CHAPTER IV
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND STATESMANSHIP

Edmund Burke

Political Philosophy

Burke did not record any political philosophy of his own in the form of a treatise. But his political ideas find a place in many of his speeches and writings, relating to the affairs of England, America, India, Ireland and France, from which his political philosophy could be deduced. A study of those speeches and writings reveals that Burke was a believer in Liberalism, Conservatism and Democracy.

"Hearn Shaw calls Burke a reformer and not a revolutionary; always a Conservative and never a Tory". As this statement rightly implies, Burke was both a Liberal and Conservative and never identified himself with one to the exclusion of the other and never believed in Revolution

Burke's faith in Liberalism is evident in his opposition to Absolute Monarchy in England. Since the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the country had been ruled by
the great Whig families of the Revolution. But when George III came to the throne, the power of the Whig began to decline. "The younger generation, as Burke never ceased to point out, hardly had the strength of character possessed by the Whigs of the earlier days. At the same time, the new king determined not merely to reign but to rule. "Since the settlement of 1688, the king had chosen for his ministers men acceptable to the Parliament. Now, an effort was made to choose only 'King's men' as ministers and to bend the Parliament to the King's will as transmitted through his ministers. This was to be accomplished by persuasion, bribery, or any other means available". This was the situation when Burke entered Parliament. From his point of view the English constitution was being undermined by the King's act of choosing his own men for administration. This would lead to Absolute Monarchy which Burke opposed. He emphasised "The ultimate authority of the people". He said "Although Government certainly is an institution of Divine Authority, yet its forms and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people." R.P. Sharma says, "Though a devoted believer in Monarchy he [Burke] was violently opposed to monarchic absolutism.... he
never was prepared to allow them to go beyond constitutional rights....He was definitely anti-despotic. Referring to Burke's faith in parliamentary system Laski says, "He showed that Government by discussion can be made to illuminate great principles... When he came to the House of Commons the prospects of representative Government were very dark; and it is mainly to his emphasis upon its virtues that its victory must be attributed." Burke's championing the causes of the Americans who opposed taxation by the British Government also reveals his faith in the principle of Liberty. His strong belief in English Liberty is evident when he says, "It has inherited an unusual devotion to Liberty from the fact of the original settlers' having been Puritans fleeing from a hostile Government." Referring again to the Americans' love of Liberty, Burke says, "this fierce spirit of Liberty is stronger in the English colonies probably than in any other people of the earth....The people of the colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England, Sir, is a nation, which still, I hope, respects and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonies emigrated from you when this part of your character was most predominant; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to Liberty according to
English ideas and on English principles."8 Condemning the denial of Liberty to Americans, Burke says, "An Englishman is the unfittest person on Earth to argue another Englishman into slavery".9 R.P. Sharma referring to Burke's Liberalism says, "As he [Burke] stood for the welfare of all the individuals he was liberal...."10 Burke continued to fight for the American cause through his Speech on Taxation and his Speech on Conciliation. But the administrators in England failed to understand the wisdom behind his arguments and to act on them. Consequently, the American colony was once for all lost to the British Government. Appreciating the value of Burke's speeches and writings on American Affairs, which show Burke as the champion of Liberty, John Morley says, "It is no exaggeration to say that they compose the most perfect manual in our literature, or in any literature, for one who approaches the study of public affairs, whether for knowledge or for tactics. They are an example without fault of all the qualities which the critic, whether a theorist or an actor, of great political situations should strive by night and by day to possess."11

Burke's faith in conservatism is revealed in
his reverence for the British Constitution and his regard for old institutions like Monarchy, Aristocracy and Nobility and the Church. In his own words, "We fear God — we look with awe to the King, with affection to Parliament, with duty to Magistrates, with reverence to Priests, and with respect to nobility."  

Burke regarded the British Constitution as being so sacred that it needed no amendment. He opposed extension of franchise. He said, "Our Constitution stands on a nice equipoise with steep precipices and deep waters upon all sides of it. In removing it from a dangerous leaning towards one side, there may be a risk of over-setting it on the other."  

"Burke would rather by lessening the number add to the weight and independence of our voters."  

He believed that the extension of franchise by making any amendment to the Constitution would serve no purpose. "He was against both the extension or reduction of franchise."  

Burke showed reverence to Monarchy which is an old institution and accepted the Monarch the head of the state. He showed great reverence for Aristocracy which is another old Institution Donald Zoll writes "Burke rooted Aristocracy in the soil of tradition and sentiment rather than in rationalistic premises and scientific concepts...his Aristocratic Counsel
is implicit and not explicit. In general it is clear that the Burkian idea of a governing class was of a superior English gentry with its conception of personal honour, rural Industry, service, moderation, religious orthodoxy and national loyalty." It is this view of Aristocracy that made Burke accept all the privileges enjoyed by the Aristocracy during his time. Burke's regard for old Institutions is also evident in his condemning the French Revolution which discarded nobility and monarchy and perpetrated cruelty on them. But it should also be pointed out that Burke was not a blind believer in Conservatism. He was moderate in his faith in Conservatism and he knew that change of circumstances necessitated modifications of old Institutions. So "as a political reformer, Burke combined in himself devotion to Liberty and respect for Authority...hope for the future with reverence for the past... A sane Conservatism with cautious reform".

Burke had faith in a vague sort of Democracy. The important principles of Democracy are rule by the majority and Liberty and Equality. The rule by the majority, that is, directly participating in the affairs of the
state, was possible only in Greek and Roman city states in ancient days. Now the rule by the majority through their representatives alone is in practice as participation of all the people in the affairs of the state is not possible in the modern populous nations. Liberty and equality are guaranteed to the individuals through their constitutional provisions in all democratic nations. During the time of Burke a great Democracy was born in America. France was yet to be established as a Republic in spite of the new-born slogans liberty, equality and fraternity. To Burke who was bred in the great British tradition none of them had any attraction. Government in France was not acceptable to him as discussed elsewhere. Though he championed the cause of the Americans he did not accept all the principles governing the newly established government. Burke had faith only in a vague sort of democracy. The idea of majority rule was not acceptable to Burke. "He did not believe in popular sovereignty and would not allow the working classes to participate in politics actively as they did not have political wisdom. But Burke advocated the supremacy of the Parliament in taking final decisions in the affairs of the State. He accepted the dominant role of the House of Lords, which consisted only of members.
belonging to Aristocracy, in the Parliament. He believed that the Aristocracy "having advantages of birth, wealth, interest and so on", were best fitted for administration. He believed in the principle of Liberty as discussed elsewhere. He did not believe in the principle of equality as the possession of property by the individuals made equality among people impossible.

His faith in the supremacy of Parliament and his faith in Liberalism and his rejection of the principle of equality which is one of the essential principles of democracy show that he believed only in a vague sort of Democracy.

Statesmanship

Burke's statesmanship is well revealed in his speeches and writings relating to the affairs of the English colonies, America and India and in his writings relating to the French Revolution. As a true statesman, he wanted the British Government to follow the policy of expediency in its dealing with the affairs of its Colonies. The concept of expediency was not "in the Machiavellian sense of condoning whatever may be advantageous in promoting a particular policy or reaching a particular objective,
but in the profounder sense of shaping the course of action to conform with the basic and permanent elements of the institutional life of a people.\textsuperscript{20} "His Expediency included Reason, Justice and Humanity..."\textsuperscript{21} "Burke did not want the statesman to cling to the old order but wanted him to move with the swift current of time. He must take circumstances and environments into consideration and then only plan his action. He said, "Circumstances are infinite, are infinitely combined; are variable and transient; he who does not take them into consideration is not erroneous but stark mad... A statesman, never losing sight of principles, is to be guided by circumstances; and judging contrary to the exigencies of the moment he may ruin his country for ever."\textsuperscript{22} "The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind.\textsuperscript{23}

On the question of American colonies, Burke held the view that England should not have adopted a rigid legislative policy towards them even if it was legally correct for the British Government to tax its colonies. Burke said that Expediency was the better guide than the doctrine of rights. He said, "The question is not whether
you have a right to render your people miserable but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tells me I ought to do.  

On the Indian question Burke showed clearly how the servants of the East India Company were arbitrary in their action against Indians and thereby they were rendering justice to them. He appealed to the English Government to take appropriate action following the principle of Expediency. Burke himself caused the East India Bill to be presented by Fox, for putting an end to the evils of administration by company servants. But the Bill was not passed.

As a true statesman, he believed in the principle of magnanimity and wanted the administrators to be conscious of it while dealing with the affairs of states. Insisting on the importance of magnanimity, Burke said, "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom, and a great empire and little minds go ill together."  

Burke's statesmanship is also revealed in his prophetic statements which came true. Regarding the American problem, Burke said that the British administrators
should solve it through conciliatory measures and if they failed to do so, America would no longer continue to be their colony. But the British Government failed to pay heed to his warning and in the war between Britain and America, Britain was defeated and America became independent. With the remarkable foresight of a statesman, Burke also said that France which discarded all the old institutions with little respect to them would certainly end up with despotism. He said, "If the present project of a Republic should fail all securities to moderate freedom fail with it. All the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed; in so much that if Monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendancy in France under this or any other dynasty, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise and virtuous councils of the prince, the most completely arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth". Napoleon Bonaparte became a despotic ruler of France and thus Burke's prophecy came true.

C.N. Annadurai

Political Philosophy

Anna had great faith in Liberalism. To him
it "stands against coercive interference of any kind in any walk of life whether moral or religious, social or political and the like...". All his activities since he entered politics reveal his deep faith in Liberalism. Having been a follower of the Justice Party leaders and Periyar E.V. Ramasamy who championed the cause of the down-trodden Non-Brahmins, Anna also took up the cause of the Non-Brahmins. He believed that the Non-Brahmins were not enjoying liberty, being suppressed in political, economic and social fields. He believed that Brahmins, being educated, were in a privileged position in the pre-independent India, playing a dominant role in politics. In the economic field Non-Brahmins were poverty-stricken and were in a suppressed state, being illiterate and employed only in manual work which kept their economic position always at the low ebb, and in social field in the name of caste, they were kept in a suppressed state. He had the uplift of the down-trodden in all the above fields as the objective of the D.M.K. Therefore in his political career his insistence on equal opportunities for all in politics, his condemnation of economic inequality and his opposition to the caste system are evidences for his faith
in the philosophy of Liberalism. His deep faith in Liberalism also made him oppose the introduction of Hindi as the official language as it would make Tamils lose their liberty and make them second-rate citizens in their own land.

Anna's faith in conservatism is revealed from his regard to the ancient Tamil custom of recognising mutual love between a young man and a young woman and his interest in conducting marriage without priestly interference as done by ancient Tamils. His interest in celebrating the Pongal festival which is only another name for the harvest festival of ancient Tamils also reveals his regard for ancient, social functions.

Anna had great faith in Socialism as he felt that Liberalism and Socialism were not opposed to each other and both were essential for modern society. His views are also reflected in Contemporary Political Theory by J.C. Johari who says, "It (Liberalism) has moved closer to the trend of Socialism through its advocacy for the cause of a positive or social service state". Advocating one type of socialism to the exclusion of the other, J.C. Johari says, "It has to be borne in mind that when we talk of socialism in this connection, it is the evolutionary or democratic socialism (collectivism or state socialism) and not the scientific
socialism of Marx in as much as it has sought to establish a happy compromise between the liberty of the individual and the activity of the State in the Social Sphere without justifying the case of an authoritarian political system". Anna, as a forerunner of J.C. Johari advocated Democratic Socialism besides being an advocate of Liberalism. Referring to Anna's view of Socialism, Sagar Ahluwalia says, "He[Anna] insisted on an accelerated system of taxation to prevent undue accumulation of wealth in individual hands, state-ownership and control of key industries etc".  

Anna had great faith in modern Democracy which insists on liberty and equality and on the majority rule through the parliamentary system.

Statesmanship

Anna's principles, political decisions at critical moments, and his achievements in his political career, stand as evidences for his statesmanship.

As a true statesman, he advocated magnanimity in politics. He said in his 'Thambikkku Kādithangal' (Letters to the younger brother) in Dravidanadu dated 26.2.56, 'Māṭrānthōttathu Mallikaikum Manam Undu' (The Jasmine in the opponent's garden also smells sweet), meaning one must learn to appreciate and value the opponent's
view when there is truth in it. Anna followed this principle scrupulously in his activities.

Anna's decision to give up the demand for Dravida Nadu was a mark of his statesmanship. He had, as his Party's goal, the formation of a Sovereign Independent Dravida Nadu comprising Tamilnadu, Andhra, Kerala and Karnataka, with a view to effecting improvement in all fields, political, economic and social and cultural and to put an end to all economic imbalances that existed between North India and South India. All his speeches and writings were meant to propagate it. But the sudden aggression from India's great neighbour China whom India had considered to be a friend, was a great shock to Anna who at that time, was serving his sentence in Vellore Jail for his agitation against rising prices. He immediately issued a statement advising his followers: "In our anger against the Congress regime, we should not commit the mistake of slackening our efforts against the foreign invader. We of the D.M.K. consider it our sacred duty to rush to the help of the Indian Government in its efforts to protect and safeguard the sovereignty of our soil". This statement clearly indicated the mark of great statesmanship in him which prompted him
to act very wisely at the hour of danger to the very security of the country. Subsequently the Government of India also introduced a Bill debarring any party which pleaded for secession, from contesting the general elections. But Anna, who volunteered to extend co-operation at the time of threat from outside, felt the Bill to be a subversive attempt to abridge fundamental rights. He argued that the Bill was undemocratic in nature. However, as a true statesman, without standing on false prestige on account of the above provocative act, Anna came forward to give up the demand for a separate Dravida Nadu, having fully realised that an unreliable aggressive neighbour could be a permanent danger to the security of the whole of India and if the country stood divided, it would be suicidal to both the proposed Dravidanadu and the rest of India. As S.Ramachandran has rightly observed, "Anna was not prepared to commit political 'harakiri' by clinging to a demand that the changed circumstances of the country did not justify. He gradually realised that he could still win his battle within the framework of the Indian union". 32 He amended the constitution of the D.M.K. party "in such a way as to work for a closer Dravidian union of the four linguistic states of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka
within the framework of the Indian constitution by obtaining more powers for the states to the extent possible.\textsuperscript{33} This act of Anna's was praised by all as the surest mark of his great statesmanship.

On the eve of the General Elections in 1967, it was Anna's statesmanship that enabled his party to forge an alliance with all opposition parties to avoid the splitting of non-congress votes.\textsuperscript{34} As foreseen by him the alliance came out successful in the elections, defeating the Congress which had ruled for twenty years, and the D.M.K. with absolute majority formed the Government.

As a true statesman Anna was very firm in the observance of the convictions which he nurtured for long and in fulfilling the objectives for which his party stood. After becoming the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, he introduced prohibition, as he strongly believed that the alcoholic drinks ruined the health of the individuals and the condition of their families at the same time. "He got legislation passed, legalising simple marriages performed without priestly intervention, in keeping with the self-respect principles preached by the social revolutionary Periyar, decades before him. The state under Anna's leadership also was the first in India to foster and
encourage intercaste marriages by awarding gold medals for every intercaste couple". Standing firm in his opposition to Hindi, he introduced the two language formula. He also renamed the old Madras State as Tamilnadu, for which cause he had been fighting for years in vain, earlier.

It is also a mark of his statesmanship that Anna founded the D.M.K. Party on sound principles and gave it a democratic structure by introducing the system of filling up the party posts through election and trained his lieutenants like M.Karunanithi, V.R.Nedunchezhiyan and K.Anbazhagan and a few others so well that after Anna, they have managed to keep alive the Dravidian movement for which dear cause Anna devoted his whole life.

Conclusion

Neither Burke nor Anna wrote any treatise on Political philosophy. Their thoughts relating to political field are only deduced from their speeches and writings. Both Burke and Anna were believers in Liberalism. Burke's strong faith in Liberalism is evident from his championing the cause of the Americans who were opposing the right of British authorities to tax them, however meagre the tax might be. Like Burke, Anna also championed the cause
of the down-trodden in Tamil Nadu, who were deprived of liberty in political and economic fields. Anna believed that the Tamils, being illiterate and ignorant, were dominated by the privileged class in the field of politics. He felt that, in economic field, the domination of the big industrialists of the North, who found Tamil Nadu as a marketing place for their goods and the establishment of some industries by them in Tamil Nadu itself, made the Tamils continue to be an economically suppressed class.

So, as a strong believer in Liberalism, Anna took all efforts to uplift the Tamils from their suppressed state in both political and economic fields. Burke's conservatism made him think that the British constitution was so sacred that it would not admit of any amendment. As a conservative he gave due respect to the ancient institutions like Monarchy, Aristocracy and the Church by allowing them to enjoy all their privileges. Anna also had an element of conservatism in him, which is evident from the support he gave to the customs and traditions of the ancient Tamils. He appreciated the ancient Tamils' regard for the mutual love of a young man and a young woman and their marriage system without priestly interference. He wanted the present-day Tamils to follow the ancient Tamils in this respect. Anna also liked
the harvest festival of the ancient Tamils which is now called Pongal. Both Burke and Anna believed in Democracy. While Anna believed in Democracy in the modern sense of the term, Burke believed in a vague sort of Democracy, as he did not believe in the principle of equality and did not favour universal suffrage. As one belonging to the twentieth century, Anna advocated Socialism without which liberty and equality are meaningless to the exponents of modern Democracy. But to Burke who belonged to the eighteenth century the concept of Socialism was quite alien. The concept Socialism in its modern form came to be known only at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Both Burke and Anna possessed remarkable statesmanship. Both of them insisted on magnanimity in dealing with political issues. Burke insisted that the administrators should follow the principle of expediency in settling political problems. Anna expressed the same view in his speech in the Rajya Sabha and he insisted that the Indian Administrators should bear in mind the principle of Expediency while dealing with political issues. Burke's wisdom, the essential requisite of a statesman, enabled him to make some prophetic statements. His warning that Britain would lose the American colonies if it resorted to war
against them, came true. So also his prophesy that the establishment of a Republican Government in France through Revolution, discarding old institutions like Monarchy and Nobility would only lead to anarchy and despotism also came true. Anna, as a true Statesman, foresaw a permanent danger to the security of India from the unreliable neighbour, namely China and gave up the demand for Dravida Nadu without standing on false prestige. It was also Anna's statesmanship that made him effect an alliance with the opposition leaders and win the Elections, defeating the Congress which had ruled for 20 years. It is also a mark of Anna's statesmanship that he founded his party on sound principles and gave it a democratic structure and trained his lieutenants so well that they have managed to keep the Dravidian Movement alive, after him, cherishing the principles for which he stood.
NOTES


4. Ibid., pp. 1-32.

5. R. P. Sharma, p. 74.

6. Ibid., p. 75.


9. Ibid., p. 96.


13
H.J.C.Grierson, p.9.

14
Ibid., p.9.

15

16
R.P.Sharma, pp.72-73.

17
D.R.Bhandari, p.358.

18

19
D.R.Bhandari, p.356.

20
R.P.Sharma, p.67.

21
D.R.Bhandari, p.357.

22
R.P.Sharma, p.67.

23

24
R.P.Sharma, p.67.

25


28 Ibid., p.307.

29 Ibid., p.30.


32 Ibid., pp.XIX-XX.

33 Ibid., p.XX.

34 Sagar Ahluwalia, p.51.

35 S. Ramachandran, p.XXI.

36 Ibid., p.XXI.

37 Ibid., p.XXI.