also a significant security arrangement in the Indo-Pacific that – from a Western perspective – can be seen to complement the Quad. The Quad also recognizes cooperation with Indo-Pacific forums like ASEAN as important in developing an Indo-Pacific vision.

From the agenda of Quad in the Leaders' Summit, it is evident that the organization is just a cooperative platform, focused on developing alternative economic supply chains to China's infrastructural projects. These supply chains would involve coronavirus vaccine as well as span other technological areas. However, much of this requires tangible technological cooperation in order to yield substantive results. Traditionally, Western countries, due to intellectual property rights restrictions, have been opposed to sharing technology with developing countries, including India. For any substantive cooperation on climate change and other critical technological areas, this politics needs to go.

Incipient efforts in this direction are visible in the recent agreement of India and the US – as a part of Industrial Security Annex signed under 2+2 in 2019 – to set up the Indo-US Industrial Security Joint Working Group. This will enable the two countries to align their policies and collaborate on the latest defence technologies. The agreement was reached during the Industrial Security Agreement summit held between the two sides recently in New Delhi, to develop protocols for exchanging classified information between the defence industries of both nations.

Some of the recent comprehensive bilateral agreements between India and US also include deals on C-130 planes worth

1.2 billion dollars, long-range P8I naval reconnaissance planes for about \$1.5 billion, weapons for the special forces of the army, heavy-duty winter clothing, and, anti-missile and anti-aircraft NASAMS-2 or Norwegian Advanced Surface to Air Missile System which is still being negotiated. These are business-as-usual deals and much of it only partially fulfills the Indian quest for technology transfer to facilitate indigenous defence products.

Moreover, most of these defence deals pale in front of the recently signed AUKUS trilateral deal – an Indo-Pacific strategy far more substantive than the Quad.

AUKUS AND QUAD

A significant part of the US's Indo-Pacific pivot is now focused on the AUKUS deal. The trilateral security alliance between Australia, the US and the UK was signed recently and constitutes a major development with implications for the Indo-Pacific and for larger Western engagement with China. Under the deal, the US and the UK will supply nuclear-powered submarines to Australia. This has come at the temporary cost of antagonizing France with whom Australia cancelled the USD 90 billion conventional submarines project, raising criticism about the US's betrayal of a NATO ally, a major Indo-Pacific power and a permanent member of the Security Council, besides being a fellow western democracy. The cancelled deal was also critical to maintaining France's indigenous naval industry.

In India, it has been a reality check about the US's decisions taken without keeping 'allies' in loop. This has further taken all idealism away from the Indo-US relationship and high expectations from Quad. Other than the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and India, no other country has nuclear-powered submarine technology. While the AUKUS deal is seen to complement Quad in 'containing'

China by the western democracies, for India, it raises strategic apprehensions about the crowding of nuclear submarines in the Eastern Indian Ocean, thereby eroding India's regional eminence in the area.

India's ambition to develop nuclear attack submarines (SSNs) has not evoked any offer of help from the US, which claims to not share this top-class technology even with its 'closest allies'. Instead, India has historically relied on Russia in procuring nuclear submarine technology. Presently, India, with Russian help, has one SSBN or submersible ship ballistic missile nuclear submarine, also called INS Arihant. India had also taken a Russian nuclear attack submarine – an SSN called INS Chakra – on lease for many years. For India to develop the kind of SSN technology that the US will share with Australia, much more advanced nuclear reactor technology is needed, for which India will need the help of another country – an issue that was discussed in PM Modi's cabinet meeting. It is yet to be seen whether India will solicit France for sharing the nuclear submarine propulsion technology, which the US has clearly refused to do, despite Quad.

CHARTING AN INDEPENDENT COURSE

The AUKUS saga, coming right before the Quad summit, clearly shows that India needs to continue on the balanced path of charting a course independent of any alliances. The view that AUKUS complements Quad has limited relevance, as India does not share a similar confrontational relationship with China that the West does, with the latter's antagonism stemming from cultural differences. Therefore, AUKUS complements Quad only from a US-dominated Western perspective, and is less useful from India's point of view. For the Indo-US relationship

to move beyond mere rhetoric, it has to deliver substantial results that are concretely helpful to India. The much-awaited trade agreement – which PM Modi was keen to touch upon in this visit – was not broached, as the Biden administration continues to dither on trade negotiations with India. Similarly, the transfer of technology in defence and the supply of advanced defence products like SSNs are far from being on the agenda. The Quad itself now appears to be little more than a toothless diplomatic forum.

After the way the US refused to help India during the second COVID-19 wave, the US debacle in Afghanistan and the AUKUS saga, India herself might be re-assessing her relationship with the US in a new light. The results are visible in India's growing relations with Russia and Iran, taking her farther away from the US in regional politics. Henry Kissinger's saying may hold well in present times that, "it may be dangerous to be America's enemy, but to be America's friend is fatal."

4. *The Present Condition of India*

A. A Deep Perspective on the Present Condition of India and Her Future Work

...a hundred years ago Sri Aurobindo wrote, “... Mankind can never be wholly rational, because our race is essentially built up of various elements, none of which can be eliminated from its system of being. It is our nature to be physical, animal, emotional & sensational as well as intellectual and the coldest thinker or most inexorable rationalist cannot escape from the constitution of our common nature. But **mankind, under the great impulse which overtook it at a certain stage of its conscious activity, felt the need of rationalising, as far as that could with safety be done, its other irrational members, the heart, the senses, the life-action, even the body.** This tendency, pursued simultaneously by Graeco-Roman civilisation, by Confucian China, by philosophical & Post-Buddhistic India, combated in India by the vitality of Yoga and religion, in Europe by the great united floods of barbarism and Catholic Christianity, has finally triumphed and reached a pitch of success, an extent of victorious propagation which, in human movements, is usually the precursor of arrest and decay. **The movement of pure intellectualism has itself, indeed, no clear premonition of its own end.** It hopes to conquer, to perpetualise itself, to bring under its sway the nations that are still exempt from its yoke or only imperfectly subdued to it; outwardly it seems to be on the point of success. It still holds the mind of Europe, although the soul of Europe begins to attempt uneasily an escape from its narrowing rigidity & dryness; it has seized on Mongolian Japan

& is revivifying the traditional intellectualism of China by a flood of fresh ideas, by the inspiration of a new & wider horizon; it has touched already the Mahomedan world; **the political subjugation of India has been followed by a pervasive invasion of European intellectualism which is striving hard to substitute itself progressively for the ancient law & nature of our Indian temperament and being.** But these manifestations, however overwhelming in appearance, however conclusive they seem of approaching victory, conceal the seeds of a profound revolution in the inverse sense. **An outward conquest is often the means of an inward defeat.** What is happening now, has happened before on a smaller scale and under less developed conditions. When the combined intellectuality of Greece and practical materialism of the Latins, supported by the conquering military force of the Roman Republic and Empire, came into contact with the old tradition of Asia, the result was the collapse of the politically victorious civilisation under the assault of an Oriental religion which in its tenets & methods not only exceeded but trampled alike on the vital force of the body & on the free play of the intellect, alike on Greece & on Rome. And it was from a part of Asia which underwent directly the Roman yoke, but persisted with the most deep-rooted perseverance in its spiritual traditions that the revanche proceeded; conquered Judaea took captive the victorious civilisation. Once more Europe, much more profoundly intellectualised, much more profoundly materialised in its intellectualism, throws itself upon Asia with a yet more supreme military force, compelling a yet more widespread political subjugation; once more a penetrating eye can discover the preparation of the same result obscurely outlining itself behind the deceptive appearances of the moment.... The very nations which are today the hope of a ~~purely intellectual civilisation, hold in themselves that which can~~

never remain satisfied with the pure reason, and this ineradicable betraying force is now being powerfully stimulated by the mental currents which for almost a century have been consciously or subconsciously reaching Europe with a slowly increasing force from the East. Therefore, **the repetition, no doubt in a very different form & to very different issues, of the miracle of Christianity is psychologically inevitable.**

If indeed, as modern thought imagines, intellectual reason were the last & highest term of evolution, this consummation need not have been inevitable, or, if inevitable, it would have been deplorable; for perfection depends on the rule of our highest member over its inferior cohabitants. But our evolution is only the progressive unfolding of our nature and faculties, **& in the list of those faculties reason does not hold the highest place; it is not even a separate and independent power, but a link, servant and intermediary. Its business, when it is allowed to rule, is to train the lower man so as to make him a fit vessel for an activity higher than its own.** The animal is content to follow his impulses under the flashlight of instinct. If ever, as is likely, there was a time when man also was a supreme animal, he must have been guided by an instinct different, perhaps, in its special kind but as trustworthy as animal instinct & of the same essential nature. It was, then, the development in us of that reason which we see ill developed in the animal which deprived man of his sure animal instinct & compelled him to seek for a higher guide. Everything goes to show that he must have sought it at first in the lower intuition & revelation which works in the heart, the aesthetic impulses, the senses. Again, it is the insistent development of reason that has served to make him dissatisfied with these powerful, but still inferior guides. But not until reason, without lapsing back

to the lower movements, yet becomes permanently dissatisfied with its own limitations, can it fulfil its work of preparation. **For there is a faculty in us superior to the rational, there is that direct seeing & touch of things which shows itself in the higher revelation & intuition & works obscurely, like a fire enveloped in smoke, in the phenomena of intellectual genius & unusual personality. Beyond direct seeing there is a faculty of direct being, if I may so express it, which, if we can entirely reach & hold to it, makes us one with God, brahmabhuta, can reveal in this material life the perfection of Brahman as it is intended to be manifested in humanity, so that man on the human level, in the human cadre, becomes perfect as God is perfect.** The intellect itself cannot reach these heights. It can only discipline, chasten & prepare the lower members to receive & hold without harm or disintegration that higher force which has alone the power to raise us to the summits. In the intellectual ages of mankind, reason forgets these limitations; it tries to do a double work, to judge correctly all the knowledge which presents itself to the sensorium & its instruments and also to know things directly & in their essence. The former is its legitimate work & deserves the name of Science; the latter is an illegitimate attempt to go beyond its sphere and conceals an error under the name of Metaphysics. The intellect can know & judge phenomena... but it cannot know & judge the essence of things...

The European attempt must, therefore, come to nought the moment it is brought face to face, as daily it is being brought more & more nearly face to face with its own inalienable insufficiency. The tradition of Asia will again impose itself on humanity, & it is probable that it will be again a country politically subject to Europe but

more than any other tenacious of its spiritual temperament & tradition, which will be the instrument of the revanche. But the revelation that will conquer this time the forces of material rationalism must be one which includes the intellect in exceeding it, fulfils, not annuls it; for the conditions demand this greater consummation. **In the Roman days the intellect was attacked before its constructive work had proceeded beyond the first insufficient paces; today the intellect has done its constructive work and the work must be accepted. It is India alone that can satisfy this double claim of the human reason & the divine intelligence; & the new reconquest will differ as much and in the same way from the old as India differs from old Judaea.**

It is true that in this country the reason has never fulfilled itself, triumphed & held undisputed sway to the same extent as in modern Europe. If we take in its general results in India the great intellectual movement of humanity, we see that it broke up & scattered about in fragments the ancient catholic tradition & knowledge, placed its stamp on much that yet remains, destroyed a great deal which it could not assimilate, left a little surviving under veils & in our remote & secret places. **On the mental temperament of our people, the long struggle had a disastrous effect; for it has deprived all except the few of the higher supraintellectual inner life of our forefathers, it has made impossible any general resort to that discipline which gave them the use to a certain extent, at least, of the higher intuitive mentality, the satyadrishti, the direct sight, and has driven the many to be content rather with the irregular intuitions of the heart, the aesthetic faculties & the senses; we have kept those faculties which receive the actual touch of the higher truth obscurely, with the eyes**

of the intellect closed but lost those which receive them directly, with the eyes of the intellect open and luminously transmitting them to the mind imprisoned in matter. We have therefore neither been able to organise the intellectual efficiency of the Europeans, nor retain the principles of inner greatness known to our forefathers. Nevertheless, we still have among us important remnants of the old knowledge & discipline & we have firm hold in our schools of Yoga on the supreme means by which its lost parts can be recovered. The key of a divine life upon earth lies, rusted indeed in an obscure corner of our mansion, used only by a few, but still it lies there & is still used. It has to be singled out from amid much waste matter, made fit for complete & general use and given freely to mankind. We have kept, fortunately, the intuitional temperament to which its use is easy & natural. **The failure of the intellect to assume complete sway and entirely rationalise our life, was a necessary condition for the preservation of that temperament, itself necessary for the appointed work & God-decreed life of our nation.... Children of the Rishis, not entirely disinherited, repositories of the Veda, still clinging to our trust, we alone can recover in our experience its half lost truths for the growing need of humanity.** We have acquired, too, by our long philosophical discipline, the power of stating supra-intellectual knowledge in that language of the intellect on which the modern world insists as the proper vehicle of understanding and the first condition of acceptance.” (CWSA 17: 559-566)

“...the future of humanity depends most upon the answer that will be given to the modern riddle of the Sphinx by the East and especially by India, the hoary guardian of the Asiatic idea and its profound spiritual secrets. **For the most vital issue of**

the age is whether the future progress of humanity is to be governed by the modern economic and materialistic mind of the West or by a nobler pragmatism guided, uplifted and enlightened by spiritual culture and knowledge.” (CWSA 13: 137)

“The evolution of mind working upon life has developed an organisation of the activity of mind and use of Matter which can no longer be supported by human capacity without an inner change.” (CWSA 22: 1092)

“If India follows in the footsteps of Europe, accepts her political ideals, social system, economic principles, she will be overcome with the same maladies. Such a consummation is neither for the good of India nor for the good of Europe. If India becomes an intellectual province of Europe, she will never attain to her natural greatness or fulfil the possibilities within her. Paradharmo bhayavahah, to accept the dharma of another is perilous; it deprives the man or the nation of its secret of life and vitality and substitutes an unnatural and stunted growth for the free, large and organic development of Nature. Whenever a nation has given up the purpose of its existence, it has been at the cost of its growth. India must remain India if she is to fulfil her destiny. Nor will Europe profit by grafting her civilisation on India, for if India, who is the distinct physician of Europe’s maladies, herself falls into the clutch of the disease, the disease will remain uncured and incurable and European civilisation will perish...” (CWSA 07: 1041)

(to be continued)

HIGHLIGHTS

THE DECIMATION OF PUNJAB CONGRESS

Recent developments in Punjab have precipitated to virtually spell the beginning of the end of the Congress in Punjab. The last few weeks have seen the resignation of veteran Congress leader and former Punjab Chief Minister, Captain Amarinder Singh, followed by the resignation of Navjot Sidhu as the President of the Pradesh Congress Committee. The Captain's resignation was brought about by simmering tensions within the Punjab Congress for more than a year and a constant tussle of power between Mr. Sidhu – widely seen as an agent of the Gandhis or the Congress High Command – and the Captain.

The Captain was seen as independent of the young Gandhi siblings and had managed to establish the Congress supremacy in Punjab, despite a BJP wave in most other parts of the country. It was this independence that cost him. The Congress's decision to replace him by Charanjeet Channi – a Dalit Sikh – is aimed squarely at the Punjab elections a few months later, as Dalit Sikhs form a sizeable vote-bank in Punjab. However, Congress's mixed signals on whether Channi would be its CM candidate is already diluting the poll gimmick pulled by the party.

For now, Mr. Channi has disproved speculations that he can be manipulated easily by Mr. Sidhu, as seen clearly in Mr. Sidhu's resignation due to his choices not being accommodated during Mr. Channi's cabinet selections. While Channi and Sidhu may reach a temporary compromise, nothing that they do could take away from the mess that the Congress party finds itself in. The Captain's decision to meet BJP's Amit Shah shows that the former intends to fully fight back against his dramatic exit.

He may join the BJP – which he has denied – or form a new party. His position towards BJP now hinges on whether some compromise can be reached on the Centre’s three farm laws.

The key implication of the Punjab saga will be the impact felt by Congress in other states where it is part of the government, such as Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. In Chhattisgarh, the situation is already looking tricky, as infighting proceeds between two rival camps within the Congress. Even in states where Congress is not in power – such as Kerala – it is diminishing.

GUJARAT – ANOTHER LEADERSHIP CHANGE

In contrast to Congress-ruled Punjab, Gujarat witnessed a smooth replacement of its entire leadership, including the Chief Minister. While Bhupendra Patel was made the new Chief Minister, the entire cabinet also saw a change in line with caste and regional representations, a year ahead of the Assembly elections. While the dominant influence was that of OBCs and Patidars, substantial space has also been given to tribals, Dalits and women, besides representation of upper castes. Regionally, the Saurashtra region has seen the most representation this time. None of the members of former Chief Minister, Vijay Rupani’s team were inducted.

The transition – firm and swift, yet smooth – is akin to the efficiency with which the change of guard was ensured in Karnataka. Due to a consolidated BJP leadership at the top, under Modi, such changes could be effected smoothly. In contrast, Congress states are witnessing frequent inner disputes.

THE FUTILITY OF ATTEMPTS TO READ
THE MODERN IDEAS OF DEMOCRACY INTO
THE PAST OF INDIA

“Indian scholars have attempted to read the modern ideas and types of democracy and even a parliamentary system into the past of India, but this seems to me an ill-judged endeavour. There was a strong democratic element, if we must use the Western terms, in Indian polity and even institutions that present a certain analogy to the parliamentary form, but in reality these features were of India’s own kind and not at all the same thing as modern parliaments and modern democracy. And so considered they are a much more remarkable evidence of the political capacity of the Indian people in their living adaptation to the ensemble of the social mind and body of the nation than when we judge them by the very different standard of Western society...”

– Sri Aurobindo

(Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 20, pp. 386-87)