

Nationalist Politics in View of Ramananda Chatterjee: A Case Study of Non-Co-Operation Movement And Gandhi.

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INTRODUCTION

The Mass awakening against the colonial rule was the result of political consciousness among the people of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century India and the print media had a prominent role in the process of our national awakening. At the beginning of the twentieth century there were more than five hundred newspapers and periodicals in this subcontinent. Among them the Hindu, The Madras Standard of South India, Keshari, Marhatta, Bombay Samachar, Induprakash, Voice of India from western India, The Tribune from northern India and the Amrita Bazar Patrika, the Bengalee of eastern India were notable which took the leading role in awakening national sentiment among the natives against colonial rule. Besides there were innumerable vernacular newspapers and periodicals which also played sharp role in doing so. The All India National Congress, the first national political organization of India, came into being at the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay in December, 1885 under the presidency of Umesh Chandra Bonnerjee. Among the 72 representatives present there from different parts of India, lawyers were the majority whereas the journalists were second in number. The notables among them were Narendra Nath Sen, the editor of the *Indian Mirror*, G.Subramanya Iyer, the editor of *The Hindu*, Apte of *Marhatta*, B.M.Malabari, Alaykar of the *Keshari*. Besides the editors of the *Tribune*, *The Hindusthan*, the *Indian Union*, the *Creasant* were also present there. In fact the newspapers and periodicals depicted the grievances of the subject people as well as the corruption and tyranny of the ruling class and thus they formed an anti-British public opinion during colonial rule. Ramananda Chatterjee was such a person who contributed a lot in this process.

The present work is a study on Ramananda Chatterjee and the role he played in national movement of India as a journalist and his views on nationalist politics. A nation's worth is judged by the great men it gives birth to. Such men are very rare and Ramananda Chatterjee was one of them who appeared in the galaxy of noblemen India has ever produced.

The role of Ramananda in the history of Indian was the role of a nation builder. He was a seeker of truth based on reasoning. He appeared on our land with the pen of Tom Paine so that thousands of his countrymen might get a new aspiration and light from his writings. His ideal was truth and whatever insulted the dignity of human life drew his criticism. He declared war against the sin of untouchability and vigorously raised his voice to vindicate the rights of women and wholeheartedly supported every movement that stood for freeing man from his degrading conditions. As a true nationalist Ramananda Chatterjee raised his voice against British imperialism and made people conscious about legitimate form of resistance against the colonial tyranny. But in doing so he did not support the way which was against humanity. The terrorist activity of the Indian revolutionaries, therefore, could not get his support.

Ramananda edited more than five journals (*Dharma Bandhu*, *Dasi*, *Pradip*, *Mukul*, *Welfare*) in his lifetime. But the two of them, named the *Prabasi* and *The Modern Review* made him world famous and brought him to the limelight of the international scholarly world. The editor of the *Light*, a paper of England, after observing two editions of *The Modern Review* commented, "We are certainly surprised to see them. We have nothing in England more important looking, more enterprising and more serious."^{1a} The *Prabasi* was mainly a literary magazine of high repute and *The Modern Review* covered the every sphere of human life. In its hay days it represented the best of Indian thought and culture. In each of its issues published in every month Ramananda expressed his views on different aspects of national movements and contemporary issues in the notes section of the periodical which provided with mines of information and views of the editor and other notable men of the society. Will Durant, the famous American writer was very respectful to these informative and thought provoking notes written by Ramananda.^{1b} These notes were equipped with the latest statistics and pronouncements of the best thinkers and prominent statesman of Europe and America which he used to collect and used when occasion demanded. This fact gave *The Modern Review* a unique value which other periodicals

did not have in those days. Jadunath Sarkar had said that the first thing that most of the readers of *The Modern Review* used to do, after getting the new issue of it, was to go through the notes section.^{1b} J.T Sunderland after Ramananda's demise commented, "I know of no other periodical that so fully and adequately represent the real India, giving to the world what the world needs to know about India's civilization, her great past, the present condition of her people, the real nature and efforts of British rule, and the meaning of her great struggle for freedom."^{1c} Taken together, these two monthly magazines (*Pravasi* and *The Modern Review*) set a new standard of excellence in the history of Indian journalism. Not only that Ramananda had authored more than hundred articles, published in different contemporary journals, which illuminate us with his views on nationalist movement and nation building of India.

Though Ramananda Chatterjee was born and brought up in Bengal he had to go to Allahabad to join the Kayastha Pathshala, a college in Allahabad, as Principal where he started publishing the *Prabasi* in 1901 and *The Modern Review* in 1907. Later he came back to Calcutta and continued his publication work from his office at Cornwallis street in this city till death in 1943. The career of Ramananda thus coincide with the national movement of India till its penultimate. His reactions to contemporary events taking place in the country are of first hand information to us in understanding the national liberation movement.

The Indian Muslims and the Khilafat Movement

A change was taking place in the Muslim community in India from the close of the nineteenth century. Earlier a section of the Muslims who realized the need for western education had sought the patronage of the administration. Sir Syed Ahmed had advised the Muslims to keep away from the Hindus and the Indian National Congress which in his opinion was busy with the interests of that community. Muslim participation in the early sessions of the Congress was low. In Bengal Amir Ali and Abdul Latif had sought to organize the Muslims. The memorial by the Central National Mohammedan Association to the Viceroy in 1882 clearly brought how poorly the Muslims were employed by the administration in contrast to the Hindus. Lord Curzon had tried to create further division between the two communities by partitioning Bengal. In spite of official declaration to the effect that the decision was based on grounds of administrative expediency, – the Bengal Presidency being considered to large to be governed effectively as it was, — Nationalists viewed it as nothing less than a plan to divide the Bengali population. Most Muslims did not join the anti-partition and Swadeshi movement. A Muslim delegation under the leadership of Aga Khan met the viceroy Lord Minto at Simla on October 1, 1906 with its body of demands which heard sympathetically. In the words of Countess Minto, "It is nothing less than the pulling back of sixty two million of people from joining of the ranks of the seditious opposition."¹

The annulment of the partition in 1911 disappointed the Muslims. They were also offended by the change that had been taking place in British foreign policy. At the time of the Russo-Turkish war in 1877, religious services were held in some Calcutta mosques in support of the Turks. Subscriptions were also raised for the relief of the Turkish sick and wounded. The Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 was viewed with disfavour and British inaction during the Balkan wars contrasted with Britain's companionship of Turkey in former years. A medical mission was sent to Turkey under the leadership of Dr. Ansari. In 1912 Jafar Ali Khan visited Constantinople to present to the Grand Vizier some of the money raised by the Indian Muslims for the Red Crescent Funds. Jafar Ali Khan's paper, the *Zamindar* published from Lahore was very critical of the British. It had an unprecedented circulation among Indian newspapers. In 1913 it was closed by the government on grounds of sedition. Early in 1914, the Turkish Consul General came to Lahore to present to the Badshahi mosque a carpet set sent by the Sultan as a token of gratitude to Indian Muslim, he was followed a fortnight later by two Turkish doctors of the Red Crescent Society. Muslims felt that Western specially British imperialism was destroying their Muslim culture and heritage.

The British Prime Minister Lloyd George was not honest in his response. Ramananda ably pointed this out in a note published in *The Modern Review* of April, 1920 under the heading 'The Khilafat Deputation and the Premier' where the Premier was quoted as follows: "No Muhammadan in India should imagine we entered this war against Turkey as a Crusade against Islam. Nothing was further from our mind — Therefore, it is no use talking about Crusades."² Earlier, however, while congratulating the British General Allenby for over-running Jerusalem he had remarked in January 1919 - "The name of General Allenby will be ever remembered as that of the most brilliant commander who fought and won the last of the most triumphant crusades. It was his good fortune by his skill to bring to a glorious end and enterprise which absorbed the chivalry of Europe for centuries. We forget now that the military strength of Europe was concentrated for generations upon this purpose in vain and a British army under General Allenby achieved it and achieved it finally."³

Ramananda asked: "Did he speak the truth then or does he speak the truth now?"⁴ This was not the only instance where the British Prime Minister contradicted himself. He had referred in 1918 to Asia Minor and Thess as being predominantly Turkish in race". Addressing the Khilafat delegation he had however gone back on his previous statement and concluded that "the Muhammadan population is an inconsiderable minority." The

whole of Thress could in such a situation be taken from Turkish rule according to the British Premier. Lloyd George also justified separating Smyrna on the ground that "a considerable majority of the population was non-Turkish rule."⁵

Ramananda refuted both statements on the basis of the facts presented in the Encyclopedia Britannica (11th edition) and a *Statesman's Year Book* (1916) which showed that Muslims were in a majority in both Europe and Asiatic Turkey. Also he questioned the basis on which the town of Smyrna was to be detached from the Turkish Empire. "Will Mr. George give a single other example of the principle of self-determination having been applied to a town as opposed to, or independently of the province or country in which it is situated?"⁶ Ramananda objected to the manner in which the western press played up what he thought were exaggerated reports of the murder of the Americans by the Turks — "It is also remarkable," he said, "that no European or the Christian Nations feel indignant at Americans, Bulgarians and Greeks massacring Moslems — If the number of all Americans reported to have been massacred at various times were added together, we presume the total would far exceed the number of Americans that ever existed at any time and yet they are not an extinct race."⁷

Ramananda quoted a news report of how disappointed the delegation was with the response of the British Prime Minister — "The Premier's reply is not only disappointing but is even provoking. From the newspaper reports the impression left on one's mind is that the Indian Khilafat deputation has not been able to put the Moslem view-point before the Premier properly and with sufficient force. Moslems are alarmed at Premier's attitude and any hope of expecting that Moslem sentiments and religious susceptibilities would be respected will henceforth vanish forever. Far from allaying the consternation, it will increase it a hundredfold. The example of Germany and Austria are beside the mark. As regards the inability of the Turk to control and rule over subject nations, the Moslems desire to know whether, in history of the world, there is to be found a similar example of a power, surrounded by covetous nationalities and intriguing subject nations with capitulations and so forth, perpetually fighting for self-preservation and yet ruling the Empire efficiently and well.

"No Moslem can believe for one moment in the British protestation of friendship with Turkey. Since the Crimean war, can the British statesmen point out a single instance in which they have directly or indirectly helped the Turks? The Moslems remember well the occasion when Italy without the slightest provocation pounced upon Turkey to snatch away her African colonies and notwithstanding the Sultan's piteous appeal not a little finger was raised to help them. The Balkan war and the anti-Turkish attitude of Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey are also in point.

"The situation has become grave and critical and responsible Moslem leaders feel that in the circumstances they will have no control over their followers any longer."⁸

A new generation of Muslim leadership had meantime emerged which was not prepared to follow the footsteps of their elders. Among them were Mohammad Ali who brought out the weekly paper "Comrade" from January, 1911 and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad who edited the 'Al-Hilal' from 1912. Zafar Ali Khan edited the "Zaminder" from Lahore. Moulana Ali who was later to win recognition as a leader of the Khilafat movement in India, edited two papers — "Comrade" in English and "Hamdard" in Urdu. The economic hardship caused by the first world war added fuel to the fire. Muhammad Ali and his elder Soukat Ali advised the government strongly to change their policy regarding Turkey. For this reason both the brothers were interned along with Azad and others. The stage was thus set for the Khilafat movement in India. Already in 1913 the Muslim League had voted in favour of periodical meetings with Congress leaders and the proposal was warmly accepted by Nawab Syed Mohammad as the President of Indian National Congress that year. As a result Congress and League had come together by the Lucknow Pact of 1916.

The terms of the treaty of Sevres which the allies imposed on Turkey were published in 1920. Turkey was forced to cede eastern Thress, her Aegean Islands and Smyrna with its hinterland to the Greeks. Armenia was to become independent and the Straits were to be put under the control of an international Commission which would keep the Straits open at all times. Syria was to become a French mandate and Palestine and Iraq British mandates. It was harsh peace which reflected the turcophobe opinion of Lloyd George. The Muslim League had expressed its concern over the fate of the Khilafat immediately after the war. When the terms of the treaty were made public an All India Khilafat Conference was held in Lucknow in September, 1919. It declared that Sultan of Turkey's temporal power was indissolubly linked with his spiritual position as Khalifah and should not be limited. October 17, 1919 was observed as Khilafat day. The Central Khilafat committee of India was formed in the next month. Here Gandhi for the first time envisaged total withdrawal of co-operation from the Government, though he did not still work out its full implication.⁹ Gandhi lent his support to the movement for three reasons—"to obtain justice in the face of odds with the method satyagraha and to show its efficiency over all other methods, to secure Mahommedan friendship for the Hindus and thereby internal peace also, and last but not least to transfer ill-will into affection for the British and their constitution which in spite of its imperfections have weathered many a storm."¹⁰

Ramananda noted appreciatively — "righteous endeavours may bring success if Indian Muslims have sufficient cohesive and solidarity and undergo sacrifice."¹¹ But he was troubled by Soukat Ali's remark at the Madras Presidency Khilafat Conference, "In this grave crisis those who are not with us are against us."¹² Ramananda considered this to be an encroachment on the individual's right to freedom in thought. Though the Khilafat question was of great consequence to the Muslims in this Country, other communities could not be expected to react equally to the situation. If members of one religious community felt that they were justified in refusing to pay taxes to the government if their demands were not fulfilled were other religious communities entitled to do so? This could only undermine the very basis of civil society and lead to chaos and confusion. At the same time he deprecated the ideas of a Hindu feeling up the post held by a Muslim who had resigned through non-co-operation with the Government. As for himself, Ramananda made his position clear in note that he wrote in *The Modern Review* in May 1920, "I am not sufficient in touch with any section of the public, particularly outside Bengal, to be able to pronounce on the strength, extent and intensity of genuine sympathy with the Muslims. I can speak only for myself. I do feel for Turkey and the Moslems. I have never sought and never received any titles from government. I have never sought election to any Legislative Council, nor would do so on future, though I have been passed to do so. I have never been an office-seeker. So there is nothing along this lines that I have to give up. As regards non-payment of taxes, I do not intend to go so far if the Khilafat agitation fails. I do not believe in verbal heroism and verbal indirect menace; and hence, what I will not do, what I think I should not do, I would not seem to be willing or ready to do."¹³ This was Ramananda Chatterje, fearless, daunted and the seeker of truth.

Non-Co-operation with the Government

At the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in September, 1920, the issue of non-co-operation was discussed in details. Gandhi moved the resolution in support of the Khilafat as follows— "In view of the fact on the Khilafat question both the Indian and Imperial governments have signally failed in their duty towards Mussalmans of India, and the Prime Minister has deliberately broken his pledge word given to them, and that it is the duty of every non-Moslem Indian in every legitimate manner to assist his Mussalman brother in his attempt to remove the religious calamity that has overtaken him."¹⁴ The resolution also included reference to the Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy and how the civil officials had avoided punishment for the part they played in it.

The debate in the Parliament showed how unresponsive the people of Britain were to the grievances of the Indians. Congress came out in support of the policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation inaugurated by Gandhi until the said wrongs were righted and swaraj was established. The following steps were recommended as a mark of protest:

- (a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in Local Bodies;
- (b) Refusal to attend Government Levees, Durbars and other officials and semi-official functions held by Government official, or in their honour;
- (c) Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and in place of such schools and colleges, establishment of national schools and colleges in various provinces;
- (d) Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid, for the settlement of private disputes;
- (e) Refusal on the part of the military clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;
- (f) Withdrawal of candidates of their candidature from election to the Reformed Council and refusal on the part of the voters for any candidates who may despite the congress advice offer himself for election;
- (g) Boycott of foreign goods and encouragement of handlooms (Charkah and Khadi.)

Despite the fact that Mahatma Gandhi was backed by Ali Brothers and the whole Muslim block, the resolution was subjected to stiff opposition. Prominent leaders like Chitranjan Das, Bipin Chandra Pal, Annie Beasant, Malaviya and Jinnah spoke against it. Gandhi's proposal was passed in the subject committee by a majority of twelve: 144 voting for, 132 against, few remained neutral. Bipin Chandra Pal moved an amendment to the effect that a committee should be formed to devise a non-co-operation programme suitable to the various provinces and a mission to England to demand complete swaraj. Pal previously in course of four lectures expressed his ideas on non-co-operation before the commencement of the special session of the Calcutta Congress. He denied that non-co-operation could by any means be called constitutional and absolute non-co-operation was impossible. As he put it, "Absolute non-co-operation can never be a constitutional movement — the primary function of every state or government is the preservation of peace and order. Therefore, any movement which strikes at the primary function of the state cannot call itself a constitutional movement." ¹⁵ Ramananda differed in this regard with Pal. He did not consider non-co-operation unconstitutional. He argued when Carson had founded the Ulster volunteer Force to resist the Home rule movement in Ireland nobody had

complained that he had violated the constitution. Non-co-operation in India could not be called unconstitutional by the same standard. Pal suggested what he called "qualified non-co-operation". The Gandhian programme of non-co-operation, he thought, did not lay emphasis on essentials like the boycott of British goods and withdrawal of Indian capital and labour from British enterprise in this country. The Gandhian programme in Pal's opinion was too negative and had little to offer in a positive manner.¹⁶ Nobody could carry on physical life by always refusing to cooperate with the Government in everyday life. So Pal recommended leaving the specific form in which the non-co-operation movement was to be carried out to the actual participants on the scene. He put it thus — "the practical shape of non-co-operation will have to be determined by practical consideration. It may take one shape in the Punjab; another shape in Bengal."¹⁷

Not only Bipin Chandra Pal, but members of Bengal delegation led by Chittaranjan Das were at first opposed to the programme of non-co-operation as laid down by Gandhi. They did not object to the principle or policy of non-co-operation, but by the manner in which it was sought to be carried out. Gandhi's strategy of boycotting councils was opposed by Bipin Chandra Pal, Chittaranjan Das and Madan Mohan Malaviya who held that they could more fruitfully carry on the fight for non-co-operation with this additional weapon in their hands rather than without it, especially when the weapon had been acquired by them and not obtained by charity. As editor of the Allahabad based journal "Independent", Pal had proclaimed, "The object of the opposition is by every means in their power to create opinion in the constituencies against the government. Bad measures we shall oppose because they are bad, good measures we shall oppose because they ought to have been better. Legitimate and constitutional obstruction must be our policy."¹⁸ Similarly Das argued, "These (reforms) are not gifts of the British Government. Reforms have been wrung out of the hands of the Government. I want to make the Councils an instrument for the attainment of swaraj and to use this weapon which is the hollow of your hands to bring about the complete swaraj."¹⁹ From the lesson of the failure of Swadeshi movement he emphasised on the need for educational institutions and constructive programme before launching immediately a movement in an over sanguine manner.

In his concluding remarks Lala Lajpat Rai as Congress President of the session mentioned some points in which he differed with Gandhi. From his experience in running the Dayananda Anglo Vedic College he concluded that it was impossible to impart national education without a national Government. He did not also approve the call for lawyers to boycott the law courts without the establishment of arbitration courts where Indians could solve their disputes. Even then he did not think that it would be possible to boycott the courts altogether as long as the British ruled the country. He opined that it was impossible to paralyse the government without striking at the root of the economic exploitation as the economic bondage was the root of the political bondage. He said, "Now you have added another clause, that is, boycott of foreign goods. You have passed that resolution, and I wish you complete success from the bottom of my heart, absolutely."²⁰

Ultimately the Congress was called upon to vote either in favour of Gandhi's resolution or Bipinchandra Pal's amendment. The result was 1855 for and 873 against. Those who disapproved of non-co-operation had no opportunity to register their opinion. As a result nearly half the number of delegates present did not exercise their voting rights. *The Leader* (September 12, 1920), *The Bengalee* (September 10, 1920) argued that "such a massive abstention invalidated the vote, making it completely unrepresentative of provincial feeling."²¹

The proposal to send a mission to England was turned down but Gandhi had to accept the attainment of Swaraj as the goal of the Congress though it was not initially a part of this resolution. The resolution adopted at the special session of the Congress in Calcutta in September 1920 were confirmed in the next session held at Nagpur in December that year. Ramananda had been observing the proceedings with great interests.

The programme of non-co-operation, he thought could be either — one to paralyse the administration or alternatively to perform all those functions which were usually discharged by the states — thus to form a state within the state, like the Sin Fin Republic in Ireland without resorting to violence. The first stage of the programme would be disciplinary; striking of effective blows could come later. Ramananda did not think that the administration could be paralysed by the programme that Congress was about to launch. A deadlock could only be created by non-payment of taxes by all or the majority of tax-payers and resignation of their posts by most Indian civil and military employees of the Government. The basis of the British rule in India could be exposed if this happened. Even Gandhi had admitted this when he said: "My resolution adopted the principle of the whole of the Khilafat programme, even non-payment of taxes, and advised for immediate adoption, boycott of titles and the honorary offices, law courts by litigants, schools and colleges and reformed councils." (*Young India*, September 15, 1920). But there was no mention of 'non-payment of taxes' in the Congress resolution.²²

Withdrawal of lawyers from courts, Ramananda thought, would not also paralyse the Government. At best it could have a moral effect which the bureaucracy could afford to ignore.²³ Lajpat considered it impracticable. Ramananda like Lala Lajpat doubted whether in the absence of an alternative system of justice it would be possible to stay away from the courts. He asked, "If his (supporter of the resolution) son were accused of murder, did they think he would leave undefended?"²⁴

Ramananda was opposed to litigation as such. So he further asked "Litigiousness, whether under a foreign or under a national government, is a great evil, and must be combated. So even if all the objects for which Mr. Gandhi's resolution has been passed were gained, it would still be duty of patriots to decrease litigiousness by fostering the growth of fraternal feelings and neighbourliness and of a sense of common citizenship and by the establishment of arbitration courts"²⁵

Ramananda was not prepared to accept the establishment of arbitration courts an adjunct to a political movement of a more or less temporary and emergent character. He contended that the establishment of courts in adequate number and people's confidence in them was likely to take a long time. So with this weapon it was impossible to deliver a swift blow at the bureaucratic citadel, as swiftness was a great factor in winning victory. Not only that without establishment of private arbitration courts the mere withdrawal of lawyers from British courts was more of a disadvantage to the litigants than an advantage. According to the census of 1911 the lawyers and their dependents numbered 1, 40,014. The number of Lawyers' clerks, petition writers and their dependents was 1, 15,649.²⁶ If they all were to withdraw there would be an influx of British Barrister to the higher courts. Gandhi's resolution demanded the greatest and most conspicuous sacrifice, by giving up the practice on the part of the lawyers. Ramananda was astonished to notice that in the Congress resolution this sacrifice was termed as "the least sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object."²⁷

It was reported in *The Bengalee* : – "The following instruction was given by Gandhi, in Young India:

"One thing practicing lawyer may not do, he may no longer figure as a leader on public platforms. He must be content to be a silent worker."

Ramananda strongly opposed to this instruction by saying, "If we were lawyers accustomed to devote a part of our time to public work, we would not have deviated by a hair's breadth from our line of work in the direction of diminishing it, owing to Mr. Gandhi's 'instruction', though we have great respect for him. No doubt, Mr. Gandhi has (Whether internationally or otherwise, does not matter) made it difficult now-a-days for anybody who is not a follower of his obtain a hearing from crowds."^{27a} If anybody had loved his country, he could serve the motherland as a silent worker or as an articulate worker, according to his powers and predilection. For this any restriction as well as instructions to men of mature age and understanding was not necessary. The editor of *The Modern Review* did not hesitate to write: "We are not sure that Mr. Gandhi himself wishes to pose as a dictator, but instructions are apt to be considered dictatorial."^{27b} At the same time he expected that no movement should be allowed to degenerate practically into an one-man show.

Boycott of Educational Institutions

The principle part of Ramananda's argument as contained in an article published immediately after the Congress session at Calcutta related to the call for boycott of British goods and educational institutions. The experience of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal was present in his mind while discussing the issues. National education had not much headway even during the days of swadeshi movement. The students' passed out of the national institutions were discriminated in the job market. A drawing on the experience of the national education movement in Bengal, Ramananda sounded a note of caution. He presented a detailed critique of the educational programme advocated by the Congress in an article published in the *Modern Review* in course of which he said, "As the warfare of physical force, so a non-violent struggle blow, to tell, should be struck swiftly. But it takes a long time to think out and perfect on educational system, to establish educational institutions, to choose and get together the right kind of teachers, and to select or write text-books which, instead of denationalizing and inducing slave psychology, would make the pupils enlightened and progressive patriots and give them the mentality of free and strong men. With the despotic powers of the Press Act and some other acts with which the bureaucracy has armed itself, even the selection and composition of text-books of history, economics, politics and literature may be best with political difficulty. 'National' schools and colleges to succeed must lead to some careers other than those government services, law &c. It is not very easy to provide independent careers and education leading thereto. All this the Council of National Education in Bengal have found by their experience. The hurry of a political emergency does not provide a suitable atmosphere for calm, deep and sane educational thought. Western education is not so fatally injurious or unmixed an evil that we must get rid of it as soon as possible even before a substitute, better than itself; has been provided; for most of our greatest modern men are its products. There is one more reason, derived from our experience in Bengal which we wish to urge against the mixing up of an educational problem which a political movement of opposition to Government, though of a non-violent character. 'National' schools, their pupils and teachers in Bengal, have long been the object of the

special attention of the C.I.C. Many boys young men and elderly men have suffered greatly in consequence. In fact this is one of the main causes of the failure of the national education movement in Bengal to make headway. When men and women have reached years of discretion decide for themselves to do things which led to persecution and sufferings, they cannot blame anybody else for their misery and their troubles have a disciplinary, formative, chastening and strengthening effect on their character. But in Bengal, boys reading in national schools suffered for being connected with a political movement which they neither started nor were responsible for in any other way; — in fact ,many of them were not old enough to be responsible for what they might have said or done. These facts prevented us from supporting any step of which the probable untoward consequences would have to be reaped not by ourselves or men of our age but mostly by juveniles; though good private institutions started independently of a political movement have our support. It should also be clear from what we have said that to start an educational movement as an integral part of a political movement of 'non-co-operation', would be tantamount almost to courting the greatest opposition to it on the part of the bureaucracy, and conquest failure."²⁸

Ramananda thought that this note of caution was necessary in view of the fact that the political leaders of the nation were trying to utilise students to gain their immediate objectives. When Gandhi and his colleagues urged students to leave educational institutions at first, it was thought that their object was wholly or mainly to give them "national" education, either in "national" institutions or in their homes or as apprentices to patriotic merchants or artisans. But later it seemed that the services of the students were required mainly or partly for the purpose of propaganda. Motilal Nehru in a speech at Banaras declared the non-co-operation movement "a spiritual war" which required the services of able-bodied soldiers. Students, he thought, were best mentally and physically equipped to carry out this task. So he called upon the students to engage in propaganda work among the masses and to train them. He expected the students to lay aside their career prospects just as English youths did at the time of the First World War. Ramananda did not swallow this line of argument. Student's assistance was sought in England during the First World War but Universities and colleges had not been closed down there with the result that students could resume their studies after the war. But Moitilal Nehru and his colleagues were trying to destroy the existing universities and colleges and schools. So the analogy did not work.²⁹ "...the British students, Ramananda said, "received training for war and were maintained by the British Government while they were under training and in service. Similarly Mr. Nehru and his Colleagues should be able to make arrangement for the training of non-co-operating students for spiritual war, and for their maintenance during training and service. Spiritual war certainly requires not less training and definite instructions than physical warfare."³⁰

In a speech delivered at Allahabad in 1920 Mohammad Ali had regretted that the students were not as spirited as they used to be before. They would grow weaker with the spread of western education in spirit and conscience. They should, therefore, be taken out of the harmful effect of education. Another answer to such question was that it was not wise in the absence of another food to eat poison.³¹ Ramananda did not consider western education to be so harmful. "There may be a poisonous element in it," he admitted, "but the antidote is also there."³² Even the Congress sub-committee entrusted with the duty of preparing the draft instructions regarding the non-co-operation had conceded that on account of this education (western education) grown-up students and their guardians had become politically minded. So the 'poison' (western education), instead of killing those to whom it was administered, might have done them some good.³³ In response to the call of boycotting the schools and colleges when hundreds of students were found leaving their institutions Ramananda admired their spirit but could not praise their judgment. He countered with the question "Five or fifteen or twenty years ago, would an apple for non-violent revolt for winning swarajya been responded to be a larger or smaller number of students? To be more particular, what would have been the response in Aligarh? Greater or less than now?"³⁴

Ramananda did not think that there was any loss of self-respect in attending Government or aided schools since the money of the state was really that of the people. He thought that the programme of gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided and controlled by the Government should not have been included in the non-co-operation programme at all. He added, "...things which form a part of our permanent duty which we must go on doing, whatever the character of our government, should not be mixed up with a political movement which is not expected or intended to be permanent."³⁵ On the contrary, he did not lose sight of the practical difficulties that were to be incurred in the establishment of national educational institutions. His view on national education was thus summed up in an article published in *The Modern Review* in August, 1920:

"Truly and fully independent schools are very few in number and very few parents and guardians are competent or have enough leisure to teach their own children, or are in a pecuniary position to keep private tutors for them. We are not blind to the defects of anti-national influence of government schools. But in spite of this facts, it is better to send children there than to keep them ignorant. Obstruction, destruction and boycott are necessary under certain circumstances, but construction ought also go hand in hand. Just as in the case of civil

litigation, non-co-operators have been advised not to have recourse to the government law courts but to get their disputes settled by private arbitration, so parents while being urged not to send their children to Government schools ought to have been told of some available alternative means of educating them. We are not unaware that self-respect may urge many not to accept any kind of Government help; but it may be asked whether studying children in Government schools can in the least added to the digress of being domineered over and exploited by an alien people? Who do not desire to be devoid of national self-respect or to lose sensitiveness should not strain at a gnat while swallowing camel."³⁶

On the basis of the figure applied in the census of 1911, he estimated that the number of the persons to be deprived of education for boycott movement at eight million and their percentage to the total population 3.25.³⁷

In the atmosphere prevailing at the time, the call for boycotting educational institutions met with tremendous response. The All India College Students Conference, held at Nagpur just a day before the Indian National Congress met in the same city on December 26, 1920, endorsed the Congress decision. Addressing the gathering Lala Lajpat Rai as the President, however, sounded a different note. Though the college students might leave their studies and participate in the national movement at once he advised the students of Medical, Engineering and Technical colleges to follow a different path. They were suggested not to leave their colleges and interrupt their studies. The Arts college students were asked to "consider the situation well and be sure under no delusion that anybody was going to make provision for their education in national colleges."³⁸ But Cittaranjan Das in Calcutta did not allow even this small exception. At a meetings of college students (from Bangabashi and Ripon Colleges) he said, "Medical colleges and Engineering colleges were not to be made exceptional in this matter."³⁹ In his view the problem was not of education, but of non-co-operation. He further added, "you must withdraw your help in moving the powerful machinery of the bureaucracy.....It contributes all the strength upon which the strength of the bureaucracy depends."⁴⁰ Vijayraghavachariar too, in his presidential address at the Nagpur session of Congress did not support the plan of withdrawal of students from non-national schools and colleges mainly on grounds of finance and of just first claims of the illiterate masses on the non-official national purse for their education.⁴¹ The same opinion was indicated by Ramananda. He thought that Lajpat's advice evinced great sense of responsibility than those who urged the students to come out of their educational institutions. He argued that in absence of a sufficient number of adequately equipped national institutions there was no sense in asking students to leave their colleges and schools.⁴² In fact there were many in the country like Lajpat Rai, Malaviya, Das, Pal, Vijayraghavachariar and Ramananda who were openly critical about Gandh's call for non-co-operation with the kind of education that was being provided by the Government. Judith Brown believes that the English educated Political elite were so concerned because the Gandhian programme "if given immediate effect, would cut at the roots of their position and power in the subcontinent."⁴³ But there were more reasons to be worried about. For a nation the greatest political disgrace was to be ruled by a foreign nation. Young men and women, whether students or not, whether students of government controlled institutions or of "national" institutions were not free from that disgrace and in fact it was impossible for them to get rid of this disgrace simply by leaving government controlled institutions. It could have been done by becoming politically free. But it was not possible for them to be politically free or make their country free politically simply by leaving colleges and schools. They were required to do "something" else in order to be free. But that very "something" had not been told by none of the non-co-operating leaders to the students till January, 1921.⁴⁴ Ramananda thought that that political disgrace was such a disgrace that college restriction could not make any appreciable addition to it, and there was moreover the set of the equipment of knowledge which made a man better soldier in the fight for freedom.⁴⁵ To prove his point he argued that the inhabitants of British India had to lead a life of political compromise but for that reason it was not wise to leave India or commit suicide. Similarly these native students might have some restrictions in their schools and colleges but for that it was not necessary to leave their institutions. For the sake of the knowledge which they received and which might equip them better for fight for freedom they were required to stay there, though on no account they were to stay there for a single day if the restrictions became intolerable.

Nobody had explained quite clearly how the students would be benefitted if they participate in the national movement leaving aside their studies. Ramananda weighed the pros and cons of the situation and concluded that the education system of British India was undoubtedly bad, but it was not so bad that it was required to be destroyed; it could be reformed. Without national autonomy it was not practicable to establish a system of education, national in its character and quality and so extensive as to meet the needs of the whole school-going population. In an article published in the *Modern Review* in February, 1921 Ramananda criticised Gandhi for his uncompromising attitude towards the state-control system of education. He expressed himself in

words as follows : "we find that Mr. Gandhi and others use and put up with state railways, telegraphs, the post office, the western system of medicine etc., though they do not like these things; but a state-control system of education, even when the control is indirect and almost nominal, it is then unbearable. We do not in the least quarrel with them for their dislikes and compromises. But so far as national self-respect and destruction of manhood goes, everyone knows that railways put the brand of the helot on your foreheads more distinctly, openly and shamelessly than any school or college. Every time we go to a railway station or board a train we feel no depressed insulted and humiliated than we can describe. It may be an individual idiosyncrasy with us that we do not have the same feeling to the same extent in entering even a Government college, but it is a fact which we must record. Yet it is the some satanic Government which controls railways and universities and schools and colleges alike and spends our money obtained in the form of taxes for all of them. Our opinion is that as we use and put up with railways because we need them for our purposes, so we should use and put up with the universities, colleges and schools, because we require them for our purposes. If we had our own national means of transport and locomotion we would boycott the existing railways if we had our national system of education we would boycott the system. In the mean time, there is no objection to but rather an urgent need for as many independent lines of railways and as many independent universities, colleges and schools as we can construct and establish; and at the same time we should try to introduce reforms in the existing railways and the existing system of education. Mr. Gandhi has tried much to improve the lot of third class passengers, but he wants not to reform the state system of education but to destroy it. We do not quarrel with him for choosing his line of action but for our part we want to introduce reforms in the universities, schools and colleges, too."^{45a}The whole question was boiling down to whether the people should receive national education first or strive for national autonomy. Ramananda did not consider these to be exclusive of each other. He recommended middle course, "while educationists should establish and conduct as many national institutions as they can, the main effort of the political workers should for the time being be directed to the attainment of national autonomy."⁴⁶

Ramananada agreed that the main object of education in British India was to produce cheap and efficient Servants and submissive subjects. But he thought just as in manufacturing industries, the byproducts sometimes turned out to be more valuable as direct product result of the education system established by the British in India had been to produce not only cheap and efficient servants and submissive subjects but politically conscious and discontented men longing for liberty. Among the English educated men and women there were not very many heroes, ready to dedicate their all for freedom. But was the number of such patriots greater among those who had not received English education than among those who had? Ramananda answered this question in the January issue of the *Modern Review*, 1921. He wrote, "Choose any number of leaders of the Moderate, Extremist, and Revolutionary parties and you will find that you cannot name a single political leader ignorant of English to match anyone of them. And it is to be born in mind that English educated men are a very small fraction of our total population. It is easy to indulge in the vague indictment that our English education makes us slaves. But admitting that to be true (which we do not), it is not also true that those who have not received any education are greater slaves, not only in that they are not politically minded and hence unconscious of their servile condition, but in that in the mass they are politically more timid than educated men. In recent times even illiterate persons have, no doubt, become somewhat politically minded and have in some places and on some occasions acted bravely, but that also is in part of an indirect result of English education, and they have done so under the leadership and inspiration of English educated men"⁴⁷

He further added, "Slave mentality" was found both among the English educated and other Indians and it was to a greater extent and degree among the latter than the former and English education was not the main cause if such mentality. On the contrary, it had destroyed the servility in many, making them free in spirit."⁴⁸

Chittaranjan Das was of the opinion that no construction was possible without destruction and the process of destruction preceded construction.⁴⁹ Ramananda too thought that destruction was necessary for new construction but one should destroy, not in a fit of frenzied fury, but as much as one can construct. In absence of sufficient number of adequately equipped national institutions it was folly in asking students to leave their colleges and schools.⁵⁰ He did not think that non-co-operation leaders had the capacity and resources enough to found and maintain an adequate number of educational institutions to replace those which the movement was seeking to destroy. Non-Co-operators asserted that the contemporary education system had made the mind servile in the case of the majority of its recipients. If that was true, the majority of college students passing through a long school course had acquired "a slave mentality." Therefore, for the purpose of building up a sound edifice of national education, they were damaged materials not first-class materials. On the other hand there were millions of totally illiterate boys and girls who were yet to be unspoiled by any enslaving education. Ramananda considered them better materials for a new and sound structure as he argued that new and first class materials had been used by good builders for sound and strong structure, not damaged materials.⁵¹

R. J. Gohale, chairman of the reception committee of the first All-India College Students' Conference, advised the students to realise their responsibility to the onward march of the country and expected them to follow in this respect the example of students of China and Egypt. But as the external environment was different in each country, imitation in externals was apt to be futile and sometimes dangerous. Having spent the considerable part of his life in educational work Ramananda wrote: "we sincerely desire that there should be a sound and healthy a system of education. We also believe that our former pupils will bear us out when we say that the present system of education did not in any way oblige us to predispose them towards servility. Our personal experience leads us to enter a protest against wholesale denunciation and destruction without the ability to reconstruct on an adequate scale."⁵²

On December 19, 1920 Mahatma Gandhi addressed a gathering of 2000 women at the Chitnavis Park in Nagpur city. He advised them not to learn English but to study Sanskrit instead. He said that India was in a fallen condition and so long as its former glory was not restored it would be ill befitted them to decorate their persons and use fashionable things. They could serve their country by helping Swadeshi. He asked them to learn weaving and thus helping in reviving the handloom industry.

Ramananda criticized Gandhi for his wrong advice not to learn English. Moreover hand-spinning by no means could be a substitute for a general education for the girls and women.⁵³ He said—"if it be necessary for Indian men to learn English, it is necessary for Indian women too" and reasoned that no Indian vernacular literature then contained books which could give one all the modern knowledge of different subjects that one required for the purpose of ordinary culture. Not only that no Indian vernacular sufficed for intellectual contact and intellectual commerce with provinces of India and no Indian vernacular was then fitted to give one a broad world out-looks.⁵⁴ Therefore, it was necessary and beneficial for Indian men and women alike to learn English. On the contrary Ramananda was not opposed to learn Sanskrit.

Economic Boycott

The ideas of swadeshi and economic boycott that were developed during the anti-partition movement during the year 1905 -1908 were to a large extent carried on by Gandhi. The special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in September, 1920, adopted a resolution to the effect : "Congress advises adoption of swadeshi in piece-goods on a vast scale and inasmuch as the existing mills of India with indigenous capital and control do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the nation and are not likely to do so for a long time to come, this Congress advises immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand-spinning in every home and hand weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement".⁵⁵

British commercial interests in India were too important and Britain's trade relation with this land was so advantageous to her. So one of the most effective means of awakening British interests in Indian affairs was undoubtedly that which could affect Britain's commercial interests. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi rightly decided to boycott foreign goods. But Ramananda considered that the declaration of universal boycott of foreign goods betrayed "more hysteric wrath than wisdom and practical sense."⁵⁶ According to him boycott of all foreign goods was impossible even were it right or wise. Ramananda pointed out that the paper on which Gandhi's resolutions were printed was foreign, the printing machine which printed it was of manufactured, all news papers, periodicals and books including Gandhi's Young India were printed with the help of foreign machines and for the most part on foreign papers. The postage stamps affixed on Indian news papers, including Young India to transit them all over the country were made in foreign land. Besides all foreigners were not enemies of India and nations were depended on each other for their own needs. This was providential means of promoting human brotherhood and solidarity. In fact it was impossible and undesirable for a civilized community to boycott all foreign goods." So it would have been better if Gandhi specified particular goods or class of goods to be boycotted.⁵⁷ At the same time the resolution about the total boycott of foreign goods was needed to be modified. Otherwise, Ramananda thought those who had voted for the resolution would be considered guilty of having taken a vow which they could never keep nor intended to keep.⁵⁸

Ramananda remembered that during the days of the Swadeshi movement, Boycott of foreign goods had involved the use of force on the part of the volunteers. These in turn had enabled the police and executive to apply force to put down the movement. It would have been better, Ramananda thought, if Gandhi had stuck to his mature and deliberate opinion and declared himself in favour of stimulating Swadeshi in all form most energetically.⁵⁹ But he left out reference to boycott. He reminded his readers that that Gandhi "himself supported swadeshi but opposed bare boycott on the grounds that it implied punishment of opponent rather than the ideal of swatyagrahi, and was in this case impracticable unless the whole country resorted to it. Nevertheless he concluded it in his resolution as he said later because he could not reject it as a matter of conscience."⁶⁰

Besides, Ramananda thought, the common people were required to make the greatest sacrifice to implement the boycott resolution of foreign goods. This involved the wearing of coarse cloth and payment of a price for it of higher than what was required for the same or superior foreign dress materials. Moreover there was no adequate supply and distribution of swadeshi clothing and goods.⁶¹ Ramananda's apprehension were not unfounded. According to the Bezwada Congress resolution (March 21, 1921) though the introduction of twenty laces of charkhas in Indian household's almost reached the target and the weaving and popularizing of Khaddar made some progress, but production was slow and far behind the target. He did not fail to observe:

"For several years passed under production and profiteering have made the lot of the poor very hard in respect of food and clothing even many young women having been at times seduced almost nudity. In the case of the poor, and they are the majority of our people, no further self sacrifice is imaginable. It is only to be hoped that their lot will not be made harder in the coming cold session by speculators and profiteers."⁶²

Ramananda hoped that Gandhi would exert his influence over the Marwaris, Bhatias as he was revered by them and others to ensure that speculators and profiteers did not manipulate the trade in Indian piece-goods in such a manner that there was an overall rise in the price. Moslem leaders like Moulana Saukat Ali could similarly persuade wealthy Moslem dealers of foreign articles to divert their capital, enterprise and energy for the manufacture and sale of Swadeshi goods.⁶³

Progress Of The Non-Co-Operation Movement

In December 1920 the annual session of the Congress met in Nagpur under the presidentship of Vijayaraghavachariar. The opposition had melted away at Nagpur which was seen in the special session of Calcutta. The elections were over, making the boycott of councils a non-issue. Gandhi met with Chittranjan Das before the commencement of the session. Though what was discussed among them was not disclosed, it was found that Deshbandhu moved the main resolution on non-co-operation and Lala Lajpat Rai seconded it. But Pandit Malaviya, Annie Beasant, Jinnah and Bipin Chandra Pal remained irreconcilable.⁶⁷ The Nagpur Congress reaffirmed the resolutions passed in Calcutta.

At the time of adopting the resolutions about non-co-operation Gandhi expected that if all the programmes were to be carried out in the right way swaraj would be gained within a year. This promise was not considered as an acceptable proposal to many such as Bipin Chandra Pal, Subhash Chandra Bose and Tagore. Pal found no logic but magic in the proposal. Bose considered the promise as childish imagination. Ramananda found it impossible to gain swaraj within a year. He wrote in the *Modern Review*, (February, 1929):

"We have neither the heart nor the desire to make fun of those who expected to win swaraj within nine months or one year, keeping to themselves the reason for the faith that is in them. For they have received some light which we have not, and they may walk by faith whilst we walk by reason; and their faith may be due to some direct, intuitive and inner illumination. This we consider to be not beyond the bounds of possibility. But if they assign any reason for the faith that is in them, if they give any indications of the means by which swaraj can be attained within a brief definite period, they place themselves on ground within our reach. We can discuss the reasons; we can consider whether the means are sufficient for the purpose. Discussing and considering the reasons and the means hitherto made public, we have arrived at the conclusion that neither students abstaining themselves from schools and colleges for three or nine months, nor the same persons working at the spinning wheel for nine months or one year can bring about Swaraj within that period."⁶⁸

To win Swaraj within a brief definite period, it seemed to Ramananda, no peaceful means except non-payment of taxes by large number of men was sufficient. A universal strike of all Indian employees of the state was another means. But it did not seem probable to him that majority of those who were in service would give up service. Another means was the gradual cut off the services of the supply of government servants by proper patriotic education and education for independent careers.⁶⁹

According to Ramananda not to pay taxes and to keep cool even when oppressed and plundered required more courage and self-discipline than large number of Indian literate and illiterate sisters and brothers then possessed. He hoped that under the competent leadership illiterate persons would prove sturdier passive resisters than the literate and well-to-do person and found justification in Gandhi's observation that the attainment of swaraj depended on agriculturists and workers. At a meeting in Harrison Road on January 26, 1921 Gandhi said, "If you do not help with money, swaraj will be difficult but not impossible to attain. If the students of India do not help me, it does not matter. If the pleaders do not help, it does not matter. If moneyed men do not help with money that also does not matter. The attainment of swaraj depends on the workers and the agriculturists.....If you have power, if you have strength in you, if you want to govern India, then make sacrifice. Sacrifice yourself, your children, and your parents, everything in your life. Swaraj depends upon the agriculturists. If they do not help, then swaraj cannot be attained. If they co-operate with the government, all

your virtues will not help you in winning swaraj."⁷⁰ The attainment of swaraj depended on how fast this could be done. Therefore, it was most important to impart education of patriotism and discipline to the workers and agriculturists. Strikes and *hartals* were imparting this education to some extent, acknowledge Ramananda and wrote, "Mr. Gandhi with his *hartal* is a great national asset. The *hartals* are disciplining the people to obey a leader. And hitherto they have rendered obedience. It ought to be concern not only of Mr. Gandhi but of all lovers of the country to see that his undoubted influence over the masses is properly utilized. This leads to observe that if the luck of the thousands of Bengali student strikers who have voluntarily left their schools and colleges can neither be educated in national institutions, nor utilized for propaganda, teaching and social service work in villages but are obliged either to idle away their time or to go back top the institutions from which they have withdrawn themselves, the non-co-operation movement will experience a setback in Bengal from which it would be difficult for it soon to recover."⁷¹

In *Young India*, January 19,1921, Gandhi told the students of Bengal to suspend their studies and learn the method of bringing out swaraj within a year and accept the spinning wheel for India's economic salvation he thought thus the students would be able to contribute to the attainment of Swaraj.He suggested every national school and college to be turned into a factory for preparing cones of yarns for the nation. Gandhi wrote, in the article entitled, "The secret of Swaraj":

"We are engaged in a spiritual war. We are not living in normal times. Normal activities are always suspended in abnormal times. And if we are out to gain Swaraj in a year's time, it means that we must concentrate upon our goal to the exclusion of everything else, therefore venture to suggest to the students all over India to suspend their normal studies for one year and devote their time to the manufacture of yarn by hand spinning. It will be their greatest act of service to the motherland, and their most natural contribution to the attainment of swaraj. During the late war our rulers attempted to turn every factory into an arsenal for turning out bullets of lead. During this war of ours, I suggest every national school and college being turned into a factory for preparing cones of yarns for the nation. The students will loss nothing by the occupation: they will gain a kingdom here and thereafter. There is a famine of cloth in India. To assist in removing this dearth is surely an act of merit. If it is sinful to use foreign yarn, it is a virtue to manufacture more swadeshi yarn in order to enable us to cope with the want that would be created by the disuse of foreign yarn." (*Young India*, 19.1.1921)

Ramananda did not see how swaraj could be gain in one year by the method suggested above by Gandhiji. He wrote: "By manufacturing our own yarn, we manufacture our own cloth. That enables us to stop the import of British yarn and cloth. The loss of her trade with India in manufactured cotton goods would rouse England to the seriousness of the situation in India and thus England would be persuaded nor obliged to grant Swaraj to India. If this be the process which Mr. Gandhi has in his mind, it means to use that one year is not sufficiently long period to bring about the result desired".⁷²

He argued Swaraj had different meanings. Swaraj meant for doing everything that for necessary for existence as a civilized people, produce all the things which required, doing research work, writing books and educating children and elders, making own roads, and settle own quarrels, policing the country etc. He then raised question how all this could have been brought about in one year. Though it was possible for Russia to remove all obstacles by force in the course of a sudden and bloody revolution in 1917 but it was not possible for him to attain Swaraj in the sense mentioned above in one year but in a much longer period".⁷³

The promise of swaraj was subjected to many provisions, conditions, ifs and buts. It was not quite clear from what date exactly the year was to be reckoned. Then there was the condition that Swaraj could be attained unless untouchability was removed though the rank and file and most of the leading non-cooperators had not been trying earnestly to give equality of social status to those whom Hindu society had made "untouchable". Besides there were divergence of views in understanding the meaning of Swaraj. It was not clear whether it meant the attainment or recognition of the right of the people to determine their form of government. These uncertainties forced Ramanand to a say that Gandhi ought not to have made any such promise.⁷⁴

In response to the Gandhi's call to the students for suspending their studies for one year Ramananda reacted strongly. He thought in an armed and unarmed war of independence of short duration education might wait. But the non-co-operation movement was not of this kind. Peaceful carrying out of the programme of non-co-operation by the people required the education and disciplining the people. For this work large number of propagandists educated and trained for the purposes were required. All this meant time and much a wider spread of education than India could boast of in the second decade of the 20th century. Therefore, neither education nor swaraj could wait. Education should have been going on and year after year on increasing number of educated men should work devotedly for bring about Swaraj.⁷⁵

The non-co-operation movement had two aspects which may be called positive and negative, or constructive and destructive. The former included the promotion of Swadeshi, particularly the revival of hand spinning and weaving, removal of untouchability among the Hindus, promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity, and prohibition of the use of alcoholic drinks. The destructive side is usually referred to as the triple boycott, — namely boycott of legislature, courts and educational institutions, both schools and colleges maintained and aided by the government. The ideas of passive resistance and civil disobedience, though not especially included in the programme, seemed to have been tactically permitted, though under strict limitations whenever necessary to carry out the above programme. The items of boycott included the surrender of titles, honour, etc. as formulated in the resolution, quoted above, of the Congress in its special session at Calcutta. Some constructive work was directly necessitated by the destructive programme, such as setting up arbitration boards where cases might be decided out of courts and national schools and colleges where students leaving old schools and colleges might continue their education. The boycott of foreign goods, particularly foreign cloths, formed an important item by way of promoting Swadeshi. Immediately after the Nagpur Congress, Gandhi made an extensive and prolonged tour of the country. At this time Gandhi wrote in *Young India* "No fierce propaganda is necessary for solidifying Hindu-Muslim unity and producing a still more non-violent atmosphere." Ramananda too expressed the same opinion: "No propaganda of a political character, fierce or mild, can produce Hindu-Muslim unity. It can result only with the gradual and increased spiritualizing and liberalizing of the religious sentiment and the dying out of social prejudice and notions of ceremonial purity and untouchability."⁷⁶ He was perfectly at one with Gandhi when the latter said:

"I have put untouchability in the forefront because. I observe certain remissness about it. Hindu non-co-operators may not be indifferent about it. We may be able to right the Khilafat wrong but we can never reach Swaraj with the poison of untouchability corroding the Hindu part of the national body. Swaraj is a meaningless term, if we desire to keep a fifth of India under perpetual subjection, and deliberately deny to them the fruits of national culture. We are seeking the aid of God in this great purification movement, but we deny to the most deserving among His creatures the rights of humanity. Inhuman ourselves, we may not plead before the throne for deliverance from the inhumanity of others."⁷⁷

Actually a throughout change of heart in the people was required for the abolition of untouchability. It was not possible to abolish untouchability by occasional embarrassing of one or more sweepers by the non-co-operators.⁷⁸

Gandhi advocated the removal of drink whereas Ramananda included other intoxicants in the list, like ganja, opium etc. as things to be shunned. Mahatma said "If we produce an effective boycott of foreign cloth during this year, we shall have shown cohesion, effort, concentration, earnestness, a spirit of nationality that must enable us to establish Swaraj". Ramananda agreed with Gandhi in this connection and though supported the introduction of the spinning wheel throughout India he did not think that the introduction of the spinning wheel was a moral or spiritual obligation like the disregard of the inhuman practice of untouchability or even like total abstinence.

The All India Congress Committee met in Bombay in early October, 1921 to tell the country what had to be done for winning Swaraj and passed some resolutions on different subjects except on untouchability. This wanting led Ramananda criticised Gandhi who included the abolition of untouchability in his programme during Non-cooperation movement. No doubt Congress was a political body and during the greater period of its existence busied itself with questions of a political a politico-economical character in the last phase of 19th century and early 20th century. That being the case, till then as nobody made social reform of any sort a part of its programme, it would be unreasonable to find fault with it for not passing resolutions on any social question. But in Gandhi's programme for the attainment of Swaraj and the attainment of Swaraj is a political question - the removal of untouchability occupied the first and foremost place. Therefore, whereas the Congress Committee passed resolutions on all other important requisites for the attainment of Swaraj, it left the removal of untouchability severely alone and even Gandhi, the paramountness of whose influence was unmistakable, did not even refer to this, the most important requisite, there was certainly just ground for criticism. Mr. Gandhi had said again and again that the foremost condition to be fulfilled to the attainment of Swaraj was the removal of untouchability; he was bound to tell the country and its leaders how it could be removed. But he did not say how it could be removed.⁷⁹

The Tilak Swaraj Fund

All India Congress C ommittee, at its session in Vijaywada in March, 1921, directed the Congress workers to concentrate for the next three months on collection of funds, enrolment of members, and distribution of charkas. The Tilak Swaraj Fund collected over a crore of rupees within six months. Women showed great enthusiasm and freely offered their jewelry. Charkhas were popularized on a large scale and khadi became the uniform of the national movement.

The collection of funds was successfully carried out, the Tilak Swaraj Fund being over-subscribed by fifteen laces of rupees, It is noteworthy here that there were doubts expressed even in non-cooperation quarters as to the genuineness of the statement that Bengal's contribution to the Tilak Swaraj Fund had amounted to fifteen lakh, Mr. Padma Raj Jain, a prominent non-co-operator, wrote to the *Servant*, complaining that his repeated requests to the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee to publish a full and detailed statement of the accounts had been unceremoniously ignored. Bengal's contribution to Tilak Swaraj Fund was a big jump from rupees three lakh to rupees fifteen lakhs in the course of a night and it was too sudden to be accepted without concrete proofs to many, even to the *Young India*. The *Young India* of July 6, 1921, wrote:

"If Bengal had not leapt from three laces to twenty-five, in spite of the Herculean labours of Bombay's choicest workers India would have failed to raise the crore." This jump could have been accomplished with the aid of one or more big donations, not by means of collecting small contribution; the period of twelve hours was too short of that. But no such big donations had been heard of. Ramananda regretted that no effort had been made to clear up the mystery.⁸⁰

"India has honoured the late Lokamanya" wrote Young India "as he has not honoured any other son before", by contributing liberally and quickly to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Ramananda added to it that the influence of Mr. Gandhi's personality and the rejuvenescence of national feeling had contributed greatly to produce this striking result. What the desire to please the bureaucracy and get some reward and the anxiety not to incur their worth, could not do for Lord Curzon's Victoria Memorial Fund, had been accomplished without any such incentives.⁸¹

In answer to the question, "how will the fund be administered", Gandhi replied in Young India, "I have unhesitatingly replied that the officials of the provincial congress committee are responsible and tried men."⁸² In this connection Ramananda wrote, "As we do not know all these officers, we can only hope that Mr. Gandhi is actually informed". He praised Gandhi when he said "If we do not account properly for every pie we receive and do not make a judicious use of the funds, we shall deserve to be blotted out of public life."⁸³ Gandhi further added "we must keep accurate accounts, which even a child can see and understand". In his opinion the fund ought not to be used outside the purpose of non-co-operation, nor generally for any purpose outside the spread of Charkha and Khadi, the removal of untouchability and programme for the elevation of the suppressed classes, the conduct of national schools, where spinning and weaving are a part of training and the advance of the liquor prohibition campaign.⁸⁴

Foreign cloth Boycott and Khadi Movement

The distribution of the number of 'charkas' determined by AICC at Bezwada almost reached the target. Gandhi was at first against the boycott of foreign goods, as it was in his opinion, a form of violence, but he changed his views in a few months and laid great emphasis on it. He appealed to householders to be determined not to buy foreign cloth and pursue the local weavers to weave enough *khadi* for them and requested them to learn the art of spinning for the sake of the nation.⁸⁵

Despite the fact that Gandhi urged people to use cotton yarn and cloth, the pity was, such goods were difficult to procure and were sometimes not at all available in the local market. Every householder had neither the leisure nor the skill to manufacture his own cloth.⁸⁶ Gandhi's advice to the house holders was – "You should deliver to the Congress committee all your foreign cloth for destruction or sending to Smyrna or elsewhere outside India.

"If you have not the courage to give up your foreign cloth, you may wear it out at home for all dirty work, but never go out in foreign cloth."⁸⁷

The All India Congress Committee at Bombay (July, 1921) when passed the resolution on the boycott of foreign cloth advised all congress organizations to collect foreign cloth for destruction or send outside India for use at their own option. This provoked a heated discussion and several amendments were moved against the burning of cloth or its being sent out to Smyrna for the use of the Turkish forces. Patel and Kelkar opposed the destruction of foreign cloth which they thought was valued roughly at hundred crore and which he described as national wealth, especially at a time when million were either ill-clad or naked.

So many bonfires of foreign cloths were organized during the period of non-cooperation movement. This burning of cloth was economically wasteful. It represented destruction of so much wealth. Those who destroyed their clothing would have certainly bought cloth in the market. And the supply of cloth being limited, that additional buying was sure to make it more difficult for poor people to get their supply of cloth.⁸⁸

Everybody had the right to exercise the freedom to destroy foreign clothing in his possession or to send it Smyrna or elsewhere outside India for the relief of those who had no clothes. But Ramananda instead of destruction preferred the use of foreign cloth, old or new, in stock, for the relief of distress and was against sending it outside India. Gandhi's proposals could have been accepted if Indians had the feeling that all India had clothed in home-spun and home-woven goods. But there were not enough such goods to replace all the

foreign stuff to be burnt or sent out of the country, nor could have enough of such goods been manufactured immediately. Ramananda wrote, "We do not see any foreign cloth must, if not burnt, be necessarily sent to outside India. Famine stricken regions in Khulna, Sindh, Kangra, Mirzapur are surely in need of cloth. Why not sent the foreign cloth meant for destruction or "expulsion" from India, to the ragged and almost naked people of famine-stricken areas?"⁸⁹

Besides there were countless persons who had only one piece of cloth each, and that foreign, to cover their shame, without any spare cash to buy Swadeshi cloth after destroying or giving away this piece of foreign cloth. In parts of the district of Khulna, women were clad in such rags that they felt ashamed to come out of their houses to beg or to accept the doles of rice given them.⁹⁰ Ramananda advised Gandhi not to aim at sudden and dramatic success; for real and lasting success was not generally achieved suddenly and dramatically. Ramananda rightly pointed out that giving up one's foreign cloth might not in every case be a question of courage; it was a question of pecuniary competency.⁹¹ In those days during 1920's there were so many non-cooperators who used to wear khadi outdoors but use foreign clothing and foreign articles of luxury at home. Gandhi's advice could have been followed in those cases of hypocritical practices. But not all the people were required to follow it. Ramananda wrote "we cannot understand why, when some persons do not feel any disgrace in using foreign motor cars for their own convenience, they should feel it a digress for others to give foreign cloth to naked or semi-naked and starving poor people"⁹² "No doubt, it is degrading for us to have to use foreign cloth. But such also is in the case with the use of other foreign things. We can understand concentrating our energies on the boycott of foreign cloth alone at first for the sake of success; we also know that it is foolish not to give up the use of some foreign things because we cannot give up the use of all; but in reality the use of every foreign thing which we can ourselves produce from our own abundant new materials reflects discredits in ourselves. Therefore, men who have not given up the use of all foreign things, have no right to ask or insist that foreign cloths must not be given even to cloth the naked poor."⁹³ The All India Congress Committee's recommendation to send discarded foreign cloth to the poor people of Smyrna was not appreciable. As Smyrna was neither in Britain nor in Japan, it was an insult to the people of Smyrna to send them what to them also was foreign cloth.

During the period of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal from the burning of one's own foreign things many proceeded to persuade others to do the same. Persuasion led to reasoning, and that to heated discussion was succeeded by the use of force. And this gave a handle to the police and the executive to do their favourite work of repression, suppression and persecution. The editor of *The Modern Review* and the Prabasi alerted the non-co-operating leaders citing this example of Bengal and it expected that the presence of Mahatma Gandhi and his propaganda for non-violence would save the movement from "striking against the rocks."⁹⁴ The more important thing, Ramananda pointed out was the constructive endeavour to supply the needs by intensive swadeshim and boycott, though temporarily necessary, was only the negative aspect of the movement and it could not clothe people.⁹⁵

Gandhi had appealed to the moderates to co-operate with the non-co-operator in the liquor campaign and especially invited them to legislate for prohibition. For this many suspected Gandhi of having committed a breach of the Congress resolution. A friend of him asked why the help of council was sought when it was boycotted. He raised question ---"does it not mean a modification of your previous attitude?" Gandhi replied "I venture to say that it does not. There is all the difference between a challenge and a petition. I had appealed out of our helplessness it would have been a breach of the Congress resolution and a modification of my own attitude. But in my opinion, I strengthen our position when invite the moderates in gentle language to do their duty and prove their claim to be popular representative."⁹⁶ Ramananda supported Gandhi in relation to his appeal to the moderates for joining the anti-drink campaigns which won support of all the patriotic Indians irrespective of party."⁹⁷

Gandhi appealed to the Englishmen of India in an open letter in *Young India* to help Indians in the boycott of foreign cloth and in the anti-drink campaign. The spirit of Gandhi's letter was unexceptional and admirable.⁹⁸ He observed "we need not hate Englishmen, whilst we may hate the system they have established". This was quite true. Ramananda in supporting Gandhi's spirit said that there were many English authors and artists who were loved and honoured by the Indians for their teachings, and inspiration and for the pure joy they gave the world. They had taught to appreciate in imagination the charm and the miscellaneous power of many rivers, lakes, mountains and historical sports in Great Britain and Ireland. India's love and respect for such Englishmen did not stand in the way of India's striving to win complete independence and of her criticizing British misdeeds and wicked British systems and laws with due severity.⁹⁹

However the year 1921 - 1922 witnessed an unprecedented movement in the nation's history. The response to the non-co-operation movement was overwhelming. C.F.Andrews who had been closely associated

with Gandhi since the time of his struggle in South Africa, explained this as due to the fact that Gandhi had appeared as the champion of the poor. In an article in the *Modern Review* of July, 1920 he said, "Mahatma Gandhi is, out and out, on the side of the poor. That is why the poor people recognized him instinctively as their friend and champion." Elsewhere in the same breath he noted – "He has gained his experience of the life of the poor, in the only one way of in which it is possible to learn it, by living himself as a poor man and by working with his own hands, as a labourer."¹⁰⁰

The British Government wanted to divide the Indian nation into pieces by following different ways like enacting acts and declaring special provisions to minority communities. Many Indian leaders succumbed to this British tactics while Ramananda tried his best to make people aware of all these administrative conspiracy. Many Indian leaders were contented that the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms would pave the way for a free constitution for India. But the editor was confident about its futility as they were not intended to lead India to full self-rule. In some important matters the provinces were treated differently under the reforms and probably it was intentionally done to "give rise to discontent and provincial jealousies."¹⁰¹ Some provinces had been under represented and some over represented and with respect to population the minority had been given a greater voice in public affairs than the majority. Ramananda did not hesitate to raise his voice against all these British tyranny. In 1932 When the Communal Award was declared by Ramsay Macdonald, the British Prime Minister, he could not help criticizing the government as well as the Congress as it agreed partially to accept it. This time he started making people conscious about the ill effect of the communal arrangement of representation of people in legislative assemblies. Not only that when the Congress Nationalist Party was formed to keep the spirit for united India upheld by Malaviya, Kelkar, Ramananda came forward and joined them with all his support and he was made the President of its first conference held in Bombay on October 25 and 26, 1934. The inter communal Hindu settlement in response to so called communal award could not please Ramananda who rightly considered it a harmful step for the Hindu community itself and assumed that the settlement could have been more satisfactory from the democratic and national point of view if a definite period had been fixed at the end of which such reservation would automatically terminate. He was right to say that in this respect the British government's decision was more satisfactory from the national and democratic point of view, as according to that decision all and every special arrangement relating to the depressed classes were to terminate in twenty years. As regards the duration of the reservation of seats the inter communal Hindu settlement was more considerate to them than the British government's decision. For, according to that settlement reservation could not come to an end until they agreed for its termination. In this context what Ramananda said is still very relevant. He wrote:

"The prolongation of reservation of seats is disadvantageous not merely from the national and democratic point of view but from the point of view of the progress and welfare of the depressed classes themselves. Reservation is a prop. The sooner every section of the population can do without prop, the better. Crutches are for the lame. If and when men can walk without crutches, to accustom them to walk with their help is to render them no service but a disservice. No class of the people can or will make the utmost effort to be equal to every other class, so long as it knows that even if it is less fit and capable than others, it can have certain rights and privileges."¹⁰²

In fact Ramananda was a true nationalist who wanted the nation to be built on firm footing. Ramsay Macdonald when came to India, he visited Ramananda's house at the Cornwallis street and considered Ramananda his friend. But in 1911 when his name was proposed as the Congress President, Ramananda opposed it as he was alien to our land. He argued if a Congress President was not available in India it was not possible for the Indians to prove their efficiency to attain self-rule.¹⁰³ He advocated for self-rule for India and declared war against the British tyranny in this land. He pointed out to every adverse step taken by the British Government against the Indian interests. The daunted editor did not hesitate to write as follows: "Never did Nadir Shah, Timor the Lame and other plunderers take away too much of wealth from India, as year after year, quietly, bloodlessly and legally, is drained away to the foreign shores to enrich the foreigners and indirectly to bring about the death of India's children by famine and plague."

Though literacy could not be a bar on attaining self-rule he urged on the spread of education like Japan and European countries and believed education indispensable for advancement of our country. He was sure that India's political salvation depended on mass education and therefore emphasized on vernacular as medium of instruction at the initial stage of learning. He made a comparison between India and Britain in respect to expenditure on education and showed that the whole amount spent on education of all kinds and grades in 1931-1932 for a population of 271,780,151, inhabiting British India was Rs.16,84,25,628 with a contribution of Rs.12,46,07,093 only by the government whereas Britain spent in 1934 Rs. 16,95,64,720 for the population of the administrative country to London numbering 43,85,825 only. India was a poor country no doubt but it was not so poor to spend some more money on education.¹⁰⁴ For this he held the British administrator responsible.

Being a distinguished journalist and a lover of humanity he wanted the upliftment of the people of India and to mirror their sorrow, their hope and aspiration. He was a man of principle and courage. Even the

British Government could not curb his fearless attitude to the truth. He did not dare to fiercely criticise the Government and its executives as well as the political leaders. He gave up the conservative path for awakening the country and helped the people to believe in independent thinking. He was successful in doing so to some extent though not fully and for that people of his time acknowledged his contribution to Indian society. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee on behalf of the public presented him with an address at his sick-bed and said, "On your seventy nine birthday, we, your countrymen, are offering you greetings. Your sacred character, unalloyed patriotism and life-long service for the country have overwhelmed us. We offer you our respect and love."¹⁰⁵ This spirit of gratitude towards him still remains the same on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary. Both as a leader and a journalist he felt his mark in our history

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