Chapter IV

Aurobindo Ghosh or Sri Aurobindo’s Concept of Internationalism

Before discussing Sri Aurobindo’s views on internationalism, an overview of Sri Aurobindo’s perception of international order is in order.

Sri Aurobindo’s life and work can be divided in two periods. Years of political activism (up to 1910) and period at Pondicherry since 1910. In the second period he did not participate in politics, although he continued to take interest in national and international politics. How did he look at India and world during these periods?

In the first period his primary interest was confined to national politics. Sri. Aurobindo’s writings in the 1890’s, indicate his concern about the cause of nationalism in India. In this field, role of congress came in for criticism. It was not a national body. It was an organization of one class. Although, Sri Aurobindo was not in favour of a country remaining isolated from the rest of the world, he was critical of blind imitation of models of other countries. For example, he was not in favour of congress imitating, the British model of reliance on political machinery, specially its reliance on legislative councils. He was more interested in French model of social development, better environment and all-round development of nation. Unless the nation developed character, mere import of an unsuitable machinery would not help.
Sri Aurobindo was not enamored of British rule, although indirectly it helped India. "Europeans", he said, "when the spirit moves them to brag of their superiority over Asiatics, are in the habit of saying that West is progressive, the East stationary. That is little comprehensive.... It was foreign energy that pushed aside our old machinery... By setting themselves to compel our social elements in to a state of fluidity. They are in the unlucky position of responsibility for a state of things which they abhor and certainly had no intention of bringing about. The force which they had in mind is to construct a body of grave, loyal and conservative citizens, educated but with out ideas, a body created by and having a stake in the present order and therefore attached to its continuance, a power in the land certainly but a power for order, for permanence not a power for disturbance and unrest". ¹

For him, development of nationalism, in the sense of all round development of a nation was inconsistent with hegemonic internationalism. "Political Freedom", he wrote in 1907, "is the life breath of a nation: to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of race, without aiming first and foremost at political freedom is the very height of ignorance and futility". ²

For achieving the aim of political freedom any means are justified, boycott, burning of goods and violence. Politics according to him is the ideal of Kshatryia and should be governed

² Ibid., p. 86.
by morality of Kshatryia. What if violence results in hatred? His answer is, 'love has a place in politics but it is the love of country and for one's country men.' Other love than this, he said, 'is foreign to the motives of political action. Between nation and nation, there is justice, partiality, chivalry, duty but not love... It may exist between individuals of different races, but love of one race for another is a thing foreign to Nature.' However, he makes it clear, 'no hatred against foreigners but antipathy to the evils of foreign exploitation is the true root of boycott.' He felt that hatred could be stimulating also. Initially, violence was bad, if used wantonly or for unrighteous ends. India's salvation could come neither by politician, nor by religion of niravuti, nor by industrialism, of the West.

If 19th century was the century of Europe, Sri Aurobindo felt that 20th century was going to be a century of Asia. The virtues of Eastern civilization (specially of India) including its humanitarian and socialistic aspect; predominance of spirituality; absence of militant materialism; the manner in which it has balanced interests of different classes in society are appreciated by many in India. However patriotism (nationalism) is not a living and moving impulse with them. What is wrong? According to Sri Aurobindo, 'instead of being dominated by natural ambition of carrying the banner of such a civilization all over the world, we are unable to maintain its integrity in its own native home'.

3 Ibid., p.126.
4 Ibid., p.126.
5 Ibid., p.426.
In fact even in 1907, Sri Aurobindo was keen to see Asia play a leading role in world. This was because in the 'next great stage of human progress, it is not material but a spiritual, moral and psychological advance that has to be made'. Liberty according to Sri Aurobindo, was 'worth striving for the world's sake'. Therefore, freedom meant 'responsibilities of freedom'.

In fact Asia had a lot to teach Europe. She alone could teach the West the art of immortality. This was because, 'Europe lives by centuries, Asia by millenniums. Europe is parcelled out in nations, Asia in civilizations'. Europe had, only one civilization with a derived and second rate culture. Asia had three civilizations, each of them original. Not only Asia was great spiritually, Japan had shown in few years and with very little trouble, with such thoroughness and science, with minimum disturbance, how she could change political, social and economic machinery.

This does not mean that East had only plus points. Eastern nationalism more particularly, Indian brand of nationalism did not preach need of economic renovation or social transformation. Sri Aurobindo was particularly critical of caste system. The baser ideas underlying the degenerate perversions of the original caste system, the mental attitude which bases them on a false foundation of caste, pride and arrogance, of a divinely ordained superiority depending on accident of birth, of a fixed and intolerant inequality, are inconsistent with supreme

6 Ibid., p.465.
7 Ibid., p.467.
8 Ibid., p.467.
teaching, the basic spirit of Hinduism, which sees the one invariable and indivisible divinity in every individual being." 9 Of course, Sri Aurobindo considered political freedom to be the most important.

Further, the internationalism of West, according to Sri Aurobindo was not genuine. Although Westerners talked of Christian ideal of human brotherhood, their rulers did not extend it to conquered people. Even, the modern labourites, who talk of internationalism give highest importance to their national interest. On the other hand, 'Asia has never embraced an ideal without universalizing it'. Nor, has an ideal had to win its way to the heart of the orient through a welter of its martyr's blood, as has been the case with all kinds of ideals in Europe'. 10

Further, Asia was not Europe. It was not likely to repeat ideals of West. As Sri Aurobindo put it, 'the political ideals of West are not the mainsprings of the political movements in East'. Even what looked like repetition would be transformation. 11 For example, democracy went from East to West in the form of Christianity. It was an assertion of human equality in spirit. But the ideal was not sincerely implemented. The revival of idea of brotherhood of man in Islam, unfortunately became a creed. In Europe the origin of middle class democracy, was a doctrine in self-interest. It emphasized rights of man. Neither the concepts of rights, nor of duties was enough. Only

9 Ibid., p.533.
10 Ibid., p.576.
11 Ibid., p.756.
democracy based on dharms in which man recognized that same soul dwelt in all human beings, ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity would be realized. Thus in Sri Aurobindo's concept of internationalism, both West and East had capacity to give and take from each other. For the present, however he felt that Asia would assume leadership in giving. India in particular had to assume the charge of this mission. Her liberation was going to serve the cause of humanity.

In one of his articles in 'Bande Mataram' written in April 1886, Sri Aurobindo, wrote of the possibility of China and Japan overthrowing European civilization. This alliance could eject British from India. India because of her potentiality could act as mediator between West and Asia. It was for Britain to convert India into a friend or a mediator. By following wrong policy Britain could drive India into the Mongolian camp. India had the capacity to become self-consciousness, to develop unity, warlike instincts and industrial independence. What she needed was revival of ideal of sanatan dharma, the ideal of humanity in God, of God in humanity.13

'Asia', according to Sri Aurobindo 'was the custodian of the world's peace of mind, the physician of the maladies which Europe generates. She is commissioned to rise from time to time from her ages of self-communion, self-sufficiency, self-absorption and rule the world for a season....when the restless spirit of Europe has added a new phase of discovery to the evolution of the science of material life, has regulated

12 Ibid., p.816.
13 Ibid., p.837.
politics, rebased society, remodeled law, rediscovered science, the spirit of Asia, calm, contemplative, self-possessed, takes possession of Europe's discovery and corrects its exaggeration, its aberrations by the intuition, the spiritual light she alone can turn the world... Asia has always initiated; Europe completed. The Strength of Europe is in details, the strength of Asia is in synthesis... It is therefore the office of Asia to take up the work of human evolution, when Europe comes to a standstill and loses itself in a clash of vain speculations, barren experiments and helpless struggles to escape from the consequences of her own mistakes. Such a time has now come in world's history, 14

India has a special place at this juncture. Only by God's wish, she was subjugated (England's victory over India could not be explained otherwise). But now the time for India's resurgence had become. It was to take place, with or without British help.

Under the present circumstances, Sri Aurobindo felt that India could not borrow much from Europe. By this he meant, India should not imitate West. According to Sri Aurobindo, the nineteenth century in India was imitative, self-forgetful and artificial. As he put it, 'if India follows in the footsteps of Europe, accepts her political ideals, social system, economic principles, she will be overcome with the same maladies'. 15 Further, in the process, Europe's problems would not be solved. The success of India's National movement, was necessary for India, but more necessary for Europe.

14 Ibid., pp.842-843.
15 Ibid., p.862.
At the same time India, a nation required a state to perform any role. The reason: 'Society lives by proper harmony of its parts and bases that harmony on the centre of power in which the whole community is summed up, the state. If the state is diseased, the community cannot be healthy. If the state is foreign, community can not live an organic life. If the state be hostile, the community is doomed'.

Further, the objective of the independence movement was not, 'alteration of a form of government but the building up of a nation' Western methods were useful in this, but not sufficient. He added, 'they might be sufficient if it were our ultimate destiny to be an outline province of the British Empire or a dependent adjunct of European civilization'. On the other hand, if 'India is destined to work out her independent life and civilization and solve the problems... which Europe has failed to solve...our means must be as great as our ends'. Thus according to Sri Aurobindo India's imitation of Western aims and methods was a mistake, a loss not only for India but also for the whole world.

Similarly nation building also required Hindu-Muslim unity, but this could not be effected by political adjustments or congress flatteries. It meant ignoring the cause. Only perception of divine unity can remove the misunderstandings and differences between two communities.

16 Ibid., p.381.
18 Ibid., p.24.
In his perception of the major problems of the day, he observed in 1909 that European liberalism had failed, it was not a failure of the principle. The principles of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' were still right. But they were 'falsely stated and executed'.¹⁹ Europe, according to Sri Aurobindo, 'had not the spiritual strength, nor the moral force to carry them out. She was too selfish, too short sighted, too materialistic and ignorant'.²⁰

In the same year, he observed that commercial and military competition between European countries, the system of alliances and counter alliances, their reliance on colonies only indicated their weaknesses. They seemed to lack vitality.²¹

The positive feature was that countries in Asia were pulsating with vitality. This was particularly true of India. Partition of Bengal was a catalytic event. Anger, vindictiveness and antipathy were not laudable but could be used by God for positive purposes. In this case, it turned the country away from imitation of West and towards its own past and to a truly national future.²² However this should not lead to a tendency to cling to every detail that has been Indian. Any such tendency would be contrary to the spirit of Hinduism.

Development of nationalism in India was a positive feature. It was the result of zeitgeist's working. Important individuals were only instruments of God. They were not as sacred as nation itself, for smaller can not be as sacred as greater.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.31.
²⁰ Ibid., p.31.
²¹ Ibid., pp.32-33.
²² Ibid., p.38.
However, nationalism was not the final synthesis. He did not agree with a critic that, that was the last thing that Europe has to offer. At intellectual level, ideals of humanity, socialism, anarchism were other ideals Europe had given. But, 'it is the highest (ideal) which the European thought has arrived at so far as that thought has expressed itself in the actual life and ideals of an average European.'

Nationalism was not a result of mature deliberation. It came like flood and swept away everybody in the current. Because it was a faith, dharma, it could not be governed by expediency. Although, nationalism could not be the highest ideal of humanity, it was not dispensable also. It was a step. With us today, he said in 1909, 'nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the chance of realizing others. We must leave as a nation before we can live in humanity.' The ultimate aim of evolution should not be forgotten. As annulment of partition could not be the ultimate aim, so the gospel of nationalism also could not be the ultimate aim, although it had not yet been fully preached. The ideal of unity of mankind as a divine manifestation could not be preached partly because of the old idea of separation of politics from religion and partly because the human aspect of nationalist faith had yet to be established.

23 Ibid., p.42.
24 Ibid., p.42.
25 Ibid., p.51.
The genius of self-sacrifice, according to Sri Aurobindo, is not common to all nations and to all individuals. It is an evidence of growth of man from self-regarding animal to self-less divinity. The first sacrifices were always selfish. A man sacrificed for his mate, then for his family, and then for the nation. Sacrifice of interest of nation for the sake of humanity was an ideal for which mankind was not yet ready. This need not be done hastily either. If the larger identification came earlier than the lesser identification, it would necessitate retrogression in order to secure the step which has been omitted.

In Sri Aurobindo's view, the spirit moving around the world, was against the continuation of imperialism in the world. 'We claim the right of every nation to live its own life by its own energies according to its own nature and ideals.' This did not involve hatred of any nation. Nor was the growth of Indian nationalism likely to be the ultimate end. The ultimate end was human unity. Hegemonic internationalism and human unity could not go together. In fact it was an obstacle. As he put it, 'We demand the realization of our corporate existence as a distinct race and nation, because that is the only way in which ultimate brotherhood of humanity can be achieved, not by blotting out individual peoples...but by removing the internal obstacles to unity, the causes of hatred, malice and misunderstanding.'

In fact struggle against imperialism by India helped British. After all liberty at home could not be reconciled by

26 Ibid., p.108.
27 Ibid., p.109.
28 Ibid., p.127.
imperialism abroad. Karma abroad will recoil at home. Love of liberty was beginning to wane and doctrine of strong man was becoming popular in U.K.. Whether it was the issue of development of nationalism or of internationalism, Sri Aurobindo's opinion was that one should not be bogged down by circumstances. In 1909, Sri Aurobindo therefore rejected pessimistic assessments and approaches. The spiritual force within not only creates future but creates material for future. It can transform bad material into good material, insufficient means into abundant means'. Concluding his remark, he said, 'It was a deep consciousness of this great truth that gave Mazzini, the strength to create modern Italy'. In India, movements failed in last century, because they were purely intellectual. Even nationalism in India has been Indian in sentiment and aspirations, European in practice and actuality.

However, Sri Aurobindo did discuss the principles on the basis of which reforms could be effected. The first base was the struggle of selfish interests between man and man, class and class, working out progress by ignoble strife, the forced compromise and convenient barter of lower kind of politics. The other was impulse and clash of mighty ideas, noble aims and aspirations which inspire mankind in upward march. The second was the better and more durable basis for reforms and unity.

Until now Sri Aurobindo's perception of the national and world scene, the positive as well as the negative factors.

29 Ibid., p.123.
30 Ibid., p.163.
31 Ibid., p.254.
working in it in 'Bande Mataram' and 'Karmayogin' days has been discussed.

In these days, his main interest was in the development of healthy nationalism in India. But even here it was not the final goal. The ultimate aim was human unity. It was not a negative force for Sri Aurobindo. It was a means for 'enriching and extending life, not for diminishing or destroying it as was attempted later by Fascism and Nazism'. Once Indian nationalism had brought political order and economic prosperity to the country, it should preserve itself in cosmopolitanism somewhat as the individual preserves itself in the family, the family in the class, the class in the nation, not destroying itself needlessly but recognizing a larger interest'.

During July-December 1909, Sri Aurobindo had considered possibility of a temporary withdrawal from active politics so as to be able to make a more effective contribution feasible at a later stage. The spiritual and political pulls had been with him all along, from the time of composition of Bhavani Mandir at least. During the editorship of Bande Mataram, the political pull was stronger than the spiritual; during the editorship of Karmayogin and Dharma, the spiritual pull was decidedly stronger; may be due to the result of prison-sadhana at Alipur. Finally, he saw his destiny in spiritual rather than political. He arrived at Pondicherry (Cave of Tapasya) in 1910.


33 Ibid., p.336.
In 1914, a monthly named 'Arya', whose objective was to give to world 'a grand synthesis of knowledge and Yogic experience was started'. Sri Aurobindo’s major works started appearing 'Arya'. His magnum opus was 'The Life Divine', 'The Ideal of Human Unity' and 'The Human Cycle' appeared from 1915 to 1916 respectively. Internally he was engaged in yoga and in heightening of the power of consciousness through the influence of higher knowledge till mental become Supra-mental truth consciousness. To the outside world he was the editor of 'Arya'. Although Sri Aurobindo had eschewed political action, he continued to follow events in India and of the world.

From the vantage point of Yogic strength and aloofness, Sri Aurobindo looked at the world, the life of 'Arya' was Mr. Ayengar puts it, was contemporaneous with the course of the first world war and its aftermath.

In 1918, he mentioned in 'Arya' that in a world which was tired of warfare, reconstruction could take place on the basis of ideals of freedom and unity, a balanced combination of these two. However, this was not to be.

In 1920 itself he wrote, "the war that was fought to end war has been only the parent of fresh armed conflict and civil discord and it is the exhaustion that followed it which alone prevents as yet another vast and sanguinary struggle. The new fair and peaceful world order that was promised us has gone far away into the land of Chimeras. The League of Nations hardly even exists or exists only as a mockery and as a by-word...... even if it becomes active, it will be a cover or passive support for domination of earth by a close oligarchy of powerful governments.
or may be even of two allied and imperialistic nations".  

What were the major factors affecting the course of events on the world scene in the first two decades of the 20th century?

According to Sri Aurobindo, wars, recurring wars and a world war was a malady from which mankind was suffering. What was it due? Was it an outgrowth of a state idea or a nation idea? Did it result from capitalistic economic system? Did it indicate that something was wrong with the Western culture or was it because the Western society in the course of evolution had not progressed beyond a certain stage? Was it because the Western Society was ignorant about the correct method of solving the problem of war?

According to Sri Aurobindo, nation was a real unit and not a political unit. It had a life of its own and did not owe its continuation to a force imposed on it. National unity therefore could not be broken easily and had a tendency to reassert itself. This does not mean that nation was always a real unit. The tribe, the clan, the commune, the regional people were the living units. But nation gradually developed as a real unit. Even old persistent race unities or cultural unities proved powerless against it. 'The nation' as Sri Aurobindo observed it, 'is practically indestructible unless it dies from within.'

However, the national unit also suffered from certain defects. It took time to be organized. Sometimes, nature had to

34 Ibid., p. 39b.
organize a nation with the help of foreign rule.

Even when nation was sufficiently organized, unity was not always achieved. Although, nature intended to make all individuals within a nation equal and all nations equal within humanity. But this does not happen immediately. Therefore class exploitation within a nation and clash between nations was the result.

This was partly because human society had not arrived at a spiritual age and because reason not the spirit was governing factor in intra-national and inter-national relations. Under these circumstances egoism of various classes and nations led to conflicts.

Therefore national egoism based on a false vital subjectivism had to be eliminated. The first world war became inevitable by rapid patriotic outbursts and glorifications where by national egoism found for itself opportunities to come into collision with rival organisms. 36

However, this did not mean that nationalism was a negative phenomena. It was a spiritual ideal for which men sacrificed their lives and did not calculate gain or loss in doing so. Nation was not a pursuit of collective self-interest but realization of cosmic force. Therefore for Sri Aurobindo, any explanation of nationalism as a mere epiphenomenon of capitalism was partial and inadequate.

However, capitalism and imperialism by creating prosperity for their countries may increase national pride and

36 Ibid., The Ideal of Human Unity, p.366.
arrogance, in case of exploitation of subject peoples and also lead to racialism. Thus, although capitalism and imperialism may not create nationalism but intensify it.

Thus nationalism was a divine force and could lead to great sacrifices being made by individuals for it should not be considered as an ultimate goal. The remedy was "to regard the nation as a necessary unit but no more in common humanity." 37

Further, even if the question of relationship between classes was settled and equality of certain type established between them, the issue of individual's relationship with other groups remained. Some societies gave primacy to the state and others to the individual. But the present problem is that, "we are now tending towards is such an organized state power and such a huge irresistible and complex state activity as will either eliminate individual effort altogether or leave it dwarfed and cowed into helplessness". 38 The state did not have either internal scruples or external checks except fear of defeat or of economic disorganization. It had no soul or a rudimentary one. It was neither the best mind of nation nor even the sum of communal energies. Nor was it the best means of human progress. This was because it was not an organism but a machinery. Because of this it leads to uniformity. Therefore a healthy unity of mankind could not be brought about by state. 39

However as the present trend was strengthening the state idea, totalitarianism was the natural result. It would discard democratic liberty and equality. Although socialism could become

39 Ibid., pp.263-284.
democratic, it could become communist as well. 'Originally', Sri Aurobindo observed, 'a rationalistic system worked out by a logical thinker and discoverer and synthesiser of ideas, it has been transformed into something like social religion'. Although totalitarianism and communism struggled with each other, as embodying state idea, they were Kinsmen. Therefore if the state idea got strengthened, it would mean end of age of Reason. Finally, stateless communism could not operate.

However, the growing struggle between capital and labour was a major issue in world politics and even world war I could not solve this issue. All other distinctions within a nation were fading. How did he see this battle? Capitalism was not only losing moral credit but with the worsening of economic condition was not able to solve material problems. The socialist idea was getting more and more popular. But capitalism was not merely facing socialist idea but also the 'the first actuality of a first successful socialist and revolutionary regime in Russia' and 'although repeated efforts to stifle it in birth have been in vain, it had succeeded in isolating, in blockading and half starving it, in erecting its westward urge an artificial frontier and in stemming the more rapid progression of its master ideas by a constant campaign of discredit'. As against this was 'the continued existence, success and unbroken progress of Russian Revolution'. As a matter of fact, this and not the demise of Germany was the most significant result of world war I, according to Sri Aurobindo. The fact that the revolution survived in the

41 Ibid., p.646.
midst of scarcity, civil strife and foreign menace and could lay the initial basis of a new type of society and spread itself in Asia, impressed Sri Aurobindo. It was not the desirability or undesirability of ideal but a sign that a phase of civilization which began to pass that interested Sri Aurobindo. For, the idea now was the substitution of labour for wealth as the social basis and the governing power. The differences within the movement now touch no longer the principle but the means and process of change and the precise form to be given to the coming of socialistic government and society. As a matter of fact, the issue no longer was between capitalism vs. communism. Capitalist industrialism was on its way out. The issue of future lies between a labour industrialism not very different except in organization from its predecessor, some greater spirit and form of socialistic or communistic society such as is being attempted in Russia or else the emergence of a new and as yet unforeseen principle.

Another important issue facing the world was that of relationship between a resurgent Asia and Europe. Not only there was a wide spread unrest in Asia. Asia was now not content with imitation of European past or its present evolution. Asia was interested in 'defence against European invasion of the subtle principle of Asiatic culture.' Spiritualised democracy, Khilafat agitation, likely development of economic models other than that of capitalism and industrialism were manifestations of spirit of independence in Asia. The capitalist governments of Europe were

42 Ibid., p.647.
43 Ibid., p.647.
44 Ibid., p.648.
trying to meet this challenge with a concession in form and denial in fact and principle'.

Further, the forces of socialism and Asiatic resurgence were forming a moral alliance. 'This tendency may have in itself little meaning beyond sympathy created by reaction against a common pressure'. Only more durable support can help the alliance. Making a very perceptible observation, Sri Aurobindo said, 'Bolshevist Russia may set up Soviet governments in Georgia and Azerbaijan but if these are only governments of occasion, if sovietism does not correspond to or touch something more profound in the instinct temperament and idea of these peoples, they are not likely to be durable'.

The world war I, according to Sri Aurobindo, demolished certain illusions.

The first such illusion was that extension of commerce would lead to extinction of war. Commercialism was supposed to be the natural enemy of militarism. Actually it was the alliance between militarism and commercialism that led to this disastrous war.

Another illusion which was demolished was that growth of democracy would lead to growth of pacifism and end of war. It was thought that wars were in their nature dynastic and aristocratic. Similarly, according to Sri Aurobindo, 'The socialist, the syndicalist, the internationalist of Yesterday stands forward as a banner-bearer in the great mutual massacre and his voice is

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46 Ibid., p.651.
47 Ibid., p.651.
Another illusion which was the power of courts of Arbitration and concerts of Europe to prevent war. Sri Aurobindo is not even convinced about substitution of United States of Europe for concert. The suggestion was reflection of Western man's faith in machinery.

The times also witnessed other speculations. Sri Aurobindo refers to a view of Russian writer that science would end the war by making it physically impossible. This is because attacker would require a very large force. Similarly it was also thought that war would not bring any commercial advantage.

Sri Aurobindo felt although war was becoming more costly, it was not yet impossible. Human ingenuity with the help of science may help men in self adaptation.

The most important requirement for ending war was psychological conviction that war should end. "The weariness and disgust, horror and pity, even opening of eyes to reason by practical facts of waste of human life and energy... are not permanent factors; they last only while the lesson is fresh. Afterwards there is forgetfulness;... A long peace, even a certain organization of peace, may conceivably result, but so long as heart of man remains what it is, the peace will come to an end. War is no longer perhaps, a biological necessity but it is still a psychological necessity."50

Of course illusions too have their value. It shows that truth behind illusion is pressing towards the hour when it may

49 Ibid., p.594.
50 Ibid., pp.586-587.
become manifest as a reality'.\textsuperscript{51}

Did Sri Aurobindo observe any positive features?

A just, generous, cordial and valid League of Nations to replace the unjust Balances of power and stumbling and quarrelsome concerts, was considered to be one such positive development.

However, according to Sri Aurobindo, appearances can be deceptive. Sri Aurobindo observed following weaknesses in League:

(1) It did not seem to be universal organization and by no means had 'a catholic appearance' but seemed to be an 'association of actual friends and allies'.

Although Sri Aurobindo recognized that 'facts and forces of the situation were more favourable than ostensible paper provisions', as the nations not included with two exceptions were small nations.

(2) The appearance and nature of the League was baffling and on closer examination contrary to the ideal of democratic federation of peoples trumpeted during the war. It did not have new appearance. On the contrary, League strikes one 'as a structure of almost medieval irregularity, complexity, incoherent construction, a well-nigh feudal political building with some formal concessions on its ground floor to modern canon of liberty and equality'.\textsuperscript{52} As a matter of fact Sri Aurobindo wondered, whether it was not an enlarged and regularized edition\textsuperscript{4} of Concert of Powers-liberalized a little in form because buttressed by a democratic general assembly.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p.587.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p.616.
It seemed to rely on balance of power like the old systems. This was because there was no impersonal governing principle and no clear original structure in the international body.

(3) It did not seem to have great guiding principles such as charter of international rights or principle of self-determination.

(4) League was conceived to be a defender of an unjust peace treaty. It seemed to stand for preparation of a new status quo.

(5) The League was a league of governments interested in preserving the capitalist order and therefore if socialism either come to be accepted as a norm whatever the means (parliamentary or revolutionary), League would not be able to continue in the same old principle.

(6) For a league to develop and provide a system of law in place of force can not be easy. Even in a national society, development of a system of legalised relationship was not easy. It was far more difficult for an international society to develop where units were nations, too organized, representing vital interests and passions of men divided by jealousies and antipathies. Success of national society came after it developed an indivisible unity. Even then national society has not been able to completely eliminate conflicts. One reason why the spirit of rule of law has not developed is because law is considered as a protector of interests of stronger. Further, even if it developed in a national society at a particular time and got accepted even though law represented the interests of stronger, now the spirit
of the age had changed. 'The idea of equity, of equality, of common rights has been generalised in the mind of the race'.

(7) Under these circumstances, the spirit and the system of League will have to be changed. In short, Sri Aurobindo exposed the insufficiency of aims of League and inadequacy of its means.

There were other positive factors. 'The constant drawing closer of knots of international life, the multiplications of points of contact and threads of communication, an increasing community in thought, in science and knowledge'. Science has created closer contacts, cosmopolitan habits of life and world citizens. As these influences grow, psychological modification may take place in attitudes of nations. According to Sri Aurobindo in the past, the effect of commercial was to produce economic unity and interdependence. But this was subconscious unity of inseparable interrelations not any oneness of spirit or of conscious organised life. As a matter of fact, because, the organised units were politically separate and rival nations, their commercial interrelations became relations of rivalry and strife or rather a confused tangle of exchange and interdependence and hostile separatism'. It resulted in tariff wars and opened the possibility of a war.

More important than these forces was the internal need of human being to unify himself with others, to create human groups, aggregates and collectivities. The will may not be quite conscient but it is irresistible. According to Sri Aurobindo, if

53 Ibid., p.632.
55 Ibid., p.467.
it gets into his conscious mind as the international idea has now done, we may count on a more rapid evolution. Such a will in nature creates for itself favourable circumstances...and will use them beyond their effectivity...for she knows that in the end she will succeed'.

However, there were two problems. The international idea had been confined to intellectuals and was futurist. Till it had grown in psychological and sentimental feelings of man, process in development of this idea was to be in external adjustments. Further, it was strengthened by abnormal circumstances like war and therefore could not be relied upon to a great extent. Further, in order to get recognition, the idea allied itself with powers and movement which are impelled by aim other than its own, which may come to aid it to strengthen their own case. Thus when it realised itself at last it would do it in a mixed, impure and ineffective form. This made human progress unreal.

The compelling necessities for the growth of international idea were also less than that of national idea. It is true, the development of international idea out of circumstances like war had its own impact and made people conscious about avoiding war. However this did not create basis for permanent unity.

The result of war came about as a result of Divine plan...
that. For others, to say that, it is a question of faith. Divine does not bring good result automatically. It may agree to bad results temporarily as it knows future. For the time being it may withdraw. Divine does not take up each thing individually.

For bringing about a good result in war, psychological change is not required. Only for creating a basis for long term unity is psychological change required. For a victory in war, divine has to arrange for forces.

Further, as far as the vision of politician is concerned, they have none. Whether it is Hitler, who wanted to dominate Europe (excluding Russia and U.K.) or of Churchill who talked of union between U.K. and France had a temporary objective, (although Sri Aurobindo was impressed) or of Chamberlin who wanted a concert of Italy, Germany, England and France were, only outwardly interested in creating aggregates larger than main states. Their real objective was either dominance of the continent or maintenance of balance of power. Therefore the utility of these schemes was limited.

Death of Tilak left a void in politics and there was a feeling in some circles that somehow Sri Aurobindo could be persuaded to return to active politics. There were several reasons for Sri Aurobindo's refusal. One reason which he gave was, 'my mind has a habit of running inconveniently ahead of times-some might say out of time altogether in the world of ideal.. I believe in something like social democracy, not in any of forms now current, and I am not in love with the European kind'. Further for the congress to hold the attraction for a man

like Sri Aurobindo it would have to change its creed, function, organization and policy and this was not likely to happen.

Sri Aurobindo’s main concentration was on Yoga. The aim of Yoga was to substitute the urges and movements of ego by the involvement and participation of God so that all thoughts, all actions may be directed towards unity, harmony and ananda rather than division, strife and misery. He was interested in community divine, which could begin somewhere as a pilot project and then spread out and envelop the whole world. In his project, no activity of the world was to be left out. Politics, Industry, society, poetry, literature, art will all remain, the idea was to give it a new soul, a new form. It is true that supramental Yoga accepts life but does not mean life as it is at present because the supramental wants perfection. Many fields of life today suffer from ignorance. We want to change the whole world of life. We want to get supramental state down in to physical being. It is comparatively easy to ascend to supramind, but then as we go up, generally we go away from life.  

In 1920 and after political situation in India was hardly assuring. The war and after war years in Europe were a period of agonising self appraisal for young men and women. India too faced a similar situation but for different reasons. Overall, there was frustration. In Ashram too, a few young men joined Sri Aurobindo for enlightenment.

On November 24, 1926, it was pointed out by mother that divine had descended into physical. After that number of sadhaks

too went on increasing. Yoga was not a new thing but Sri Aurobindo described newness of Yoga in following terms:

1. Its aim was to change or transform life and ‘ascent’ to the higher consciousness was the means of bringing down the power of consciousness to effect divinisation of life;

2. Its aim was not an individual achievement for individual’s sake but preparatory to larger achievement compromising all humanity;

3. Its aim was to bring down the hitherto unrecognised or unabolished power of supramental consciousness and to make it act directly in human and terrestrial existence.

4. In its method it was as total and integral as the aim before it, the total and integral change of consciousness and nature. Contact was made by Sri Aurobindo through Darshan, touch, letters with sadhaks.

In 1936, Sri Aurobindo’s leg sustained an injury. It helped in resumption of talks with disciples that had been discontinued after 1926.

1939-45 were the war years. The fluctuating fortunes of the Allies, the performance in several theaters of war, relative merits of statesmen and Generals on two warring sides, the ambiguous gyrations of neutral powers, the impact of war with its vicissitudes on Indian political life, the probable course of future events, all come up for comment day after day. He was critical of weak French leadership, appeasement policy of Chamberlain, of all, he was most critical of Hitler, behind whom were ‘Asuric’ forces.

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During the period of 'phony war' Sri Aurobindo did not actively concern himself with war. But when it appeared as if Hitler might crush all forces opposed to him and create conditions for Nazism to dominate the world, Sri Aurobindo began to intervene, with the help of spiritual powers. He was even critical of those in Ashram who had the sympathy for Hitler. 'Hitlerism is the greatest menace that world has ever met. If Hitler wins, do they think India has any chance of being free?... He is openly talking of world empire'.\(^6^4\) Hitler was the symbol of vital world's descent upon physical. He was also mystic who went into isolation to get massages from Asuric forces. What exactly was the 'spiritual' force used by Sri Aurobindo, how it operated, with what success and with whom remains unclear.

Similarly, because Britain's position in the Far East became vulnerable. In this situation people of India heard different counsels. As Srinivas Ayengar, aptly describes it, 'while Jinnah talked of 'Muslim Nation', Gandhi swore by non-violence. Subhash Chandra Bose had in mean time joined hands with Japanese and formed an "army of liberation" or the Indian National Army. Nehru felt over taken by events and enacted the role of an Indian Hamlet. The question was: were Indians now at least to co-operate to resist a Japanese invasion or were they to welcome Japanese as liberators, or were they to do just nothing'.\(^6^5\) Churchill's offer of 'dominion' status, Cripps Mission were welcomed by Sri Aurobindo. It was good for India, good for Indo-British relations and good for global unity. It was also

\(^6^4\) Ibid., p.677.
\(^6^5\) Ibid., p.680.
good for Hindu-Muslim unity. He sent even special emissary to Delhi. Although the mission actually failed. He said rejection of Cripps mission was loss for India and for world.

Looking at the whole world war, he described it as 'struggle between forces of falsehood and darkness of oppression and degradation and those who stood for free future of humanity'.

'The Allies were by no means blameless paragons' but they happened to be 'on the side of evolutionary forces' however slow, imperfect and hesitating that evolution may look like to some people. Nazi Germany on the otherhand stood 'for reversal of this evolutionary tendency, for destruction of new international outlook and the new Dharma , for a reversion not only to past but to a far-back primitive ,and barbaric ideal'.

The Allies stood for values , however imperfectly they may be realised. Hitler stood for diabolical values; things could be as bad as under them as under Hitler.

The end of war made Sri Aurobindo happy but partition made him unhappy. He agreed to partition but not on the basis of communal consideration. Free India had to perform several goals (conceived in childhood,youth). He described them in natural order as follows: a revolution which would achieve India's freedom and unity; the resurgence and liberation of Asia; the emergence of one world in place of many warring nationalisms; the assumption by India of spiritual leadership of human society. He said 'the partition must and will go'. But it would

66 Ibid., p.683.
67 Ibid., p.683.
68 Ibid., p.687.
come about in a natural way.

The end of second world war, also left Sri Aurobindo to write, 'A Postscript Chapter' to 'The Ideal of Human Unity', which is an interesting survey of the post-second world war world scene. Even though as we have seen Sri Aurobindo was critical of League of Nations, its establishment and continuation without an early breakdown was an achievement. But more interesting was the fact that its sequel U.N.O. could be immediately established. It was a hopeful sign in an era which threatened the breakdown of civilization.

This civilizational crisis was the product of nuclear weapons which has given rise to cold war.

However, even out of third world war, Sri Aurobindo was hopeful, a new world body may emerge. In Sri Aurobindo's view, nature uses such means, apparently opposed and dangerous to her intended purpose, to bring about the fruition of that purpose. 69

In fact Sri Aurobindo warns us about becoming skeptical about U.N.O. However, he was all for removing any defects in U.N.O. immediately. But, 'a too hasty or radical endeavour to get rid of these defects might lead to a crash of the whole edifice'. 70 The U.N.O. was a more universal organization than League but veto was a concession to big powers which could not be avoided.

The third world war may be an instrument used by Nature to build 'eventually at least, a true world state without is

70 Ibid., p.559.
exclusions and on a principle of equality into which considerations of size and strength will not enter.\textsuperscript{71}

'The real danger', according to Sri Aurobindo, 'however lies not in U.N. Assembly but in the division of peoples into two camps which tend to be natural opponents and become declared enemies irreconcilable and even their common existence incompatible'.\textsuperscript{72}

More important, this is because the so called communism of Bolshevik Russia came to birth as the result not of a rapid evolution, but of an unprecedentedly fierce and prolonged revolution which created an autocratic and intolerant state system... and a moral struggle with the outside world'.\textsuperscript{73}

Sri Aurobindo has interesting observations to make on the nature of struggle between U.S.A and U.S.S.R. 'If much of the unease, the sense of inevitable struggle, the difficulty of mutual toleration and economic accommodation still exists, it is rather because the idea of using the ideological struggle as a means for world domination is there and keeps the nations in a position of mutual apprehension... than because the co-existence of the two ideologies is impossible.\textsuperscript{74}' He adds, 'If this element is eliminated, the world in which these two ideologies could live together, arrive at an economic interchange, draw closer together, need not be at all out of question; for the world is moving towards a greater development of principle of state control over the life of community, and a congeries of socialistic states on the one hand, and on the other, of states

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{71} Ibid., p.560.
\bibitem{72} Ibid., p.560.
\bibitem{73} Ibid., p.560.
\bibitem{74} Ibid., p.561.
\end{thebibliography}
co-ordinating and controlling a modified capitalism might well come to exist side by side and develop friendly relations with each other." Even a world-state based on co-existence of these two ideological systems could not be ruled out. U.N.O., too could move in that direction.

The main issue is whether the nation, the largest unit which humanity has been able to create is also its last and ultimate unit or whether a greater aggregate can be formed. 

Even in the past, the tendency to build large aggregate was there. Empire was one such unit. But it has not endured. In actual fact, a new attempt of world wide domination could succeed only by an instrumentation or under novel circumstances in englobing all nations of earth or persuading or forcing them into some kind of union. An ideological domination by Russia would not prove to be enduring. Only formation of true world state or a union of free peoples would prove durable.

Was Sri Aurobindo aware of impact of nuclear weapons? Yes, he considered even possibility of ban on its use. But more likely is the possibility that he even considered the possibility of using it for a possible victory. But he was writing in 1950.

About aggregates larger than nation, he recognized existence of peoples of the American continent and United states of Europe. However, he did not consider latter a complete possibility as the communist world was out of it. Emergence of Asiatic resurgence and its acceptance by U.S. and Europe was a

75 Ibid., p.563.
76 Ibid., p.564.
positive sign. He did not see confrontation between Asia and Europe with the removal of Japan’s military power. The problem in Asia was of two opposing ideologies. Communist ideology with the emergence of China and possibility of a Soviet-China bloc created dangers for South-Western Asia and Tibet, eventually posed a danger to the security of India. Possibility of a world conflict in Asia and postponement of world union were also foreseen by Sri Aurobindo.

An interesting question was, if socialism was extended to all nations, could international unity result from it? Although theoretically possible, there were practical difficulties. In the first place, socialism itself was infected by dividing national spirit. Secondly, there might not be for a long time to come, an inevitable tide in favour of socialism. For example instead of communism, less extreme socialism may become popular. Concept of liberty may pose a threat to communism. Although true communist system has not been tried. Only a rigid system of state socialism has been tried. Sri Aurobindo did not consider generalization of socialism a predominant possibility. There was also a possibility of Marxist groove developing less rigid modes; a co-operative socialism. With America opposed not only to communism but even to moderate socialism, the division into two blocs was the strong possibility.

In spite of this, in spite of limitations of U.N.O., with the nature itself working for larger agglomerations, the largest of all units is bound to be established. If nothing else the
evolutionary nature of things will lead to this. Among other things which will help, 'the necessity is there, at least some general recognition of it has been achieved, the idea has been born, the body is already calling for its creation.'

As far as form of this inevitable, necessary world union is concerned, initially Sri Aurobindo was in favour of confederation but as 'this might give too much room for fissiparous or centrifugal tendencies to operate; a federal order would then be the most desirable'.

All else would be determined by course of events and by general agreement.

For creation of a new world order based on human unity, what would be the dependable factors? What would be the place of internationalism in his vision of human unity? What did he mean by internationalism? How could and through what stages did internationalism develop? What shape it had taken? What was the ideal shape of internationalism? Did it aim at human unity? If it did, how was human unity to be achieved?

He defined internationalism as 'the attempt of human mind and life to grow out of national idea and form and even in a way to destroy it, in the interest of larger synthesis of mankind'.

But before we discuss that an interesting question was on what factors not to base the ideal of human unity or to put it in the other way, what were the inadequate alternatives to human unity? Negatively speaking, did Sri Aurobindo not prefer any particular type of world order?

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77 Ibid., p.570.
78 Ibid., p.571.
79 Ibid., p.525.
(a) Society based on Reason

The present age of mankind can be described as an attempt to discover the right principle and secure foundations of a rational system of society. The progress has been either adaptive or radical. The modern age has been a constant series of radical progressions. The principle of reason has made important contributions. But this led to rule of dominant classes and class war. It lead to increasing stress on competition, rather than ordered conflict. This was because man was not rational enough, identified reason with self interest and tried to enforce it with strife.

Education and training were developed as a means of making man rational. But the absence of equal educational and other opportunities has led to plutocratic tendencies.

Therefore democratic individualism has led to democratic socialism. But socialism led to emphasis on community. This has to be justified by denying the importance of individual except as a member of society. It was felt that ideas of freedom and collective good could be combined.

Liberty as a principle was not found sufficient and equality brought in. But 'an artificial equality has its irrationalities, its contradictions of collective good, its injustice and even its costly violations of truth and nature'.

That is where fraternity came in. But without liberty and equality its value would be diminished. The only liberty left at the end would be freedom to serve the community.

81 Ibid., p.131.
under the rigorous direction of state authority; the only equality would be an association of all alike in a spartan or Roman spirit of civic service; the only brotherhood will be a sense of comradeship in devoted dedication to ... the state'.

The collective principle leads to totalitarianism. In a communist dictatorship it leads to denial of liberty, in a non-communist or Fascist type of dictatorship it leads to denial not only of liberty but also of equality.

Thus, the principle of reason, therefore has not led to ideal society, either national or international. Why? There are some defects in the principle itself.

It is in the nature of reason to challenge the established order of things. As Sri Aurobindo rightly asks, 'whether it will ever be satisfied... unless indeed it sinks back into a sleep of tradition and convention or else goes forward by a great awakening to the reign of a higher spirit than its own and opens into a supranatural or spiritual age of mankind.'

According to Sri Aurobindo, dissatisfaction with the collective principle may lead to intellectual anarchism, 'declaring that government of man by man by the power of compulsion is an evil.... Even the social principle in itself is questioned and held liable for a sort of fall in man'. Sri Aurobindo finds this exclusivist idea inherently wrong.

Intellectual anarchism relies for progress and unity of human society on two factors, of enlightened intellect and human

22 Ibid., pp.191-192.
23 Ibid., p.181.
sympathy. But Sri Aurobindo is not satisfied with this as well. The nature of man is such that factors like ego-force of the infrarational cannot disappear, nor should it disappear altogether. Life then would be dull and poor in vitality. But if not suppressed, it can prevent harmony. Best solution to this would be its transformation, which is beyond the capacity of reason. 34

He sums up the nature of man and the dilemma it creates in the way of ideal united human society: a rational satisfaction can not give him safety from the pull from below nor deliver him from attraction from above. If it were not so, the ideal of intellectual Anarchism might be more feasible as well as acceptable as a theory of what human life might be in its reasonable perfection, but man being what he is, we are compelled in the end to aim higher and go farther. 35

Another limitation of reason is, with its help, complexities of life can not be understood. Reason can observe, analyse and explain. At thought level, it can allow most extreme viewpoint regarding life to co-exist. When knowledge is pursued for its own sake, then alone are we likely to arrive at true knowledge. But when reason seeks to govern life, it is obliged to fix its viewpoint, to crystallise its system...... it mechanises; but while mechanism is a sufficient principle in dealing with physical forces, it can never truly succeed in dealing with conscious life. 36 According to Sri Aurobindo, then it becomes the servant and counselor of forces it studies. 'The

34 Ibid., p.205.
36 Ibid., p.201.
whole difficulty of the reason', according to Sri Aurobindo, 'in trying to govern our existence is that because of its own inherent limitations, it is unable to deal with life in its complexity or in its integral movements, it is compelled to break it up in parts'.\textsuperscript{67} Moreover, 'the logical mind in building its social idea takes no sufficient account of the infrarational element in mass, the vital egoism which) ... defeated in the end all the calculations of the idealizing reason'.\textsuperscript{68}

Finally, Sri Aurobindo concludes, no machinery invented by reason can perfect either the individual or collective man; an inner change is needed in human nature, a change too difficult to be ever effected except by the few'.\textsuperscript{69} If this is not the solution then, there is no solution. Then the terrestrial evolution must pass beyond man, as it has passed beyond the animal and a greater race must come that will be capable of spiritual change, a form of life must be born that is nearer to the divine'.\textsuperscript{70} But Sri Aurobindo feels that if a few can reach divinity, it is worth it. Gradually, descent of divine force will radically alter the life of mankind.\textsuperscript{71}

Religious Idea

It is true that organized religion can provide a means of inner uplift for individual or preserve in it or behind it a way for his opening to spiritual experience, however it has not played that role so far. It could not do so because it had to

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p.161.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p.205.
\textsuperscript{69} Ideal of Human Unity, Op.Cit., p.209.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p.207.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p.207.
compromise with the lower part of life. Religions have tended to be credle and have accumulated lot of local and national historical traditions and hence lack a universally acceptable formula. Followers of various religions have so much hostility towards each other that they can not solve problems of mankind.

Further, religion has encouraged superstitions and has stood in way of philosophy and science. Religious spirit impoverishes joy and beauty of life. In politics religion has worked on the side of power and resisted coming of larger political ideals. It has supported outworn and rigid social systems and has led to the revolt of intellectuals both in the East and West.

Sri Aurobindo does not deny the importance of religion in man’s progressive evolution in the direction of divinity. He distinguishes between religion and religionism. True religion is spiritual religion. Religionism lays exclusive stress on intellectual dogmas, some fixed moral code, some religio-political or religio-social system. They are needed by man because the lower members have to be exalted and raised before they can be fully spiritualised.

But here Sri Aurobindo sees a problem. Sometimes prophets of religion have described spiritually as different from earthly life and hostile to it. So one can reach spirituality only by renouncing lower life. This is a negative contribution of religion. For if it is true that without the higher spirit, lower life cannot be divinised, it is equally true that by

93 Ibid., p.167.
denying lower life, lower is denied opportunity for perfection.94 Similarly, those who guide the lower must have risen from lower but must have sympathy for lower.95 That is why to Sri Aurobindo, the idea of Indian Rishi had an appeal.

Humanism

It is contended at times that humanism can produce solution to mankind's problems. Humanism was a product of Renaissance rationalism and was directed against theological world view of Middle Ages. The main tenet of humanism was to emphasize the worth and creative power of a human being.

Sri Aurobindo does not consider man either as God or as a beast. He is neither virtuous nor sinful as such. Sri Aurobindo is aware of presence of both lower and higher self in man. Sri Aurobindo is not impressed about achievements of man at present but optimistic about his future.

The Age of Reason has given to modern man the cult of humanism which is an offshoot of humanitarianism. Some thinkers point out that humanism means love of learning. Sri Aurobindo is for learning and knowledge. He specifically values tradition. But neither learning and knowledge nor tradition can take the place of direct experience of divine. There, he thinks every man is Yogi, though not a conscious one.

Humanitarianism and Humanism are essential but can't lead us to human unity. They have to be subordinated to spiritualism, if true human unity is to be achieved.

94 Ibid., p.163.
95 Ibid., p.169.
Ethical Idealism

Sri Aurobindo is aware that ethics has performed great services in the evolution of human race. It has checked and neutralised the operations of devil in man. But it can not provide the ultimate solution. A social regulation after all is the product of mental ignorance and half knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo is critical of ethical idealist who selects a fundamental principle of conduct on the basis of intellect, utility, hedonism, reason, intuitive conscience or any other generalised standard.

Sri Aurobindo is not against ethical standard. But he is in favour of real categorical imperative coming from within. The spiritual man is moral not out of fear of social conventions and public opinion. Moral action becomes part of his nature. Ethics according to Sri Aurobindo is based on dualistic and pluralistic assumption of moral agent being separate from the being, with reference to whom, he is practicing ethical conduct. He wants achievement of sense of identity with the spiritual absolute. This identity consciousness would result in identity with spiritual essence of all living creatures. Therefore there is no deliberate moral action but natural moral action.

Science

Science by its very nature is international. Men of science can very easily grow into internationalist spirit. Science has also promoted greater contacts between human beings across the world. It has encouraged cosmopolitan habits and broken barriers of prejudice between peoples of the world. It has provided
many physical amenities to people across the world. Science has created individualistic and collectivist tendencies.

But it has provided weapons of mass destruction. It had helped in creating economic man, industrialism and is also responsible for its evils. Materialism is the offshoot of science. It is the business of science to discover truth. Ultimately it will discover unity of truth and God. But in the meantime, it may deny the existence of God.

However, according to Sri Aurobindo, physical science unaided by higher sources of knowledge can never lead to integral growth of whole being of man. No scientist or materialist thinker can point to mankind its destiny nor the path that leads to its realization. It is only because of this that sickness, dissatisfaction and disillusionment results from materialism.

League of Nations and U.N.O.

Sri Aurobindo is aware of the weaknesses of these organizations. However, creation of such organizations and desire to maintain them, inspite of failure of world organizations in the past is considered to be a good sign by Sri Aurobindo. He also sees the possibilities of world state developing from such organizations. Ultimately, however Sri Aurobindo does not have faith in such institutional mechanisms.

The next question is what type of world order does Sri Aurobindo prefer? Will it be a system of nation states or go beyond it? What shape will it take? How it will be brought about? On what factors would it be based? How will it be related to internal order? What will be the objectives of this internal order? What will be the role of India in this?
Related questions are: What type of internationalism does Sri Aurobindo advocate? Is it hegemonic or revolutionary or liberal or does it go beyond all this?

Sri Aurobindo believes in development of an individual, nation and of mankind as per their nature. "All mankind is one in nature (it has) one destiny. . . . Nothing which any individual race or nation can triumphantly realize... has any permanent value except in so far as it adds something for this human march". 96

Each unit in this world must behave according to an ideal law. As per this, individual has to perfect his individuality and help others in free development of others. Similarly, a nation has to develop itself and help others and be helped by them. And as for the law of humanity, according to Sri Aurobindo, "it is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding of expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not ideally one family, but even then when it has succeeded in unifying itself, to respect, aid and be aided by free growth and activity of its individuals and constituent aggregates." 97 It is Sri Aurobindo's objective to point out to mankind this ideal law, the method of gaining the objective and the difficulties in the way. It is Sri Aurobindo's contention that he has realized all these things, not through rationality but through Yogic experience. Every one ultimately

96 Ibid., p.59.
97 Ibid., p.84.
has to realize divine by his own self. But those who have realized divine or are on the verge of realizing can help others.

The ideal law, according to Sri Aurobindo, has not been realized by imperfect human race. It may be very long before the human race attains it. However, Sri Aurobindo is optimistic about it.

The next important question is why is this movement of mankind towards Unity through divinity essential? Also what makes Sri Aurobindo optimistic about it? Thus there are several related issues to be considered and a critical review is necessary.

The law of humanity, which Sri Aurobindo has described, the law for man is also according to Sri Aurobindo, the law of Nature, although man because of his imperfection may not be able to grasp this completely.

Nature has been defined in various ways. Sometimes nature is taken to be a synonym of the physical universe. Sometimes Nature is regarded as anti-thesis of what is artificial. Nature is also used to denote a realm which is different from super natural realm. Sometimes natural is contrasted with something that is artificial or acquired or civil. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is integral philosophy, most of these meanings are used, and found to interpenetrate and to be interdependent. Material nature is devoid of ethical significance. According to Sri Aurobindo, it is infra ethical in its beginnings and supra ethical at summit.
But most important, man must follow nature, not only because it is useful but because it reveals the will of God. The spirit is the central secret of Nature. Nature is only an outward executive aspect of the universal spiritual force. But nature is not static, it evolves. Man is the last evolute of nature. Man is the first of three constant factors of social evolution. The other two are, community and mankind.

In man two ends of nature meet: the animal sector and the divine sector. Man is also an instrument of nature. Nature becomes self-conscious in man. There is a will and design in nature and this telos finally concretizes itself. Nature has some vital and imminent aims and that segment of humanity which best serves them all will survive in the struggle for mastery. Sri Aurobindo does not put emphasis on biological power of survival but man's spiritual and mental capacity to understand the teleology of evolutionary nature and to co-operate with her.

In the process of historical manifestation, Nature can bring in a series of intellectual and spiritual movements to revive a failing and decaying organism. Sometime it is tired of age long inertia. At times it can destroy. Since evolution proceeds out of unconscious, methods used by Nature may not be ethical. But even these means are used as instruments for an ultimate divine scheme about which man may not be aware of. That is why nature often surprises. Nature evolves. Man also evolves. Man's ideal is same as that of Nature. But in the process of evolution, man has not acquired the capability to understand his own nature. Therefore he thinks and acts in terms of his limited competence. Therefore nature has to intervene to correct man and
guide development in view of divine scheme.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the supermind or sachidananda creates the world. It operates in it secretly. The creative mechanism of supermind operates through the mechanism of involution and evolution. The divine being descends into the inconscience for evolutionary progression. It is involved in inconscience and out of inconscience it evolves again. The concept of involution is based on the same logic that only that can evolve or come out which is already involved. According to Sri Aurobindo, "the Divine descends from pure existence through the play of consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic force; we ascend from matter through a developing life, soul and mind and illuminating medium of supermind, towards the divine being. The knot of the two, the higher and lower hemisphere, is where mind and supermind meet with a veil between them." 98 Existence Matter Consciousness-Force Life Bliss Psyche SuperMind.

Evolution is mechanism of two significant processes, ascent and integration. Ascent signifies the growing manifestation of the inherent unmanifest consciousness-force. This process of ascent is not yet complete in the course of evolutionary progression because the supramental force has not yet descended for the purpose of total transmutation.

Integration as a process signifies reconciliation and harmonization of higher and lower states of being. It means taking up of what had already been evolved into each higher grade.

as it is reached and transformation more or less complete so as to admit of a total changed working of the whole being and Nature. The higher principles descend into lower and makes transformation possible.

There is thus in Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution a triple process of foundation, from that foundation an ascent and then integration. Thereby an evolution in unconscience and evolution in ignorance is replaced by an evolution in knowledge.

In the upper hemisphere, creation is impelled by original and supreme self consciousness of the infinite because it is the work of supermind unadulterated by the least degree of the nescience. In the lower worlds, creation involves the principle of ignorance which is born out of unconscience. This difference between the creative mechanisms of the two worlds necessitates the discovery of hidden or inexplicit spiritual rationale in the facts and events of terrestrial and political history. The spectacle of evil deeds, disasters, catastrophes, retrogressions, violence, hate and frustration is explained by working of the separatist, ego-centric and partial ignorance. The super-terrestrial spheres are not evolutionary but typal, manifest some potency of perfection and do not aspire after transcendence. There is in Sri Aurobindo's perception, no contrast between life and matter, mind and life and supermind and mind - no opposition and complete separation but an evolution.

One of the main principles of Nature is 'Unity in Diversity'. Though, the principle of unity as part of nature is not perceived by man. It is developed as a result of circumstances. Sri Aurobindo perceives that one of the
objectives of evolution, specially of descent of divine into ignorance of inconscient is to participate in Lila. It might be interpreted, as he put it, "the joy of the danger and difficulty and adventure, the will to attempt the impossible, to workout the incalculable, the will to create the new... the fascinations of contradicters and their difficult harmonisation, these things translated into another supraphysical, superhuman consciousness, higher and wider than mental, were the temptation that led to the fall." 99

Sri Aurobindo explains the presence of diversity thus, "Behind everything if life there is an Absolute, the Infinite, which that thing is seeking after in its own way; every thing finite is trying to express an infinite which it feels to be its real truth. Moreover it is not only each class, each type, each tendency in nature that is thus impelled to strive after its own secret truth in its own way, but each individual brings in his own variations". 100 Unfortunately, because of the limitations of reason, as Sri Aurobindo said, "We can only catch a glimpse of her (Nature's) tendencies". However, human being wants to know unlike animals. This mentality itself is part of Nature.

Nature has created three permanent units: Individual, Community and Race. Nature wants harmony within these units and between them. It is only because of the imperfectness of individual and collectivity that smooth relations do not

develop between them. On the other hand, 'There is a struggle, an opposition of ideas, impulses and interests, an attempt of each to profit by various kinds of war on others, by a kind of intellectual, vital, physical robbery and theft or even by the suppression, devouring, digestion of its fellows rather than by free and rich interchange'.

This according to Sri Aurobindo is the aspect of life which humanity in its highest thought and aspirations knows that it has to transcend but has either not yet discovered the right means or has not had the force to apply it. Right now the issue is sought to be solved by subordination of lower units to higher. It is not a proper solution either. The reason is, 'while the life power in man demands diversity, his reason favours uniformity.' Uniformity has to be admitted as necessary due to defects of mentality. But real aim of Nature is unity supporting a rich diversity. Sri Aurobindo feels that socio-historical and political development of society is also leading mankind towards the goal of unity. Although, the social and political man has been moving in the direction of unity, he has not arrived there yet. Mankind has arrived at the crisis of its destiny. Mankind is undergoing evolutionary crisis, because, 'human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way.'

Sri Aurobindo explains the nature of crisis further, 'man has created a system of civilization,'
which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual moral capacity to utilize and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. He adds, 'Science has put at his disposal many potencies of Universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially one, but what uses this Universal Force is a little human or communal ego'. Therefore what results is clash of ideas, systems, classes, nations.

This evolutionary crisis in civilization, according to Sri Aurobindo, is only a symptom of cosmic crisis. Nature has evolved from insconscience into matter, life and mind. However, a higher power, the super mind has not yet evolved. That is why because of inadequacy of instruments, mankind has not been able to solve its problems. Thus to Sri Aurobindo inadequate development of internationalism was related to evolutionary and cosmic crisis.

Sri Aurobindo explains socio-historical development of history in terms of different ages. Each age is symbolic of 'something which human feels to be present behind himself and his life and his activities'. Thus a civilization develops from 'the symbolic period' in which human ideas and institutions bear the stamp of symbolic mind and its intuitive capacity. In the second stage of 'the Typal-conventional Period' is symbolized by social regularizations, arrangement, formalisation, systematization and traditionalism. In India caste system was a product of this age. The next stage was what Sri Aurobindo described as the 'Age of

105 Ibid., p.1053.
106 Ibid., p.1054.
Reason'. The individualism of the new age is an attempt to get back from conventionalism of belief and practice to some solid bed-rock, no matter of what of real and tangible truth'.

It is necessarily individualistic because all the old general standards have become bankrupt. In Europe, age of individual led to triumph of physical science and materialism. This age in Europe made two very important contributions: the democratic conception of rights of individuals. Here, 'the primal law and purpose of individual life is to seek its own development'.

Search for National soul was the by product of this period. Unfortunately because of false subjectivism, it led to satisfaction of ego in conflict with other egoisms. This was due to their ignorance.

The growth of science, on the one side has led to an exaggerated individualism, on the otherhand to opposite ideal of collectivism. In case of Germany, the result was that the individual was subordinated to community, nation state but in the international life it led to egoistic self assertion of individual nation against others. If at internal level, individual egoism has been subordinated to collective entity at international level national egoism has to be subordinated to collective entity. The modern European society has been built upon the principle of reason. Life itself is the object of living. The primary impulse of life is individualistic and family, social and national life are the means of greater

108 Ibid., p.28.
109 Ibid., p.50.
satisfaction of vital individual. The attempt is to make rational, utilitarian, efficient instruction and organization of man and his life. However, even in rational age, suprarational element intervenes, say for example in terms of absolute ideals. They are crossed by imperfection or opposite vital movements. But even the ideals which serve selfishness such as patriotism, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy contain some half seen truth of absolute. That is why competing national units feel the urge of internationalism and human unity.

Thus according to Sri Aurobindo, there are three stages of the social revolution or generally, of human evolution in both individual and society. The evolution starts with infrarational stage in which man has not learned to refer his action in terms of principles and its forms to the judgment of the clarified intelligence. Man proceeds by various stages out of these beginnings towards a rational age in which his intelligent will becomes the judge.

Finally, human evolution must move towards a suprarational or spiritual age. In this age man will develop progressively, a greater spiritual, supra-intellectual and intuitive, perhaps in the end a more than intuitive, a gnostic consciousness.

These stages are not exclusive and absolute. They are not rigidly marked off from each other. They not only arise out of each other but may be partially developed in each other and they come to coexist in different parts of earth at the same time. Only each stage may be marked by predominant play of one
element.

Similarly, there is no continuous progress, there is a danger of relapse as well. For example if democracy and socialism are examples of Age of Reason, totalitarianism suggests a relapse. Only when the whole masses are involved, one can talk of Age of Reason or Infrarational Age.

For the present, according to Sri Aurobindo the present problems of human society come because the spiritual element has been neglected. On the other hand, this evolutionary crisis is being wrongly tackled. For example if the present crisis has been created because science has developed so many things, while man's capacity to tackle them has not advanced. Instead the remedy suggested is 'more and more science, more and more mechanical devices, a more scientific organization of life.' As well to say that 'to carry a disease to its height is the best way to cure it'. Similarly the remedy suggested is rational reordering of societies. Whereas, the real remedy is 'to become ourselves', 'to exceed ourselves'.

A new order will not be easy to bring about. Dissatisfaction with present state of affairs, desire to bring about change, who are convinced that change is needed, to effect it in themselves, to lead others to it and make it the original goal of the race.

The spiritualised society would not have nations fighting with each other but regard them as national souls, who

110 Ibid., pp.173-174.
111 Ibid., p.209.
112 Ibid., p.243.
will grow by helping each other.\textsuperscript{113} This would be the case because in a spiritualised society, men do not live in their egos. Similarly in relation to political units also, the trend has been in the direction of human unity, although it may not be perceptible to everybody. Larger aggregates are not necessarily better than smaller aggregates in everything. On the contrary, small aggregates are favourable to rich and puissant human life. However, practical advantages led to creation of larger aggregates. These advantages are organization, peace, wide-spread security, order and material well being. Larger aggregates are not created voluntarily, although later on they may be supported by all people in territories constituting larger aggregates. However, the trend of larger aggregate is the design of Nature and according to Sri Aurobindo must come about.\textsuperscript{114}

The movement of individual in the direction of human unity is not direct and and immediate but gradual and through lesser aggregates, which act partly as aids and partly as barriers to human unity.\textsuperscript{115} Similarly, creation of larger aggregates does not mean that small are erased. They co-exist. This is explained by Sri Aurobindo, with respect to Nature’s passion for variety, richness, multiformity.\textsuperscript{116} It is not that human unity is only a thing of future. Sri Aurobindo believes that some kind of philosophical Anarchism might have existed. The form of future human unity might be different. History, according to Sri Aurobindo moves in cycles.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.242.
\item \textsuperscript{114} The Ideal of Human Unity, Op.Cit., p.266.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p.257.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p.268.
\end{itemize}
So far Nation is the largest unit created by Nature. However, within nations too, complete unity is not evident. Differences in development of individuals leads to class rule, the basis of which is determined by requirement of Nature at that particular time. \(^2\) However, this is only a temporary necessity as far as Nature is concerned.

When Nature has two elements to reconcile, she tries to do it by balancing. This is true even in the realm of ideas. Even in compromise resulting from strife, each element wants to have maximum say. 'A compromise between two conflicting egoisms and not fusing of them' is the highest ideal we have come so far.

Within a nation, the strife takes place between collective idea and individual idea. Whatever the nature of collectivity, the family, the tribe or city, the nation or the mankind, the strife will be there. Of these two, the state idea was more powerful than the individual idea. But, 'it is the energy of the individual which is the really effective agent of progress'. \(^3\) The state is neither the best mind of nation nor the sum of communal energies. It has the greatest amount of power but least amount of scruples. 'Until recently the organized nation, in its relations with other nations was only a huge beast of prey with appetites which sometimes slept when gorged or discouraged by events but were always its chief reason for existence'. \(^4\) Self-protection and expansion by devouring of others were its dharmas. The state is attempting to be an

\(^{117}\) Ibid., p.269.  
\(^{118}\) Ibid., p.272.  
\(^{119}\) Ibid., p.279.  
\(^{120}\) Ibid., p.280.
intellectual and moral person internally. Even externally events like World war I are forcing it to be an intellectual and moral person. Whatever it may try to be, it is convenience, and rather clumsy convenience, for our common development, it could never be made an end in itself'.

But the more important thing is that because of the above factors, 'it is quiet improbable that in the present conditions of the race a healthy unity of mankind can be brought about by state machinery'.

The problem of human unity according to Sri Aurobindo was twofold. Firstly, there was the question of modification or abolition of collective egoisms already constituted. There was doubt if even external unity could be constituted and at what cost. Secondly, there was a doubt whether a living unity could be constituted by mere economic, political and administrative unification.

According to Sri Aurobindo, there were two types of units. Political, created by circumstances not having a real life within. Empire was one such unit. Real units had a life of their own and not easily destructible. Nation was such a unit. Even the nation was always not a real and vital element. But it has become one due to several factors.

But as far as empire is concerned, Sri Aurobindo was convinced it would not become real. Its problem remains of, 'how to transform the artificial political unity of a heterogeneous empire, heterogeneous in racial composition, language and culture,'
into a real and psychological unity. The Roman empire provided an example not only of Graeco-Roman Unity but also of psychological unity. Introduction of Latin Language, common military and civil privileges, common citizenship were responsible for this in addition to advantages, the empire offered. But this method has become dated, as replacement of local by imperial culture and the speech of the conqueror is now not accepted. Sri Aurobindo felt that, the need of new models could be satisfied by confederal or federal empires. Of course, the question of converting it into a natural and psychological unit remained. Sri Aurobindo considered at one stage even the possibility of converting even the old empires into confederal units as an alternative to independent India and Pakistan, thought it to be a great experiment and if succeeded, it could set a precedent for world union. However, he ruled out unification of nations by a single forceful imperial domination. He considered federation of heterogeneous empires a vague possibility. This was because nationalistic, democratic and socialistic ideas were at work. But imperial idea was also working and even more powerful. Therefore a system of federated empires and free nations was more likely.

A federation of free nations was the ideal. But in a world of inequalities between nations and with the imperial instinct still alive it was not likely to come about. Sri Aurobindo hoped

124 Ibid., p.295.
125 Ibid., p.303.
126 Ibid., pp.316-317.
127 Ibid., p.323.
128 Ibid., p.328.
only for a conversion of a purely political empire into a moral
type. An enlightened view of self interest may make it possible.
Therefore a federation of empires and free nations was not
impossible.

Sri Aurobindo did not put much faith in international
law for better ordering of relations of nations as it required
effective sanctions. A loose federation of European states
suggested after the war, raised the question of feasibility in
formation. But Sri Aurobindo was more worried about its becoming
a tremendously powerful instrument for domination and
exploitation of the rest of the world. \(^\text{129}\) It would awaken egoism
of other continental egoisms such as Asiatic Unity, American
Unity. How right he was about formation of blocs resulting in
other blocs (though the basis of the blocs at present has been
economic)! But his chief objection to the idea of United States
of Europe was that, 'humanity is already seeking to travel beyond
its continental distinctions and make them subordinate to a
larger human aggregate'. \(^\text{130}\) Therefore United States of Europe
would be a reactionary step and would be attended with serious
consequences for human progress. Sri Aurobindo was in favour of
universalistic internationalism and did not favour development of
internationalism in Europe only. 'Such developments set at
brought the new cosmopolitan conditions created by modern culture
and science'. \(^\text{131}\)

Sri Aurobindo felt that steps in the direction of human
unit, were now possible and necessary because of 'an underlying

\(^{129}\) Ibid., p.331.  
\(^{130}\) Ibid., p.331.  
\(^{131}\) Ibid., p.332.
spirit and sense of need in the race. The spirit was created by increased communication and development of wider intellectual ideals and emotional sympathies. The sense of need was partly due to economic and other material changes which render results of divided national life, war, commercial rivalry and consequent insecurity and peril to the complex and easily vulnerable inimical both for economic and political human animal and for the idealistic thinker. The new turn could be attributed to the desire of successful nations to possess the rest of the world by compromise among themselves. Neither economic nor political factors were the real sources of strength. The real strength of the tendency was in the intellectual, idealistic and emotional parts. Economic motives were partly sources of strength but economic motives may become dysfunctional to the cause of human unity. Sri Aurobindo, initially considered only system of federal empires and free nations possible, with an internal arrangement of society and an administrative mould progressing rapidly towards a rigorous state socialism and equality by which the woman and worker will chiefly profit. Sri Aurobindo would not predict when mankind will be able to reach unity. On the other hand he felt that on the way to that goal mankind may produce unexpected revolutions.

In a survey of creation of large aggregates from city state to Empire and Nation, Sri Aurobindo concluded that in ancient world large aggregates such as Roman Empire were created directly from small aggregates without creating necessary

132 Ibid., p.334.
133 Ibid., p.334.
134 Ibid., p.335.
intermediate aggregates and uniformities at center killed vitality in units. The other European cycle of nation building was better and passed through three stages. The first stage progressed through 'a long balancing of centripetal and centrifugal tendencies'. The second stage consisted of 'a movement for unification'. The third stage enjoys 'advantage of unit; and uniformity and safety utilizes possibilities of regional and city life saved from entire destruction from the first'.

However, according to Sri Aurobindo, the nation unit is not formed and does not exist merely for the sake of existing; its purpose is to provide a larger mould of human aggregation in which the race and not only classes and individuals, may move towards its full human development.

Sri Aurobindo, perceived that development of human unity would follow the same course as witnessed in case of development of national unity. For the time being, not only psychological unity but even external unity would not emerge. It is true that idea of human unity was no longer perceived as a fad even by a common man but no long intellectual preparation had taken place. As a result interventional idea was likely to be at a disadvantage, as it was likely to be shaped by mind of the politician with his narrow vision. Unless forced by general opinion, or a powerful interest or by a spell of a great new enthusiasm diffused in the mental atmosphere of the times, the political mind would aim low. It would be satisfied with, as

135 Ibid., p.349.
136 Ibid., p.350.
137 Ibid., p.359.
rearrangement of frontiers, a redistribution of power and possessions and a few desirable or undesirable developments of international, commercial and other relations'. 136

Further, 'passions, hatreds and selfish national hopes raised by war' may be another obstacle to real progress in the direction of human unity. However, there were other factors such as 'exhaustion and internal reaction produced after relaxing of the intensity of the struggle' to counteract this pernicious influence. 139

Further, in international life, even a small radical change may turn out to be an irrevocable departure. On two points, war affected minds of people. It produced a sense of revolt against the possible repetition of this vast catastrophe. It also produced the necessity for finding means to prevent the unparalleled dislocation of economic life of humanity. However, with national egoism still remaining and because of other limitations, the first steps could not be bold. Similarly, with causes and means of conflict remaining, new causes of conflict emerging, steps in unity of mankind taken with the help of political and administrative means could not bring about reign of peace and order dreamt of by idealists. 140

Moreover, as a result of, this loose formation in the direction of unity would have to be strengthened by a second step, a movement towards greater rigidity and restriction of national liberties.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the ideal basis of human unity would be an association of free nations, with founding

136 Ibid., p.363.
139 Ibid., p.364.
140 Ibid., p.370.
motive power of two principles -nationalism and internationalism. But it was a practical impossibility. If any ideal international society was to be formed the right conditions in terms of these principles had to be recognized from the beginning and not left to worked out in a tug of war. But these ideal conditions which demanded, 'a psychological clarity, a diffused reasonableness and scientific intelligence and, above all a moral elevation and rectitude to which neither the mass of mankind nor its leaders and rulers have yet made any approach.' But more important, 'in their absence, not reason and justice and mutual kindliness but the trend of forces and their practical and legal adjustment must determine the working out of this as of other problems'. The problem of nationalism and internationalism was certain to be troubled by claims of other intermediary isms such as Pan-Islamism, Pan-Slavism, Pan-Germanism, Pan-Anglo-Saxonism with a possible Pan-Americanism and Pan-Mangolianism and according to Sri Aurobindo even imperialism not to talk of commercial interests. Sri Aurobindo described them as 'monsters'.

Forces were going to play more important role in creation of human unity than moral principles, reason and justice. These latter served as 'subservient aids', 'battle cries' as 'camouflage'. This was bound to be the case until the average man become more of an intellectual, moral and spiritual being and less predominantly the vital and emotional half-reasoning human animal. Moreover the States and Governments

141 Ibid., p.372.
142 Ibid., p.373.
143 Ibid., p.374.
yield to moral pressure only if they have not to sacrifice their national interests. The world war I was said to be fought on the principle of liberty but it was liberty only for the established nations. As far as liberty for colonies was concerned, even the most advanced intellectuals in imperial countries approve of autonomy for colonies but not complete independence.  

Sri Aurobindo was confident that an international council embodying ideal of human unity would not be democratic. It would be oligarchic with a special role for Great Powers either constitutionally or otherwise. 'All other powers would exist by sufferance or by protection or by alliance'.  

After all, even internally democratic countries have been ruled by oligarchies.

Sri Aurobindo visualized therefore that only if new forces came in to existence, the tendency of large imperial aggregations would end. Then a more feudal world order, a more decentralized world order might emerge, but till then, he visualized the following possibilities:

(a) An imperial nation like England may dominate the world or become 'arbiter of the world';

(b) Two or three imperial nations may dominate the world;

(c) A war of classes may take place, even if increased socialization of governments take place and more nationalization is done. This may result into inter-European or an international conflict. The important question as far as Sri Aurobindo was whether, a strictly unified order will not necessarily involve

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144 Ibid., p.375.
145 Ibid., pp.376-377.
146 Ibid., pp.379-381.
the overriding of liberties of mankind.\textsuperscript{147} If unification proceeded by way of domination of world by one empire, nation or race or by two or three empires such a result was inevitable. In case of imperialism, the people in imperial countries too would lose their liberties. Moreover, man has learnt to assert his freedom after a long endeavour and he is not solicitous about liberty of others. Therefore unification by this measure would be a reactionary step. On the other hand, a combination of free nations and empires, specially if empires tried to be psychological realities. Although the principle of unification, itself would involve curtailment of liberty.\textsuperscript{148} Moreover it was in the nature of each tendency to overassert itself, even to trample upon other tendencies.\textsuperscript{149} Man has become more, a reasoning than a reasonable animal, and he uses reason more to justify strife and mutual contradiction than to arrive at a wise agreement.\textsuperscript{150} His reason is mostly at the mercy of his vital desires and passions, whether it be the cause of nationalism or internationalism. Struggle between principles of uniformity and liberty was inevitable. The circumstances being favourable to principle of uniformity, it would win.\textsuperscript{151} As the principle of liberty was eroded within nations themselves, it would be an additional constraint on principle of liberty at international level.\textsuperscript{152} Another issue that troubled him was the future of nation as a group unit.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., p.383.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., p.385.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p.386.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., p.386.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p.387.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., p.387.
He considered Imperial unities established as a result of partly free and partly forced groupings as a possible but by no means an inevitable next step in the human aggregation, as easier to realize than a united mankind in present conditions, but could serve only two rational purposes, one as a half-way house to the unity of all the nations of the world and an experiment in administrative and economic confederation on a large scale, the other as a means of habituating nations of different race, traditions, colour, civilization to dwell together in a common political family. 153

Several possibilities in relation to future of nation including its survival with less vitality as compared to present, and its total disappearance were considered. Similarly he considered the degree to which the principle of uniformity could go ahead including development of a common language, a central authority which was completely regimental. Growth of science and the triumph of socialistic idea could make this possible. But this disenchantment with socialism could lead to Anarchism or new combinations of freedom and uniformity could emerge.

In any case, 'the principle of free and natural groupings of peoples must be eventual conclusion, the final and perfect basis. It must be so, because on no other foundation could the unification of mankind be secure and sound'. 154 The natural unit in such grouping was bound to be nation as it had been firmly created by Nature with a view to greater unity. Other factors like race, cultural, language, economic

153 Ibid., p.409.
154 Ibid., p.409.
convenience either singly or in combination could not be
decisive.

The precedent of formation of diverse and often
conflicting elements of a people into a single national state
would naturally be determining precedent for formation of single
world-nation and world state.

Favourable circumstances, shock of war, presence of
idea of humanity in the mind of thinkers and favourable
disposition of ordinary men towards this idea because of
necessity made the emergence of world-union possible. The only
question was whether it was going to take the shape of world
state founded upon uniformity or a world union founded upon
liberty and variation in a free and intelligent unity. 155

Sri Aurobindo also considered various other issues—such
as the type of government e.g. Monarchy or Republic would be
suitable in world union, a bourgeoisie government or a socialist
government would be better; and if parliamentary form of
government would be successful or not and whether it would be
oligarchic or equalitarian. 156

Another vital issue discussed by him was the need of
military unification in relation to world state. A related issue
considered was necessary conditions of international peace.
Various ideas put forward at that time (post first world war
scenario) such as responsibility of Germany and breaking of
German militarism (so long as national egoisms were, fields of
political and economic aggrandizement were there, wars would
155 Ibid., pp.441-442.
156 Ibid., pp.443-451.
establishment of a League of free and democratic nations (Are bourgeoisie democracies less war minded than monarchies?)
right of self-determination (not capable of universal application at present); socialism (until now socialism has been international and pacific, but possession of power is the greater test of idealisms and so far no religious or secular idealism has withstood it or escaped diminution and corruption). However, possession and concentration of military power by world government would be the first necessity.

In addition to concentrating military force in its hands, the world state according to Sri Aurobindo ought to commence consciously in the beginning what the nation state arrived at by a slow and natural development, ordering of commercial, industrial and economic commerce and ultimately the whole economic system and its principles.157 Force and coercion of any kind, he said, 'not concentrated in the hands of a just and impartial authority are always liable to abuse and misapplication'.

Although Sri Aurobindo was critical of the increasing impact of commercialism in modern economic life and an economic view of life,158 he recognized the contribution the economic factors made to the cause of internationalism. The impact had been 'to bind together the human race into a real economic unity'. But 'this was a subconscient unity of inseparable interrelations and of intimate mutual dependence, not any oneness of spirit or of the conscious organized life.159

157 Ibid., p.470.
158 Ibid., p.467.
Sri Aurobindo also examined the question of International Administrative Authority, which he felt, once constituted, would not confine itself to limited functions. In his analysis of likely reasons, he stated, 'the desire of powerful nations to use it for their own purposes, the utility for weaker nations of appealing to it for protection of their interests, the shock of actual or threatened internal disturbances and revolutions would help to give the international authority greater power and provide occasions for extending its normal action'.

Prophetic words not in terms of unity of any international authority to be constituted but already constituted and in terms of demands on internationalism made by nation states even today!

Nationalism was going to be more an obstacle in the process of human unity as compared to pettier and less firmly self-conscious groupings which preceded the developed nation state.

Ideas and forces, however were working for subordination of nationalism. Regarding the functions to be handled by world authority and other units, matters of political system, social and cultural system were to be tackled by states. But international authority was not going to be a nominal body. It was to deal even with such subjects as international crime. Sri Aurobindo felt that even principle of political non-interference would not be admitted. 'The opposite principle of interference is slowly erecting itself into a conscious rule of international

159 Ibid., p.471.
life'. The interference could take place not on ground of national interest but on ground of some principle or political ideology. As the life of race became more unified, the idea of common interest of race in internal affairs of nation was likely to increase. If the idea of socialism got accepted in major countries, interference from these countries in backward countries was likely to increase. Similarly these countries were also likely to come into conflict with capitalist countries. Under circumstances of international socialism, neither politics nor social life was likely to escape the centralized control. Anyway differences in culture between European countries themselves or between occident and orient were narrowing down. Race sense might not give in easily but would be affected by intellectual, cultural and physical intercourse. Thus Sri Aurobindo was highly optimistic about emergence of human unity.

Sri Aurobindo considered socialistic world state as an extreme form of state ideas. On the other hand in Asia, although there were peoples, nations, with a common soul-life, a common culture, a common social organization, a common political head but not nation states. Some such principle also was possible for world. Then world would be a single human people with a free association of its units. The other possibility was that instead of nation, some new group unit may emerge.

Sri Aurobindo was not in favour of world state. He knew that such a state would have the same advantages as Roman Empire but some disadvantages as well. Even if the world state assumed democratic form, it would annihilate liberty. Present day

160 Ibid., p.478.
democracies suffered from tyranny of majority. Democracy offered freedom of thought, speech which were important. As long as they were there society would not be stagnant. But an all regulating static, a socialistic world state would not permit it.

However, Sri Aurobindo felt that unity and not uniformity was the law of life. Life existed by diversity. The best thing was to avoid excesses.

The process of formation of world union was likely to be different from that of nation. As in case of nation, although many small groups lost their identity, many nations survived. In case of world union, diversity may disappear. 161

He also discussed the means for preserving group freedom when larger aggregates were to be formed. Nationalism and particularism were to be preserved but separatism was not to be encouraged.

He saw the struggle before the war in terms of imperialism vs. nationalism, although imperialism was only the aggressive and expansive aspect of nationalism. The European states were ready to make some changes in the maps but no radical transformation. They announced the principle of free nationality. But after the war, it only meant that, the existing tendency of nationalism would get extension by creation of a number of new independent nations; the existing tendency of imperial aggregation would gain a far greater extension by the expansion of actual territory, world wide influence and international responsibilities of successful examples. 162 The third world

161 Ibid., pp.493-499.
162 Ibid., p.506.
countries became victims of these states. On the positive side, was the influence of U.S.A., pacific and non-imperialistic (although becoming imperialistic) idealistic and who even considered ideas as national interests. But U.S. influence would not be sufficient as U.S. would have on its side status Quoist powers, Russian influence would help as she tried to be free from reserves of diplomacy and self-interest and who not only preached self determination but practiced it. The Russian influence would be the most important anti-imperialistic influence. If Sri Aurobindo was keen to preserve the particularist tendencies of nationalism, he was against hegemonic internationalism. His admiration for Russian Revolution was based on this. It was based on principle of free confederation. It emphasized the primacy of psychological and moral principle cemented by vital and physical necessities. Sri Aurobindo realizes and is critical of the way in which it was effectuated in Russia. But the value of Principle was emphasized. It was as he said, a more advanced, a moral principle, than the aggressive nationalism which was all the international result of the French Revolution, it has a greater meaning for the future.

It is true that circumstances may demand a union out of necessities. But as the principle of free association was not the basis on which the union was created, such a union may not became durable. There may be a revival of separatist tendencies in a rigidly unified union. On the otherhand, a free world union

163 Ibid., p.509.
164 Ibid., p.518.
may start from the national basis because of the way in which it is created, may gradually result in disappearance of the national principle itself. The change may result in growth of living idea of religion of humanity. Internationalism, as an idea according to Sri Aurobindo was an outcome of the European mind. He defined internationalism as, 'the attempt of the human mind and life to grow out of national idea and from and even in a way to destroy it in the interest of the larger synthesis of mankind'. For such an idea to have impact, an alliance with some actual force or developing power, whose aim may be different was necessary. In the process, it does not come into effect in the pure form.

The internationalist idea was born out of French Revolution. But there was no strong force in life to support it. Therefore what came out was a complete and self-conscious nationalism and not internationalism. Only in the 19th century, when it was possible to have an alliance with socialism and anarchism, the idea assumed a clear body and a vital force. Here it became intolerant of nationalism and contemptuous of patriotism, a corporate egoism, which created strife between nations, a product of past, which the growth of reason was destined to destroy. Thus it was futurist in view.

Sri Aurobindo however estimated the power of the idea correctly. 'As the human being is now made, the pure idea, though always a great power, is also afflicted by a great weakness. It has an eventual capacity, once born of taking hold of

165 Ibid., pp.523-524.
166 Ibid., p.525.
the rest of the human being and forcing him in the end to acknowledge its truth and make some kind of attempt to embody it, that is its strength'. Its weakness was that as mankind now lived in its vital point, the idea looked abstract and remote.

Time was ripe according to Sri Aurobindo for the progress of internationalism as the forces favourable for it were working. These included increase in contacts and communication between nations, development of science and scientific community, growth of knowledge and cosmopolitan habits, a slow realization of its true function by religion were some of them. However, internationalism as an idea has remained confined to few intellectuals and politicians in favour of the idea have adopted it as a measure of expediency but mankind in general has not made it a part of its psychology.168

The alliance of socialist cause with internationalism proved to be illusory. When put to test, socialists were found to be nationalists at heart. Russian socialism, although it too had stronger root of internationalistic feeling, attempted 'development of Labour rule on the basis of purified nationalism, non-aggressive except for revolutionary purposes and self-contained, and not on the larger international idea'.169 More important, according to Sri Aurobindo, 'the triumph of socialism is not bound up with the progress of internationalism..... socialism is an outgrowth of national, not of the internationalist idea'.170

167 Ibid., p. 526.
168 Ibid., p. 527.
169 Ibid., p. 528.
170 Ibid., p. 529.
The weakness of the present internationalist idea has been that it has been encouraged by emergencies like war. Until, the idea took shape in human psyche, 'progress would take place in external adjustments, more in the use of ideal for mixed and egoistic purposes than at once or soon in a large and sincere realization of the ideal'. 171

Can the idea of internationalism be made a part of human nature? It was a difficult assignment. Family, clan, tribe all had its origin in vital need. The idea of nation did not arise from our vital nature, but from a secondary or even tertiary necessity. 'It had to be created most commonly by force, force of circumstances partly no doubt but also by physical force, by the power of king and the conquering tribe converted in to a military and dominant state or else it came by a reaction against force'. 172 But the necessity was there. Later on psychological unity also developed, the soul of nation. 'Without such a soul, such a psychological force and presence within the frame, there can be no guarantee of durability. Without it, 'what circumstances have created, circumstances easily will destroy'. 173

In case of international unity, even the necessity was much less compelling than any that preceded it. There was no vital necessity. There was no geographical necessity in the real sense. The need was economic, political, mechanical which under certain circumstances could create tentative framework. Moreover

171 Ibid., p.530.
172 Ibid., p.532.
173 Ibid., p.532.

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it is not sufficiently vital to be precisely a necessity; for it amounts mainly to a need for the removal of certain perils and inconveniences, such as the constant danger of war, and at most to a strong desirability of international co-ordination.\textsuperscript{174}

Of course, the most positive factor in favour of international unity was, an internal necessity into being 'to unify himself with others of his species, to join himself to them or agglutinate them to him, to create human groups, aggregates and collectivities'.\textsuperscript{175} This will, according to Sri Aurobindo, was often quiet conscious or foreseeing, largely subconscious. But if it got into conscious mind, as it had then, a rapid evolution could be predicted. Such a will in nature would itself create circumstances.

Was there an existing framework which can help the idea of international unity, a body in which soul could find its place? An imperial structure dominating the whole world would not work, though a compromise between three or great empires could work. League of Nations meant control by big powers. Development of socialist Movements with the twin objectives of labour rule and Internationalism was a positive development. 'A general victory of socialist idea or other, seeking to organize humanity according to its own model or by any other yet unforeseen way, a sufficient formal unity might come into existence'.\textsuperscript{176}

The real problem was that of creating a real, living unity out of the formal unity.\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., p.533.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., p.534.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., p.537.
concerned, they could be developed or may develop but die as well. Therefore a psychological reality able to survive has to be created. The psychological unity will also be essential, as creation of World State itself will not mean end of problems, although such a state could give peace, security, and economic well-being. For human instinct for liberty, his separative instinct and his ego would not disappear easily.

It is possible that indispensable inner factor might be created in the process of growth itself. But psychological elements would be required to be present in great strength... to make the change persist”. A religion of humanity would satisfy such a requirement; a recognition of single soul in humanity, of which each man and each people is an incarnation and soul form; an ascension of man beyond the principle of ego which lives by separativeness and yet there would be no destruction of individuality.  

This religion of humanity, was not to be an intellectual and sentimental ideal, which is an 19th century product. The Age of Reason gave birth to Humanitarianism. According to Sri Aurobindo, the fundamental idea behind is that mankind is godhead to be worshipped and served by man. No other idol, neither the nation, the state, the family nor anything to take its place; they are worthy of respect so far as they are images of human spirit and enshrine its presence and aid its self-manifestation. Democracy, socialism, pacifism were its by

177 Ibid., p.540.  
178 Ibid., p.540.  
179 Ibid., p.542.  

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products. Sri Aurobindo was appreciative of the religion of humanity born in the Age of Reason. It was critical of the present; future oriented, led to humanized society, legal system and punishment, war and made it an interlude; spread enlightenment and emphasized dignity of mankind.

However, its major failure has been that, it has been unable to curb the human egoism, of individual, class, nation. The question was whether a purely intellectual religion of humanity could do this. 'It does not get at the center of man's being'. The aim of the religion of humanity were formulated in 18th century. It was to recreate human society; in the image of ideal of liberty, equality and fraternity. None of this has been won. The religion of humanity with an intellectual orientation has only secured mechanical liberty and equality. Fraternity is claimed to be non-practicable and only mechanical principle of equal association is offered. The approach has been to 'work on the machinery of life and on the outer mind much more upon the soul of the race'. 180 It has laboured to establish a political social and legal liberty, equality and mutual help in an equal association.

But these three ideals can not be achieved through external machinery or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and communal ego." when the ego claims liberty, it arrives at competitive individualisms. When it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at attempt to ignore variations of Nature, and as the sole way of doing that successfully , it

180 Ibid., p.546.
constructs an artificial and machine-made society. A society that
persues liberty as an ideal is unable to achieve equality; a
society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice
liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity is to speak of
something contrary to its nature. Yet, brotherhood was the
key to the religion of humanity. Brotherhood exists only in the
soul and by the soul. "When the soul claims freedom," observed
Sri Aurobindo, "it is the freedom of its self-development, the
self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it
claims equality what it claims is that freedom equally for all
and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all
human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding
that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a
common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the
recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are
in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are
the eternal attributes of the spirit. It is the practical
recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man
and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his
ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to
which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can
fulfill itself in the life of the race." 182

Thus, according to Sri Aurobindo, the human unity was
to come through the workings of Nature. Two helpful factors in
bringing this about were the increasing closeness of common
interests of mankind and secondly, the force of common uniting

181 Ibid., p. 545.
182 Ibid., pp. 546-547.
sentiment. The latter could come either as originating or contributing cause or may come afterwards as a cementing result. There were circumstances already leading mankind to unity. If mankind was to avoid catastrophes like world war, a unified order was inevitable. In addition, an intellectual religion of humanity had already emerged, clearly in minds of few, vaguely in minds of others, which in its extreme form thought of destroying the Nation altogether. This made eventual unification inevitable.

The form this could take could be a repetition of past experience. A world state might emerge the way the Nation state emerged. It could also develop in a special way. Sri Aurobindo considered three possibilities, namely, a centralized World-State or a looser world-union which may be either a close federation or a simple confederation. Sri Aurobindo’s initial preference was for confederation, although all the three systems had its disadvantages. The first might kill variety, the second would give less scope to variety and last would be too ready a handle for centrifugal forces. Any form developed for the cause of unity of mankind would not be an enduring one unless accompanied by a religion of humanity. It had only emerged. However, the intellectual form it had taken was not the final solution of the problem. ‘For the rational idea always ends as a captive of its machinery... A new idea with another turn of the logical machine results against it and breaks up the machinery but only to substitute in the end another mechanical system, another credo, formula and practice’. 183

183 Ibid., p.554.
Only a spiritual religion of humanity was a solution. It means, 'the growing realization that there is a secret spirit, a divine Reality in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human beings are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here'. Knowledge and feeling of brotherhood of man in terms of same divine spirit dwelling in all his essential. The realization of this may take time. Until then attempt to bring about unity by mechanical means must proceed. But a unity brought about by these means can only be temporary.

In a 'Post Script Chapter' written for 'The Ideal of Human Unity', Sri Aurobindo was optimistic about prospects of internationalism. The very fact that mankind was creating world bodies and modifying them, was a good omen. But unless these bodies became universal in membership and embodied the spirit of equality, they could not prove successful. Whether talking in terms of past, present or future, Sri Aurobindo was not in favour of hegemonic internationalism, although he was not biased against it and even considered the possibility of such a form of internationalism contributing to human unity, however unsatisfactory it might be. His assessment and prediction about the survival of imperialism made in the post first world war period, did not prove correct. He considered imperialism as contributing to human unity, only if imperialism changed its character.

Sri Aurobindo was in favour of democratic and universalistic internationalism (although he understood the
phenomena of hegemonic internationalism in terms of circumstances.) The modern weapons of destruction made hegemonic imperialism impossible, it would not be possible also because now West had accepted the emergence of Asia, and as Asia did not seem to be as strong as was initially thought (the fall of Japan). On the contrary, as a Realist he could foresee, the emergence of Russia and China as threat to North Asia. Thus although he did visualize cold war conflicts, Monroe doctrine or intra Asian conflicts as occasions for hegemonic internationalism he did not think such efforts would succeed. Sri Aurobindo also considered the revolutionary internationalism. He was critical of cold war which had its basis, a world divided into groups.

He saw reduction in hostilities in the cold war in future as the countries of the world were converging on the basis of socialist idea. On the other hand, he also saw the possibility of socialism becoming less rigid. But he also saw the possibility of end of ideological warfare on the basis of development of tolerance by both sides of each others ideology and systems which according to Sri Aurobindo, with the development of State idea in all countries were not going to be that hostile to each other. This would be helped by Soviet Union feeling more secure. However, he did not see the end of cold war to be imminent and considered cold war as an obstacle to world state. Further, he considered development of revolutionary socialist internationalism as possible but not inevitable in the sense of it spreading everywhere and was not confident of its contribution. Socialism after all was a product of the Age of
Reason and unity of mankind could not be brought out on a long term basis by this factor. Further the convergence of socialism and internationalism was only a coincidence, although ideology of socialism could help the internationalist idea to spread. Socialism was basically an idea which had grown out of the state idea. On the other hand, the idea of internationalism developed out of the idea of nationalism. Ultimately the question was whether out of the internationalist idea, an aggregate greater than Nation would emerge or not.

Sri Aurobindo was optimistic about the prospects of internationalism. His optimism was based on several factors. Circumstances such as fear of catastrophic wars, reduction in cold war hostilities and increased tolerance, economic interdependence and increased communication were some of them. Creation of aggregates like League and U.N.O. and its preservation without permanent rejection showed that internationalism had come to stay. The development of religion of humanity, even though with an intellectual orientation was a positive development. The internal need of a man to find happiness in association with others too promoted human unity. Finally, the imperative of evolution itself would categorically lead mankind to unity. The question of modalities would be taken care of by Nature. Sri Aurobindo had his own preferences. In the 'Post Script Chapter', Sri Aurobindo revised his opinion and opted for federal structure, instead of confederal structure. The latter would encourage centrifugal tendencies too much. On the other hand, the federal structure would take of both of need for unity and diversity. Once structure was developed, structure
itself may partially help develop the spirit of human unity.

Having considered Sri Aurobindo's views on internationalism and more particularly his perception that the ideals could culminate in human unity on an enduring basis if human unity was conceived in a spiritual sense, the question remains: Who could contribute to the bringing about of this divine unity of mankind? Was the West capable of bringing about or was it the destiny of the East? What was India's role? What was the role of leaders? What was the role of the masses? What would be instrumentalities used in the process?

We have already examined the role of circumstances, the role of Nature and the process of evolution, the role of social and political evolution in particular. Sri Aurobindo emphasized the spiritual element as most essential for building human unity. Sri Aurobindo tried to assess the contribution, Europe and Asia could make to this cause. The relationship between these two has been of conflict. Both have tried to 'conquer, assimilate, and dominate' each other.135 'All Asia has always had the spiritual tendency in more or less intensity' and in this essential matter, 'India is the quintessence of Asiatic way of being'. Europe too had her share of spiritual element in the past, but 'since some centuries Europe has become material, predatory, aggressive and has lost the harmony of inner and outer man which is true meaning of civilization and efficient condition of true progress'.136 On the otherhand India in particular has never

136 Ibid., p.4.
shared in Asia's attacks upon Europe. Her interest has been in cultural conquest.

There has been a difference between the Western and the Eastern approach to life. West has relied on an ordered use of knowledge for a progressive social efficiency which will make his brief existence more efficient, more tolerable, more comfortable, happier, better appointed, more luxuriously, enriched with pleasures of the mind, life and body. Material comfort, material progress, material efficiency have become gods of her worship. This does not mean that Eastern or Indian traditions believe in poverty or anything like that. Also, when one does say that some culture gives importance to material or spiritual culture, it does not mean that culture which puts emphasis on material excludes spiritual element or vice versa. It is a question of difference of viewpoints regarding existence. As Sri Aurobindo, put it, "the spiritual viewpoint holds that mind, life and body are man's means and not his aims and that even they are not his last and highest means; it sees them as his outer instrumental self and not his whole being. It sees infinite behind all things finite and adjudges the value of finite by higher infinite values of which they are imperfect translation. It sees a greater reality, not only behind man and the world but also within man and the world, and the soul in man it considers to be of highest importance which every thing else in him must try to bring about and this soul man must try to see, unite with it and in it to find his unity with his fellows". 138

137 Ibid., p.13.
138 Ibid., p.428.
As Sri Aurobindo was worried about civilizational crisis facing the mankind and as his ultimate concern was with the problem of unity of mankind based on human perfection, he considered the question 'whether a unified world culture was not the large way of future'. Having noted that the Western approach was materialistic and the Easter spiritual, he asked the question, 'whether, an exaggeratedly spiritual or an excessively temporal civilization be the sound condition of human progress or human perfection'. He felt that, 'a happy or just reconciliation would seem to be a better key to a harmony of spirit, Mind and Body'.

Behind Sri Aurobindo's concern for internationalism in terms of development of world culture or cultural synthesis lay Sri Aurobindo's concern for India mainly but in general for Asia as also his perception of India's role in this world culture.

Sri Aurobindo is not completely enamoured of the India. As he put it, 'from the viewpoint of evolutionary future, European and Indian civilizations at best only have been half achievements, infant dawns pointing to mature sunlight that is to come. Neither Europe nor India nor any race, country or continent of mankind has ever been fully civilized'.

The spiritual advance of humanity took place by stages. The three stages were: conflict and competition, concert, sacrifice. The second stage had hardly commenced. Individuals might have reached the higher stage but not the whole communities. Concert or unity may come in good time but 'it must

188 Ibid., p.4.
199 Ibid., p.130.
be an underlying unity with a free differentiation'. 'One should not follow a law or principle involuntarily or ignorantly'. It would end in self destruction.\(^\text{191}\)

This was India's problem. In this stage of transition from stage of conflict to concert she had been physically occupied by Europe. Necessarily she was facing cultural assault. As per Nature's law, she could not remain sharply separatist. But there was the danger not only in India but elsewhere where of 'a swallowing unification'.\(^\text{192}\) Sri Aurobindo was afraid that a rationalised and Westernized India, a brown ape of Europe, might emerge with retaining only some elements of her ancient thought to modify but no longer to shape and govern her total existence.\(^\text{193}\) According to Sri Aurobindo, the dominant motive of India was and must remain spiritual.\(^\text{194}\) This she must do by aggressive defence and not by way of static defence otherwise he was afraid, India would lose her vitality.\(^\text{195}\)

His internationalism was thus inspired by his national concern. But ultimately that national concern was for the good of the humanity. India, according to Sri Aurobindo declined not because she did not pay sufficient attention to the material world but because she did not give sufficient importance to spiritual element. The 'dwindling of the spiritual impulse' was her problem.\(^\text{196}\) Her treatment of untouchables was an example of this.

\(^{191}\) Ibid., p.5.
\(^{192}\) Ibid., p.10.
\(^{193}\) Ibid., p.19.
\(^{194}\) Ibid., p.417.
\(^{195}\) Ibid., pp.20-21.
\(^{196}\) Ibid., p.433.
The European mind believed in principle of growth by struggle but Indian culture proceeded on the principle of a concert that strove to find its place in unity and reached out again towards some greater oneness.\(^{197}\) Its aim was a lasting organization that would minimise or even eliminate the principle of struggle. Its problem was that unfortunately 'it ended by achieving peace and stable arrangement through exclusion, fragmentation and immobility of status; it drew a magic circle of safety and shut itself up in it for good. In the end it lost its force of aggression, weakened its power of assimilation and decayed within its barriers'.\(^{198}\) A static and limited concert, not always enlarging herself became her problem. Therefore even a defensive reaction of an Indian now which approved everything Indian was understood by Sri Aurobindo and was not approved.\(^{199}\)

Thus his internationalism involved rejection of isolationism, or a mere consideration of national good or national interest. What India required was 'a greater outward expression of spiritual and physical oneness, but with a diversity which the mechanical mode of Europe does not tolerate and seek unity not by accommodation of conflicting interests and through the force of mechanical institutions but on the basis of spiritual factor.'\(^{200}\)

Sri Aurobindo also had a typical vision of the process of the synthesis which ought to take place in any international clash of cultures. In this climate of internationalism, \(^*\)

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197 Ibid., p.36.
198 Ibid., p.38.
199 Ibid., p.415.
200 Ibid., p.33.
certain amount of imitation, a great amount even, was a biological and a psychological necessity. But if there is a mechanical imitation, the inactive or weaker culture perishes.

Sri Aurobindo considers the formula of taking good and leaving bad as crudity. This is because we can not take over good of anything or say, for example of European Industrialism without taking bad of the same.

What I mean by assimilation, he said, 'is that we must not take it crudely in European forms, but must go back to whatever corresponds to it, illumines its sense, justifies its highest purport in our spiritual conception of life and existence and in that light work out its extent, degree, form, relation to other ideas, applications.' He gives an example to illustrate. Democracy can be included if it was part of our tradition and in a suitable way. Sri Aurobindo not only discussed the possible combination of East and of India in particular in bringing about a new world-culture, a new divisioned society, a world based on human unity but was not unaware of the difficulties in the way. The whole societies had to be divinised and not some individuals. It was not difficult for individuals to see the absolutes of everything but not so easy for societies. Even in India, as Aurobindo saw it, the masses were merely aping West.

How to solve this problem of human unity? The evolution of man up to the present and the way he has developed, he could not solve this problem. He must evolve further, either in the present human form or in some different form altogether. In this

201 Ibid., p.389.
the individual is the key to evolutionary movement, for 'it is
the individual who finds himself, who becomes conscious of
reality. The movement of the collectivity is a largely sub
conscious mass-movement; it has to formulate and express itself
through individuals to become conscious: its general mass-
consciousness is less evolved than the consciousness of the most
developed individuals, and it progresses in so far as it
develops what they develop'.

Therefore utmost individual perfection should be first goal. But this is not enough.
Individual's relations with all around him should be the second
goal. Lastly, there must be a change in the total life of the
community.

It is the second part-change in individual's relations
with community and change in the total life of the community
which is more difficult. This can occur only if what Sri
Aurobindo describes as gnostic beings appear, not only a few
isolated evolved individuals but many gnostic individuals appear
, forming 'a new kind of beings and a new common life superior
to present individual and common existence'.

The gnostic human being would be in unison and communication with the consciousness
-force that is at the root of everything.

Only by developing, a higher consciousness, going
beyond our nature, we can solve problems of mankind. It does not
mean that urge to union is not there in Nature and forces are not
there. But 'we can construct nothing which goes beyond our

203 Ibid., p.1031.
204 Ibid., p.1037.
nature; imperfect we can not construct perfection, however wonderful may seem the machinery our mental ingenuity involves, however externally effective. The height to which a man can go, with the present state of consciousness is well described by Sri Aurobindo, "Individual and group harmonies of a comparative and qualified completeness are created, a social cohesion is established; but in the mass the relations formed are constantly marred by imperfect sympathy, imperfect understanding, gross misunderstandings, strife, discord and unhappiness. It can not be otherwise so long as there is no true union of consciousness founded upon a nature of self-knowledge, inner mutual knowledge, inner realisation of unity, concord of our inner forces of being and inner forces of life. In our social building we labour to establish some approach to unity, mutuality, harmony because without these things there can be no perfect social living, but what we build is a constructed unity, an association of interests and egos enforced by law and custom and imposing an artificially constructed order in which interests of some prevail over interests of others, and only a half accepted half enforced, half natural half artificial accommodation keeps the social 'being. Between community and community there is a still accommodation with a constant recurrence of strife of collective ego with collective ego." 206

On the other hand in gnostic communities, there would be diversities but no discord because it would be a diversity of one.

205 Ibid., p.1034
206 Ibid., p.1035
truth of knowledge.\textsuperscript{207} There would be no ego insistence of personal idea.

'The gnostic individual would be in the world and of the world, but would exceed it in his consciousness and live in his self of transcendence above it.'\textsuperscript{208} The gnostic being has the will of action but also the knowledge of what is to be willed and the power to effectuate its knowledge; it will not be led from ignorance to do what is not to be done. Moreover its action is not the seeking for a fruit or result, its joy is in being and doing, in a pure state of spirit, in pure act of spirit, in the pure bliss of spirit.'\textsuperscript{209}

It does not mean that a community or communities of gnostic being will suddenly come into existence and will be universal.

The birth of gnostic being is related to the process of evolution, an evolution from consciousness of a mind to supermind through several intermediate stages, as Sri Aurobindo observed, 'it is conceivable indeed that without the descent, by a secret pressure from above, by a long evolution, our terrestrial Nature might succeed in entering in to a close contact with the higher now superconscient planes and a formation of subliminal overmind might take place behind the veil, as a result a slow emergence of consciousness proper to these higher planes might awake on our surface'. But it would be a long process and superior mentalisation might be subject to principle of inferior mentality. 'For a real transformation there must be a

\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., p.1032.
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid., p.972.
\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., p.976.
directed and unveiled intervention from above, there would be necessary too, a total submission of lower consciousness.\textsuperscript{210} That is lower parts must agree to be transformed. The descent of supermind will have its own consequences for the whole principle of evolution. The gnostic being will seek harmony in his inner and outer life and in group life but also with surviving world of ignorance. Because the gnostic consciousness would help him perceive the evolving truth and principle of harmony hidden in the formations of ignorance.\textsuperscript{211}

Otherwise, the normal process of evolution would be a slow one, including ascent of soul to a higher status, but descent of higher consciousness so gained to take up and transform the inferior nature.\textsuperscript{212}

A supramental change of the whole substance takes place when supermind in Nature emerges to join supramental light descending from supernature. The individual must be the instrument and first field of transformation but isolated individual transformation is not enough and may not be wholly feasible.\textsuperscript{213} Even when achieved it will not be permanent, unless he becomes a sign for the establishment of supramental consciousness Force as an overtly operative power in the terrestrial workings of Nature, as mind has become the operative power through evolution of Life and Matter.\textsuperscript{214} There must be an emergent supramental consciousness Force liberated as active

\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., pp.921-922.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., p.970.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., p.957.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., p.952.
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., p.962.
within the terrestrial whole and an organized supramental instrumentation of spirit in the life and body. Till then any intermediate change must be partial and insecure.  

Yoga was an instrument to make one fit instrument for higher truth. In 1926 on July 13, Sri Aurobindo said that he was bringing down higher spiritual force in to earth plane and physical being and one had to sit down to it and call it down and hold it.  

As a matter of fact, it could not be delayed. The whole adventure of transformation of consciousness—the mind's movements, the conflicting pulls of the vital, the bodies cells with their molecular energies: the charging of all these with the truth and effectivity of supramental consciousness so that no thought, no vital desire, no cellular activity might accomplish anything other than what is true, what is right and fully purposive this adventure was the pith and marrow of the Yoga and for complete success in it, the aspiration, the descent and transformation had to be total. Even if one individual could succeed, the benefits would flow to the whole world.  

How would humanity benefit from descent of supermind? In Sri Aurobindo's vision of internationalism, the descent of supermind would benefit not only the mankind but the animal world and plant world. It would not only establish supermind and supramental race of beings upon earth, it could bring about an

215 Ibid., p.962.
217 Ibid., p.528.
218 Ibid., p.523.
uplifting and transforming change in the mind itself, and ... the mental being...in principles and forms of his living, his ways of action and the whole build and tenor of his life. As to the question, 'whether the whole humanity would be touched or only part of it ready for the change would depend on what was intended or possible in the continued order of the universe. If the old evolutionary principle or order must be preserved and only a section of the race would keep the old human position, level and function in the ascending order... But even so there must be a passage or bridge between two levels or orders of being by which mind would be capable of contacting... supramental truth.... Supermind is here veiled behind a curtain... though true cause of creation here... But in a world where supermind has made its appearance... A total change of the mental principle can not be ruled out as impossible.  

However, this would not alter the evolutionary order. It may be alleged that transformation of mankind into a gnostic race would leave a gulf between the man and the animal. This would not be the case. According to Sri Aurobindo, there would be a saltus between different orders, Matter and the plant, the plant and lower animals, one species of animals and another and between highest animal and man.

Of course in such an evolutionary order, no leap would be possible from animal mind to supermind. But as a result of descent of supermind in the earth nature, there might be a change in the law of evolution, its method and arrangement: a larger

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220 Ibid., P.72.
221 Ibid., P.81.
222 Ibid., P.74.

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element of the principle of evolution through knowledge might enter into universe. For example, 'if man began to develop the powers and means of a higher knowledge in something like fullness, if the developing animal opened the door of his mentality to beginnings of conscious thought and even a rudimentary reason, at his highest he is not so irrevocably far from that even now, - if the plant developed its first subconscious reactions and attained to some kind of nervous sensitiveness, if the Matter, ...were to become more alive with the hidden power within it and to offer more readily, the secret sense of things, the occult realities it covers, as for instance the record of the past, it always preserves even in its dumb inconscience or the working of its involved forces and invisible movements revealing veiled powers in material nature to a subtler generalized perception of new human intelligence, this would be an immense change, ... but it would only mean uplifting of and not disturbance of universal order'.

Sri Aurobindo's Concept of Internationalism -
An Overview and a Critique:

Sri Aurobindo's concept of internationalism has its origin in Nature's design. For him finest form of internationalism meant human unity, but a unity based on diversity. The very purpose behind nature's evolution, the reason why evolution takes place is the desire of Sachchidananda to be itself, to become one, though in the interim period by becoming many. The process of becoming one from many is on. The only difficulty is failure of

223 Ibid., P.76.
man to know this. A few individuals have been able to see this design. But many have failed to see this. Probably they would, although there is no fixed time frame. But the idea of internationalism in the form of human unity has taken hold of human being. Forces are also there which facilitate human unity. But there is an evolutionary crisis now. Man as is constituted now does not know how to achieve human unity. His instrumentalities are wrong.

This failure is not confined to man in West only. Different civilizations have approached the problem of human unity wrongly. The European mind struggles to achieve unity by struggle and by creating institutions. Eastern culture and Sri Aurobindo had specifically India in mind, once knew the correct path but then lost its way. Initially its approach to unity was through enlargement of units with diversity being maintained but then it ended by relying on exclusion, fragmentation.

This failure to see the idea of internationalism leading to human unity in proper perspective is a part of evolutionary crisis. Man as is constituted now and relying on the factor of Reason, will always rely on institutions and will never see the light. Only if man evolves further and becomes a creature of spirit and not of Reason, would he be able to become a real internationalist and solve the problem of human unity. According to Sri Aurobindo if the present human race can not solve this problem, a new race will emerge. But Sri Aurobindo is optimistic. This is based on four factors. The idea of internationalism has got hold of man and secondly, forces favouring development of internationalism were strong. Thirdly
he felt that there were countries like India, which could perform the missionary role of spiritualising the world. She had in her tradition vedantic ideals of freedom, unity and divinity in man. It is true that for quite some time, she had ceased to be universalistic but now things were changing. She was undergoing a Renaissance. The Western impact had created an imitative culture in India. But at the same time, it revived the dominant intellectual and critical impulse; it rehabilitated life and awakened the desire of new creation; it put the reviving Indian spirit face to face with novel conditions... and the urgent necessity of understanding, assimilating and conquering them. And as spirit had been the dominant motive in Indian mind as renaissance in India was likely to be something like celtic revival in Ireland, India could make a useful contribution. Sri Aurobindo stated, 'politics, society, economy are in the first form of human life simply an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce and satisfy their desires, enjoy progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency; but the spiritual aim makes them much more than this, first a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow into his real self and divinity, secondly, an increasing embodiment of divine law of being in life, thirdly, a collective advance towards the light, power, peace and unity, harmony of the diviner nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve'. Forthly, the West itself was trying to outgrow the

225 Ibid., P.497.
226 Ibid., P.430.
limitations of its conceptions and a rapid infusion of essential ideas of the East was taking place there, specially in art, literature and music. Later on, infiltration in other areas was likely to take place, too. Finally, an evolutionary view of civilization indicated that neither Western nor Indian civilizations were perfect. If civilizations meant harmony of body, mind and spirit, none of these could be called civilized. A perfect civilization was yet to be born. Both West and India could contribute to the making of it. A universal culture but not a monotonous one would be an answer to the problems of mankind.

Problems caused by nationalism, obstacles in the way of internationalism and failure of mankind to achieve unity were all due to evolutionary crisis. It was the failure of Nature to evolve and of man to evolve further that was the heart of the matter. It was the nature of the Nature to undergo involution of one into many and of many to evolve into one, therefore any genuine solution to problems of mankind had to be on the basis of unity among diversity. It was the failure of man to understand the nature of Nature, which led him to emphasize either the principle of unity, or of the principle of diversity. Sri Aurobindo also realized that depending upon circumstances one or the other principle could be emphasized. But ultimately balance had to be found.

Sri Aurobindo’s reading was that Nature was leading mankind towards unity, towards internationalism from nationalism. It was creating forces favourable to this. Man’s social history also indicated that the Age of Reason was coming to
an end and spiritual Age was being heralded. Man did not realise
the Nature’s design completely. He had not yet diagnosed the
disease and therefore was applying faulty solutions. The reason
was that he was still basically a rational man. Ultimately,
everything depends upon his evolution from a rational man into a
spiritual man. There were exceptional men who had evolved, more
could evolve to the fullest extent but ultimately the whole
community had to evolve. Of course, full evolution of even a few
would help not only mankind but the whole of Nature.

It is because Sri Aurobindo was aware of Nature’s
design, purpose and its nature, that he did not approve either
hegemonic form of internationalism or socialist form of
internationalism. In case of hegemonic internationalism, Sri
Aurobindo considered that with the exception of Roman Empire,
Empire could not become a real unit and remained a political
unit. On the other Nation had become a real unit, although it
emerged as political unit. Further Empire in ancient history was
an attempt to circumvent Nature’s ladder as it emerged even
before the emergence of Nation as a unit. Moreover the principle
of Empire emphasized the principle of uniformity (with few
exceptions) and ignored the principle of diversity and therefore
was contrary to Nature. After all, man could realise perfection
only by effectuating nature’s Law of Unity in Diversity. Therefore
unless the nature of Empire changed, it could not become a real
basis of internationalism. Finally, imperialism was the result of
inflated national ego and national ego was responsible for
conflicts and wars between nations, therefore how could
hegemonic internationalism solve this problem? (of human unity)
Socialistic internationalism, too, was not a real solution to the problem of the world politics full of conflict of national egos, resulting in wars between nations. The main reason was that socialism was culmination of the nation idea and not of the international idea. It is true in the past the international idea had aligned itself with the socialist idea. But that was a mistake. Socialists turned out to be ardent nationalists and were not internationalists (with few exceptions). Even Russian socialism proved the same point. International socialism belonged to future. There was even a possibility that socialism might become imperialistic. Further, socialism believed in class war which was hardly away to achieve human unity within or across nations. It emphasized the principle of equality (of labour), sacrificed liberty and in no way in practice worked towards fraternity. Finally socialism was a product of the Age of Reason. Of course, democracy and socialism were its best products. According to Sri Aurobindo, the principle of socialism which emphasized the collectivist idea, was bound to lead to Totalitarianism and therefore was likely to prove incompatible with democracy. As a product of Age of Reason, it was bound to make an attempt to govern life by some kind of rational order. Similarly, although in theory socialist talked about disappearance of state, Sri Aurobindo was convinced, it was not likely. Thus socialistic internationalism, too violated the principle of unity in diversity and was more likely to lead to uniformity and Regimentation. As a matter of fact, no machinery invented by reason or any institutional change could solve this
problem and implement Nature's Law, of evolving from diversity into unity without sacrificing diversity, of preserving national ego but at the same time transforming it and preventing it from becoming a source of discord.

Can we then describe Sri Aurobindo as subscribing to the theory of liberal internationalism? As we know, the Western advocates of liberal internationalism were aware of the defects of international system dominated by nation states, their conflicts, their wars, and big power rivalries, imperialistic ambitions and resulting world wars. They sought to limit the incidence of these defects by creating a European Empire dominated by some country, by balance of power, by concert of European Powers or by a League of European Nations or by attempting to achieve European Unity. They did not want to destroy state system. Preservation of State system was important. Most of them approved of domination by Great Powers as necessity. Only a few attempted to tackle this problem by advocating a territorial redistribution. The main interest of thinkers belonging to various states was in their own states or in their own continent. As far as policy prescriptions were concerned they advocated prudence, particularly by Anglo-American thinkers who thought the options were open to rulers. Prudence was essential to avoid evil consequences. Only by a few like communists and anarchists wanted the end of the state altogether. A few considered the weaknesses of the international system from the civilizational point of view. Many considered their civilization as better than that of the East. Some considered capitalism as good but a few others found it to be inadequate.
Nationalism combined with socialism and brought about through democratic means was sufficient. Only a few advocated Marxism to solve national and international problems.

Sri Aurobindo considered the whole problem of international system from the civilizational view point. Problems which the international system was facing was a part of the 'civilizational crisis'. Sri Aurobindo's objective was to find solution to this. In this he was motivated by national concern. For example he was worried that political slavery of India may also bring socio-cultural subjugation. But India's independence and aggressive defence of her culture was essential not only for India but also for world. The world civilization required a spiritual leadership. Only India was capable of providing it. But unlike Western thinkers of Anglo-American School, Sri Aurobindo thought that isolationism was no answer to the nation's problems. In fact it was the cause of India's decay. After independence, Sri Aurobindo knew that preservation of independent state was bound to be India's main concern. But the world concern was never absent.

The causes of weaknesses of international system were many. But mainly it was the problem of 'national ego' represented by nation state system. It was an obstacle to human unity. Nation was not an evil. It was a real unit, a positive thing. But it was a step in the evolution. A higher aggregate was essential. An Empire, a confederation, a federation were such units. Sri Aurobindo's ultimate preference was for the last one as it closely approximated Nature's Law of Unity in Diversity and
maintained harmony between two. A socialist state too had been a nation-state. However, these were all institutional devices, born by use of reason. State was a highly inadequate instrument to achieve human unity. Its dharma was self-protection and self-expansion. Its nature had not changed. Its only problem was, now it faced a greater difficulty in devouring others. Because of its belief in 'sacred egoism', neither public opinion nor international law could effectively put check on it.

This did not mean that institutional devices were useless. Some served the purpose for the time being. Nature would create new ones, either through man or inspite of him. Only if man understood the purpose of Nature! But as he did not, institutional failures and resulting frustration was bound to take place.

Ultimately, however institutional devices were no solution. They were product of the Age of Reason. What was required was a spiritualised community of mankind where soul in each man felt a community with the soul in every other man in the world. This required further evolution of man. A community or communities of gnostic beings was required. Sri Aurobindo felt that this was the need of mankind. It could take time. But Nature’s design and observation of social evolution indicated that direction was clear. Even if only a few became gnostic beings and complete transformation of mankind was likely to take time, the world would certainly benefit because of these few.

Sri Aurobindo’s concept of internationalism was not opposed to Nationalism. But it all depended on what type of Nationalism one was talking about. If Nationalism meant self -
consciousness and discovery of National soul, it was not opposed to internationalism. Only if Nationalism took the shape of National ego and racism, it would be opposed to internationalism. As Dr. P. Chattopadhyaya mentions it, 'The right type of nationalism has to be established on the basis of true subjectivism and realization of our unity and solidarity with peoples of other countries'. In Sri Aurobindo's words, 'one can not love all men alike and that at the very first stage cultivating the social sentiments, we must rise by degrees'. On the contrary, 'the desired and durable form of internationalism will emerge not by suppression but through fulfillment of nationalism'. Nationalism rightly understood had no necessary relationship with xenophobia, racism or with imperialism. In Sri Aurobindo's view even socialism was not opposed to nationalism. Socialism was an attempt at further development of nationalism in the sense that nation-state took up more functions for community.

Although at the abstract level and as a stage in evolution internationalism came higher than nationalism, in practice nationalism taking the shape of national ego was a force stronger than internationalism, democracy or even socialism. As nation-states were willing to sacrifice any of these three forces for the sake of nationalism.

Science, thought and religion were strengthening the forces of internationalism but national ego was an obstacle in

228 Ibid., p. 90.
its path. The international organization likely to give shape to these forces was world-state, although Sri Aurobindo's preference was for world-union. He was convinced about inevitability of first and desirability of second. A world state moved too much in the direction of uniformity. This was partly because the human society did not evolve in the same way as self-conscious human mind did. The first course of evolution of human society was determined by the pressure of circumstances and tended to be self-conscious only later on. Ultimately, any solution founded on institutions was not likely to be satisfactory. The emphasis had to be on psychological unity of mankind. However, merely relying on psychological assent was also unwise and unsafe. At least in the beginning institutional base was must. On the whole, however, Sri Aurobindo's concept of internationalism, rejected institutional-objective approach to internationalism and also an intellectualist approach to it.

Critical Appreciation

Sri Aurobindo's concept of internationalism has its merits. As a thinker, he accepted Nation-unit as a realisation of divine will on earth, he was not like Hegel. To Hegel, nation represented, the manifestation of Weltgeist and did not accept and kind of internationalism. But as he felt the Weltgeist was represented in a particular nation at a particular time, he did not want its claim to be hampered by other nations. Further, this spirit resided in nation state and did not make any distinction between State and Nation. As nation-state had to be

229 Ibid., P.159.
230 Ibid., P.168.
supreme, it led to suppression of freedom of individual internally and clash with other nation states externally.

On the otherhand, Sri Aurobindo, not only did not believe nation as the climax in a series of human aggregates but only a step. He did consider nation as a divine manifestation and eulogized Indian nation, almost imagined it as performing messianic mission. For the people of India, subject to centuries of foreign rule, it was like a tonic. But it was also with a view to promote human unity. Not only that, in the general evolution of political units, Sri Aurobindo did not stop with Nation. Not only he considered various institutional devices to achieve human unity but thought of even non-institutional means. He viewed evolution of human society and polity in the direction of unity as a categorical imperative. Further he distinguished between Nation and State and therefore did not consider state as justified in demanding surrender of individual. On the otherhand, individual was divine, individual could not be sacrificed. Similarly, although nationalism rightly considered involved no clash with other nations, national egos did clash in practice. Some national leaders at times like Hitler even represented Asuric forces and their policies were a backward step in evolution. Important thing is Sri Aurobindo, never approved of national egos or such leaders. As a matter of fact, he assured us that attempts at imperialistic internationalism were bound to fail, unless imperialism changed its base. Human unity brought about in a right way was divine desire. Nature through man, through various aggregates of man and by creating various forces was bound to bring about human unity.
However, the very process of formulation of his views leaves Sri Aurobindo open to the charge of determinism. The assumption that human unity is based on determinism by Nature makes Sri Aurobindo's arguments more formidable and raises Sri Aurobindo's arguments above criticism. For, who can understand the divine design, except the gnostic few? Further, he says, what he says is based on facts of reality and there is nothing theoretical about it. Theory being a product of reason and often based on inadequate knowledge of with reality may be questioned, corrected and even refuted but fact has to be recognized or ignored and can not be manipulated according to our sweet will. All our doubts regarding benevolence of evolutionary and teleological interpretation of history is our relative ignorance, our lack of intuitive knowledge.

Further, even the goal of human unity need not be pushed ahead on ground of divine design. It could be defended on a different ground. Probably, the desire of Sri Aurobindo to give his design, a permanence led Sri Aurobindo to add the factor of divinity. At least this is the interpretation one can make on the basis of limited rationality one possesses. However, this converts Sri Aurobindo's model in to a utopia from an ideology. Sri Aurobindo can be criticised either for unnecessary mystification of some plain facts. Moreover, Sri Aurobindo's design of human unity is based on a particular view of human nature. Once one refuses to accept the Aurobindite view of divinity of human nature, it would be difficult to conceive of an enduring human unity. This again leaves world politics with
conflicts of nation-states and other problems and inadequate solutions based on limited rationality of human beings. It does not mean that world will not move towards greater internationalism and the goal of human unity. One should not underestimate the role of what Sri Aurobindo described as 'forces'. They have great capacity to cut the edges of 'national ego' and ultimately may change human consciousness. Look at the Europe of 1992 and compare it with Europe of 1972 and one can see what forces have done. Personally, I feel only circumstances does not mean only those referred to by Sri Aurobindo-an important factor that brings U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. closer together is their domestic conditions and awareness of their own limitations and emergencies and time will move mankind towards greater internationalism and greater unity. Sri Aurobindo's design is certainly pleasing, soothing, comforting but one looks at real situation, one feels how long is the distance one has to travel to find a community of souls! With a conception of man less bright than one given by him probably, one could have visualized a design of human unity less perfect but more real.

There is a further difficulty in looking at things from Sri Aurobindo's point of view. He regards several things as inevitable, such as unity of medieval Europe through Christianity, emergence of British colonial system as federal empire, India's attainment of political unity through British coming of human unity. The problem is that facts once they have already taken shape are described as inevitable and a conclusion regarding a certain trend or tendency is drawn but evidences indicating a contrary tendency are not given or not
conceived. For example factors strengthening unity and uniformity are mentioned and as 'national ego' is mentioned as a factor obstructing the trend in the direction of unity but as we see it today, although there are trends which suggest that world is moving beyond a nation-state, there are contrary tendencies too. The Russian confederation has broken up. The homogeneous looking communist world has fragmented. New nation-states have come up and others have broken up. One of the scholars of international politics, Medley Bull even considered return of feudal order as one of the possibilities of future world order! The world today is witnessing tendency of unification as well as fragmentation simultaneously. It is difficult today even to predict which tendency will prove stronger. A co-existence of several tendencies is what the present world looks like! One can doubt whether there is an all comprehensive order in human history. Further one can even visualize an ever narrowing rather than enlarging circle! Much will depend upon forces but also on human management. If politicians perceived things rightly (if not because of the divine design) according to sheer enlightened self-interest things would be much better. Of course looking at the lot of our politicians, one tends to share skepticism about them expressed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sri Aurobindo. One could even agree with Sri Aurobindo about the necessity of even a few gnostic beings, not to talk of community of gnostic beings. If these men are at the helm of affairs, an improvement in environment would certainly be visible. 20th century world politics has given examples also of politicians like Nehru, Gorbachev, Adenaur, Wilson. The whole lot of politicians is not
despicable. Some particular observations of Sri Aurobindo can be questioned, too. For example, an organization based on order and discipline and not on that of liberty and variation would necessarily crack and crumble.

Similarly his observation that decline of world state will lead to anarchism can also be challenged. Under these circumstances, intellectual anarchism would be too abstract and Spiritual Anarchism, too lofty to reach.

Dr. V.P. Varma finds some contradiction in his acceptance of theory and of spiritual determinism in history and of the creed of messianistic vocation of one particular nation. 'It would appear as if he has been using the universalistic Vedantic ideas to serve the purpose of Indian nation.'

Similarly Sri Aurobindo's generalisations regarding East and West, have been questioned. Statements about East are made on the basis of data about India. Therefore to conclude about spiritual role of East would be far fetched. Similarly, generalising about West as materialistic and East as spiritualistic may be questioned.

An important criticism made against Sri Aurobindo but without real foundation is that he had considered role of gnostic leaders and Avatars in bringing about human unity but had ignored the role of masses. It is true that Sri Aurobindo had considered gnostic beings and Avatars as catalytic agents but never considered a change as complete till the masses were involved. For example, An Age of spiritualism would not be considered to have arrived till change had taken place at mass level. Similarly

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he had also not ignored the role of historic forces in bringing about change.

One of the most important criticisms made against Sri Aurobindo was that, in him the purpose of evolution as mentioned by him was not convincing. Why should Divine create many only so that latter may merge into one Divine. According to Sri Aurobindo, the objective was 'Lila, adventure, experiment'. If he had put the ultimate destination as divine and man taking place from animal world, would it have been understandable but it would have created other problems of logic.

Finally, Sri Aurobindo as a thinker, as a creative writer made important contribution to the Indian theory of internationalism, which had as its goal, not only national welfare or interest or development of and satisfaction of Indian nationalism but a wider goal of human development, of world peace, a civilizational regeneration and human unity to be realised not by institutional instruments used in West such as balance of power and collective security but by putting main emphasis on subjective and non-institutional means. All these was conceived by Sri Aurobindo as part of evolution by Nature and by Man. This could take time but the process had begun. If the divine in this process acted as a strategist and diplomat by using forces as Nirodharan described to me, Sri Aurobindo was working through his Yoga and sadhana to bring the supramental consciousness on earth in a secure way, which made it possible for those who were ready to become gnostic beings with the help of that new consciousness. So the goals, the processes, the instruments of internationalism and unity here were different from those in the West.