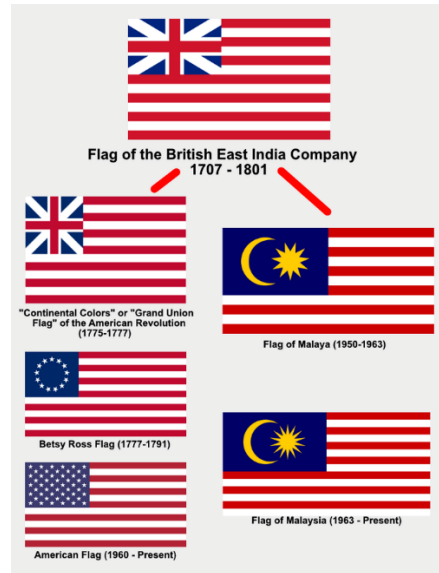




THE HINDU CONQUEST OF THE US

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The US presidential election of November 5th will see two Hindu women as protagonists. Kamala Devi Harris, the current vice president, will stand for the Democrat Party. Her mother was Shyamala Gopalan a Hindu from Chennai in Tamil Nadu (Southern India). The name Kamala (कमल) means 'lotus' in Sanskrit, the ancient and sacred language of India from which derive most languages of the subcontinent (e.g., Hindi, Gujarati, and Urdu). On the other ticket, the current vice presidential candidate J.D. Vance is married to Usha Chilukuri who is Hindu (of Telugu origin). The Sanskrit name Usha (उषा) is equivalent to Aurora in Latin, Eos (Ἠώς) in Greek and means 'dawn' in English. The next administration will either have Kamala (कमल) or Usha (उषा) living in the White House.

In a way, the connection between North America and India is what created the United States. The famous Boston Tea party of 1773 was a dispute between the British colonial rulers who wished to impose taxes on tea. Some Bostonians rebelled and showed their anger by throwing the tea which was to be taxed into the sea 'The Boston Tea Party'. The three ships (Darthmouth, Beaver, and Eleanor) were carrying East India Company tea. It had sailed from London to Boston. While the Bostonians had a grudge with the British fiscal authorities, they attacked a ship owned by Americans because it was transporting goods from India.



The dispute may not have been with the East India Company since the Grand Union Flag of 1775, adopted by the colonial Americans, was copied from the East India Company flag (they are identical). The flag act of 1777 replaced the British Union Jack on the top left of the flag with a blue background with thirteen stars. The stripes are those of the East India Company, and the stars are of the New Colonies. The flag of the US is an adapted version of the one of the East India Company.

The British colonies in North America were often called the ‘West Indies’ in reference to India as the original land in the East. The traditional woman’s dress in many islands of the Caribbean is the sari which originated from India (sari साड़ी in Hindi from Sanskrit śaṭī शाटी/śaṭa शाट, ‘garment’).

The notion that the US was just a western version of the India led to the famous verse of the Irish Anglican bishop Berkley (1685-1753): ‘westward the course of the empire takes its way’. He lived in Newport Rhode Island (1728-1732) when it was still a British colony. The expression became symbolic of an attitude and the University in California was named after him since it was the furthest westward limit of the American continent.

The concern about corruption, taxation, India, and the American colonies were all central to Edmund Burke (1729-1797), author of *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1791). As a Member of the British Parliament, he stood and spoke in defence of the Americans and attacked the corruption of the East India Company. Burke was Protestant Irish.

Trump has chosen as his vice president J.D. Vance whose book *Hillbilly Elegy* describes the Protestant Ulster Scot communities living today along the Appalachian Mountains. Among the Ulster Scots one may single out the Duke of Wellington (famous for Waterloo) who took part in the siege of Seringapatam (1799) and was a decisive British battle in India. Another Ulster Scot was Castlereagh (British foreign secretary 1812-1822) who had been President of the Board of Control of the East India company when Delhi came under British control (1803). His great uncle, Robert Cowan, a Presbyterian from Londonderry, had been governor of Bombay (1729-1734) and spoke Portuguese as well as Gujarati.

The history of the creation of the US is profoundly connected to India. The flag is the symbol of this deep rooted connection. The fact that two women represent Hindu culture and are protagonists of the US presidential election should not surprise one. We should be asking ourselves: why didn’t the natural connection between US and India emerge earlier?