CHAPTER-3

THE RICH TRADITION OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN NADIA:

A PROLOGUE:

It is true that the ‘Quit India’ movement was organized very bravely and quite brilliantly in the district of Nadia of Bengal in 1942 and there was a great political sensation among the common people of the district regarding the movement. The people of Nadia had participated very courageously in the movement along with the political leaders and workers of the district. Gandhiji’s slogan of ‘Do or die’ had acted upon them as a magic term or sacred mantra and enthused them a lot to participate in the movement and to make it strong and effective with both the overt constitutional method and the method of covert violent activities. It is the people of Nadia that had helped immensely the leaders and workers of the movement of the district organize, launch and effectuate the movement all over the district.

It is interesting enough to mention in this connection that the district of Nadia had a long and rich tradition of close attachment to and intense
association with political movement like the ‘Quit India’ movement and had traditionally experienced a series of political movements since the time of Lord Chaitanya of the city of Nabadwip of Nadia district like the Civil Disobedience Movement of Srichaitanya, movement against the policy of Partition of Bengal, Swadeshi movement, Khilaphat movement, Non-Co-operation movement, Civil disobedience movement, Anit-untouchability movement and so on.

Here in this chapter we will discuss two specific glorious socio-political movements of rich tradition in which Nadia had taken direct and active part, and which had kept a great and magnificent socio-political legacy for Nadia. The two historic socio-political movements, enriched with the direct participation of the common masses of Nadia, are:

1) The First Civil Disobedience movement, organized successfully in Nadia by Srichaitanya of Nabadwip

and

2) The No-Tax Satyagraha-Movement at Tehatta, brilliantly launched in favour of the Second Civil Disobedience Movement, organized by Mahatma Gandhdhi during the freedom movement in India.
SRICHAITANYA OF NADIA AND THE FIRST CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT IN INDIA:

It is curious enough that Lord Srichaitanya had for the first time very brilliantly organized a sensational civil disobedience movement against an unjust ordinance in the form of dictatorial injunction over the Baishnaba cult of Sankirtana, proclaimed by the Kazi Saheb Moulana Sirajuddin, the local Muslim ruler of Nabadwip and it was historically the first Civil Disobedience Movement not in Nadia district alone but in the whole of India too indeed. And this Civil Disobedience Movement based on Sankirtana and Bhakti had really become highly popular among the masses and achieved glorious success as well. It was thus a successful mass movement against injustice and arrogance of the political authority in India.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND SRICHAITANYA

Srichaitanya of Nabadwip being whole-heartedly a religious personality was basically a social reformer. He belonged to a Brahmin family but was completely opposed to the elitist status and advantageous position of the Brahmin caste in the
During his life time there were two severe crises on the Hindu society, e.g., (i) one was the humiliating caste division within the Hindu society, resulting in the limitless exploitation by the upper caste Hindus, especially of the Brahmins over the low caste Hindus and obviously leading to the inhuman practice of untouchability among the Hindus and (ii) the other was the extreme extortion and expropriation by the Muslims over the Hindus. And these two crises had gradually eroded the very kernel of the Hindu society and endangered the so long sound survival of the society and ultimately brought it to the verge of disintegration and degradation, leading to the severe crisis of identity and existence of the society.

In order to save the Hindu society from the very crisis of identity and existence Srichitanya sincerely realised the very urgency of adopting and actualizing a new pure, perfect and liberal method and the method, he properly devised, is that of following the path of Sankritana i.e., the devoted chanting of the glorious name of Lord Srikrishna – God Srihari---by all persons, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. In fact, Srichaitanya had turned spiritual Sankirtana into devoted mass-song to all the people of Nabadwip in order to unite them into single unity and to save Nabadwip society from disintegration and degeneration.
1) CRISIS-1: MUSLIM OPPRESSION AND EXTORTION OVER THE HINDUS:

At the time of Srichaitanya, there was Muslim rule in Bengal. Hussain Shah, the king of Gour, the-then capital of Bengal, was the Nawab or Sultan, i.e., the Muslim ruler in Bengal. He was not altogether a non-communal ruler and it cannot be said with complete certainty that he was liberal and sympathetic to Hindu religion and Hindu community as well. During his aggression over Orissa, he had destroyed many Hindu temples, broken the images of the Gods and Goddesses of the temples into pieces, organized looting of the wealth of the temples and perpetrated indiscriminate torture over the Hindus and even committed murder.

Moreover Hussain Shah as the Muslim ruler of Bengal had also committed brutal torture over Subuddhi Roy, a Hindu Brahmin and his once employer, and had also taken every step to make him lose his Brahminism. Regarding this very communal attitude and action of Hussain shah, Ramesh Chandra Majumder, an eminent historian, wrote very categorically that “we read in Chaitanya Charitamrita that in his boyhood Hussain Shah was the servant of a Brahmin, Subuddhi Roy who once caned him for neglect of duty and for this on becoming sultan, he had that Brahmin drink water touched by a Muslim and thus made him lose his caste.”
Not only that Hussain Shah had also ordered Srichaitanya to leave the area of his capital Gour when latter had been making a religious tour along with his number of devoted followers with the usual performance of Sankirtana over the area. In this regard historian Ramesh Chandra Majumder wrote very clearly that as per the dictat of Hussain shah, his “Hindu officers, who knew of his hatred for the Hindus…. secretly sent word to Sri Chaitanya begging him to leave Hussain shah’s Capital as early as possible.\textsuperscript{12}

Furthermore Hussain Shah had also perpetrated a lot of communal and anti-Hindu activities and got quite intolerant to Hinduism and Hindu people. In fact, in his rule in Bengal, Hindu people were severely oppressed and expropriated. He thus appeared as a communal ruler, mercilessly subjugating and exploiting the people of the Hindu community.\textsuperscript{13}

Besides Hussain shah, Moulana Sirajuddin, the Kazi Saheb of Nabadwip, i.e, local Muslim ruler, appointed by, and working under the kingship of, Hussain Shah, had also taken stern attitude and communal steps towards the Hindu society in general and the Baishnaba community well organized by and sincerely unified under the leadership of Srichaitanya in particular.

The Kazi Saheb Moulana Sirajuddin due to his anti-Hindu attitude had, in fact, perpetrated a lot of torture over the Baishnabas\textsuperscript{14} in as much as he used to feel
seriously disturbed and mentally irritated with the Baishnaba cult of loud-voiced Sankirtana songs and Sankirtana-procession all around the city of Nabadwip by huge number of devoted Baishnabas with related spiritual songs and dances along with high pitched sound of different musical instruments like Khole, Kartal, Mridanga, Conch, Flute and so on. This is why he had proclaimed an arbitrary injunction over the Baishnaba cult of Sankritana and ordered to stop the performance of Kirtana, i.e., the melodious chanting of the name of Lord Krishna. In this way he had forcefully sought to proscribe the most devoted custom of Sankritana of the Hindu Baishnabas. This was indeed a communal step on the part of the Kazi Sheb as the local Muslim ruler of Nabadwip.

But despite the injunction proclaimed by the Kazi Saheb over Sankirtana, it is interesting to mention here, the Baishnabas of Nabadwip city did not at all stop their usual performance of Sankirtana. They rather more vigorously continued to perform regular Sankirtana and city procession with Krishna-Kritana and self-willed unbound devotional dances. Having seen his prohibitory order being so mercilessly violated by the Baishnabas in this way, the Kazi Saheb had become tremendously angry and mentally felt impelled to take revenge against them. He then proceeded to adopt punitive measures against the Baishnabas. “Having heard the hue and cry of the people engaged in Sankirtana procession in one day evening, the Kazi of Nabadwip made torture over them. He had beaten whomever
he was able to arrest, having broken Mridangas (a kind of musical instrument). He organized violence and injustice to the houses of the Sankirtana performers.”

It is in this way that the Kazi Saheb used to maintain injustice and maladministration all over Nabadwip\(^{17}\) and perpetrate communal discrimination and severe torture and violence over the Hindu community in general.

Moreover at that time the Muslim people of Bengal in general also, due to their identity as the ruling community, used to look down upon the Hindu community and perpetrate torture upon the Hindu people. In fact, under the Muslim rule of Sultan Alauddin Hussin Shah of Bengal and that of Kazi Shaeb Moulana Sirajuddin of Nabadwip, the Muslim community as the ruling community, used to enjoy extra-ordinary opportunities and special advantages and even royal exemptions and also exercise especial rights and privileges, which the Hindu community did not at all enjoy and exercise, that obviously resulted in the distinct discrimination between the privileged Muslim community and the under-privileged Hindu community.\(^{18}\) Consequently the Muslim people as being the members of the ruling community used to exploit and torture the Hindu people quite unduly and unjustly. In fact, the overwhelming dominance of the Muslim community over the Hindu community and the utter neglect and disdain along with communal torture and oppression by the Muslim people over the Hindus were the common and usual practice of the day.\(^{19}\)
This was more or less the overall scenario of the then Muslim oppression and exploitation over the Hindu people in Bengal in general and in Nabadwip in particular.

2) **CRISIS-2: INTRA-COMMUNITY DISSENSION AND DISCRIMINATION WITHIN THE HINDU SOCIETY.**

Besides this fact of torture and neglect as well as injustice and mal-administration perpetrated over the Hindu community by the Muslim community in general and the Muslim rulers in particular, there was also another grave crisis of intra-community cleavage and conflict and utter dissenion and discrimination within the Hindu society itself at the time of Srichaitanya, that had aggravated the age-old custom of caste division and discrimination in the society. In fact, the-then deep rooted caste discrimination among the Hindu people directly led to the hatred and torture of the higher caste, mainly the Brahmin caste over the lower castes of the society and culminated in the complete jeopardy of the mental unity and social cohesion of the very society. It was indeed a grave crisis of the-then Hindu society.

Shibnath Shastri, an eminent personality of the period of Bengal Renissance in the Nineteenth century, wrote very categorically that “The custom of caste-division has remained a strong barrier in the way of our progress for many centuries.” It was his firm conviction that “Caste-division has made the people of
this country conservative and averse to progress, and, along with it, has destroyed our humanity too."  

During the period of Srichaitanya there was hierarchical caste-division in the Hindu society and the Hindu people were socially stratified into four castes namely Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. It is curious enough that the Brahmins were on the top of the caste hierarchy of the Hindu society and used to enjoy highly priviledged position in the society and exercise especial rights, extra opportunities and additional exemptions, leading to ‘Brahmin elitism.’ Obviously the Brahmin Hindus appeared to be the ‘elite caste’ in the stratified caste system in the Hindu society. On the other hand the people of the lower castes, especially those of the Shudra caste were very invariably deprived of all the rights, opportunities, privileges and exemptions that the Brahmins used to enjoy by the only quality of their birth in the families of the Brahmin caste.  

In fact, the social position of the people belonging to the Shudra caste was really very deplorable. They were actually Dalits in the-then caste-divided Hindu society. They were practically used to be considered as uncivilized, downtrodden, non-aryans and utterly neglected in the society. All the lower castes, including the Shudra one were under-privileged and ‘under-utilized’ in the Hindu society due to the overwhelming dominance and extra-ordinary influence of the Hindu Brahmins.
Practically speaking, the Hindu people of all the lower castes were inhumanly treated as ‘untouchables’ in the parochially stratified Hindu society and the Brahmans by virtue of their mere birth in the Brahmin families only and not by virtue of their acquired knowledge and achieved qualities used to hold dignified status in the society as well as to enjoy extraordinary rights and privileges that ultimately culminated in the establishment and development of the so called ‘Brahmin elitism.’ Regarding this elitist status and excessive dominance of the privileged and powerful kulin Brahmans as well as the deplorable plight of the people of the downtrodden lower castes in the-then Hindu society, Dinesh Chandra Sen, an eminent writer, wrote very clearly in his famous book History of Bengali Language and Literature that “The power of the Brahmans had become oppressive. The rules of castes had become more and more stringent as Kulinism was stereotyped. While better ideals in [Hindu] religion were upheld by the Brahmans, the gap between man and man was widened by caste restrictions. The lower strata [i.e.,lower castes] of [Hindu] society groaned under the autocracy of the higher, who shut the portals of learning against the inferior classes. They were also debarred from having any access to a higher life, and the religion of the new school (Pauranik) became the monopoly of Brahmans as if it were the commodity of the market place.”24
In fact, at the time of Srichaitanya, the people of the so called Shudra caste like cobbler, milkman, washer man, garland maker, bittle supplier, vegetable supplier, carpenter, smith, chandal (i. e., burning ghat worker) and so on were used to be openly treated as ‘untouchables’ and therefore they were neglected, exploited, oppressed and limitelessly deprived in the Hindu society and were thus quite depressed and downtrodden. Even they did not get the minimum dignity and respect of human being.  

25 They were really considered as less than human being. So the very pangs of being neglected and humiliated had been secretly flowing in their mind like the hidden stream of the river Falgu. This is why they never used to come forward to be associated with the mainstream of the Hindu religion and culture.

**SRICHAITANYA AND SANKIRTANA : A PANACEA TO THE HINDU SOCIETY**

But Srichaitanya was the first person to feel the very pangs and pathos of the mind of the people of the lower castes of the Hindu society and he had thus quite sincerely wanted on the one hand to remove their mental agony of being utterly neglected and depressed and on the other to uplift them in the social strata and also to equalize them with all other people of the Hindu society including the
Brahmins. For this purpose he took Sankirtana, i.e., loud-voiced chanting of the name and glory of Lord Srikrishna as the best weapon. He had used this weapon of Sankirtana in his social war primarily against the discriminatory and derogatory hierarchical caste system of the Hindu society, but finally against inequality and discrimination maintained towards the Hindu society by the Muslim rulers in particular and the Muslim community in general. Ultimately he had successfully organized vigorous Bhakti movement with the help of this effective and popular means of Sankritana with a view to removing discrimination between and among the castes and religions and also maintaining equality and unity among all the people in the Nabadwip society.

In fact, the historic Bhakti movement organized by Srichaitanya on the basis of Sankirtana had historically played a unique role of a two-pronged weapon against both the crises of i) intra-community discrimination and disintegration in the Hindu society and ii) inter-community discrimination and inequality between the Hindu society and the Muslim society. Regarding this double-ended effectiveness of the Bhakti movement of Srichaitanya, Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, an eminent writer, wrote very categorically that there was “the challenge that Islam is supposed to have posed to Hinduism... The Bhakti movements were a two pronged defensive mechanism to save the Hinduism by purging it of the caste system and idolatry and at the time defending its basic tenets” of love, peace, truth,
honesty, service, forgiveness, fraternity and so on.\textsuperscript{26} It is historically true that under the charismatic leadership of Srichaitanya Bhakti movement had been turned into a highly popular and a very powerful mass-movement.\textsuperscript{27}

It is the historic success of Srichaitanya that he had propagated the cult of Sankirtana all over Nabadwip city of Nadia district and enthused all the people of the city to engage themselves in Sankirtana: “Sing the song of Krishna in full swing” or “Krishner Kirtan karo paripurna kori.” \textsuperscript{28} According to him, it is only by performing Sankirtana that all the people irrespective of their castes, creeds and religions will be able to become equal devotee to Lord Krishna and that the discrimination between and among the people of the society will be removed and they all then will be equal in the social stratum and be equally placed on the same stand and status in the society as the common devotees of Lord Krisna. He used to believe very firmly that “The talented person who performs Sankirtana ceremony/Gets the shelter of the feet of Srikrishna,” or “Sankirtana jajna kare jei jan/ Sei sumedha pai Srikrishner charan.”

Srichaitanya used to sincerely believe that Sankirtana is the only means by following which any person can quite easily get uplifted in the social stratum and become equally befitting and able member of the society, no matter in which religion or caste or race he/she belongs to. He used to say, “A Chandal is not a Chandal if he chants Krisna,/A Brahmin is not a Brahmin if he forgets Krishna” or
“Chandal Chandal nahe jadi Krishna bole,/ Brahman Brahman nahe jadi Krishna bhole.” 29 It was thus his firm conviction that “A Chandal devoted to Hari is also better than a Brahmin” or “Chandalohopi Dwija shreshtha Hari-bhaktiparayanaha.” 30 He had thus greatly wished to bow down to the feet even of a low caste person if he is devoted to Lord Krishna. He thus used to say, “If a Cobbler chants the wealth of Krishna-mantra with devotion,/ I bow down to his feet with a crore of salutation,” or “Muchi jadi bhakti-saha dake krishnadhane,/ koti namaskar kari tahar charane.” 31

In fact, Srichaitanya used to sincerely belive that caste, creed, race, religion etc. are not and can not be by any means barrier in the chanting of the holy name of Srikrishna and also in the performance of Sankirtana. He thus used to propagate quite categorically that “Low caste person is not unfit for worshipping (Krishna)./ One who worships is great,(but) irreverent is lowly inferior. /There is no consideration of caste and clan in the worship of Krishna,” or “Nich jati hoile nahe bhajan ajogya./ Jei bhaje sei bara, abhakta hin chhar/ Krishna bhajane nahi jati kuladi bichar.” 32

It is in this way that Srichaitanya made Sankirtana, i.e, devoted chanting of the name and glory of Lord Srikrishna the only acceptable and adoptable religion to all persons irrespective of caste, creed, race, religion and social stratum and thereby turned it also into a unique means of uniting all the people together in the society.
Under his direct leadership Sankritana started to be performed regularly in almost all the families of the town of Nabadwip and the people of all castes, creeds and religions of the town started to perform Sankirtana with great devotion and dedication. They had thus become overflowed with the glowingly floated waves of Hari Sankirtana.

In fact, the Baishnabite cult of Sankritana in the form of Krishna-Kirtana, reinvigorated and renovated by Srichaitanya, had made the people of Nabadwip so emotionally overwhelmed that they really started to forget the discrimination and disparity between and among their castes, creeds and religions. While chanting the name of Lord Krishna- --Srihari --- in course of their Sankirtana- performance, the emotionally overflowed people of all castes and religions started to embrace one another and thereby they became the common brothers to each other. On chanting the name of Srihari, Brahmins had now started to embrace the so called Chandals and Hindus had also started to embrace Muslims and vice-versa and thereby they all really forgot the age-old discrimination between high and low and the deep-rooted distinctions between and among castes, creeds and religions. Consequently they all had actually forgot all the sorrows and sufferings, pains and pathos and pangs and problems of their daily life.

In this way Srichaitanya and his cult of high-pitched Sankirtana with devotional dance and loud music had, in the name of Srikrishna, brilliantly
removed all the turbidity and filthiness of caste discrimination and religious distinction among the people and gloriously raised and spread the unique spirit of love, affection and sympathy among them all and thereby organized social unity and cohesion among them all throughout the society of Nabadwip and that of Bengal as well. It is to be acknowledged in this regard that Srichaitanya had thus very uniquely used the very cult of Sankirtana to unite all the people of all castes, creeds, races and religions together in the single thread of ‘Krishna-Nam’ and made them all socially integrated and socio-psychologically equalized and unified with the very ideal of liberal brotherhood---------universal fraternity.

Moreover with the help of the means of holy Sankirtana culminating in the historic Bhakti movement, Srichaitanya had successfully released the Hindu religion from the monopolistic supremacy and dictatorial dominance of the Brahmin caste and made it open to all the people devoted to Lord Krishna irrespective of their castes, creeds, races, religions and so on and thereby made all the devoted people equal in social stratum and turned them into common brothers with equal social status and dignity. In this way he had launched a strong protest movement against the Brahmin elitism and the elitist power and predominance of the so called Brahmins. Ramakanta Chakroborty, an eminent thinker and writer, had very nicely written, “Chaitanya had utilized song (i.e, the song glorifying Lord Krishna called Sankirtana) as the best medium of propagation of bhakti…”
Srichaitanya was quite successful in his Bhaki movement in fulfilling his cherished mission of equalizing all the people devoted to Lord Krishna in the caste divided Hindu society and thereby he had brilliantly brought about social mobility of the lower caste Hindu people in the-then discriminatory system of social stratification of the hierarchically segmented and segregated Hindu society. He had thus magnified and dignified the people of the low and downtrodden segments of the society, having broken the narrow caste stratification and segregation and discriminatory religious division and distinction between and among the people of the society. Joseph T.O’Connell thus nicely said, “When we do consult the available sources to learn what was happening in the social life of devotees of Chaitanya we find that… the proclamation of Chaitanya’s divine zeal to rescue women, shudras and especially sinners is conspicuous.” 35 This very attempt of Srichaitanya in his cherished Bhakti movement in equalizing all the Krishna-devoted people irrespective of their castes and religions and thereby also in removing the barrier of the narrow caste division of the hierarchically stratified Hindu society and even in completely shattering the elitist stand and status of the Hindu Brahmins, had actually appeared to be a social revolution. 36

To speak very practically, the inculcation of this historic cult of high pitched Sankirtana by Srichatanya, leading to the revolutionary Bhakti movement and removing all the narrow divisions and discriminations among the people of the
Hindu society in general was not only an event of social revolution, but truly a glorious event of renaissance of the society as a whole also. Because the Sankirtana cult of Sri Chaitanya had, in the name of Lord Krishna, Kirtana and Bhakti, given overall importance to man and humanity and very significantly upheld the dignity of man as human being irrespective of caste, creed, race religion and so on. It had, in fact, brought the whole of the Hindu society under pervasive unification, united in the same thread all castes (namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) and religions (namely Hinduism and Islam), raised the women folks from the neglected and deprived plight to dignified status, uplifted the social status of the lower caste Hindu people and thus brought about social mobility in the-then parochially stratified Hindu society and thereby it had brilliantly thrown a magnificent flash of new light of life in the society enlighting its every nook and cranny. It had thus really brought about revolutionary change in the Hindu society and brilliantly enthused and invigorated it with the excellence of renaissance.

Regrading this unique social progress and renaissance of the Hindu society in general, brought about by Sri Chaitanya and his well-planned and properly organized Bhakti movement based on the cult of Sankirtana, Sukumar Sen, an erudite literary personality of India, wrote very nicely that “Chaitanya was not a propagator of religion and he never preached any religion … Chaitanya used to say… chant the name of Hari keeping no desire… in mind. Then Krishna will
rescue you… Brahmin-Shudra-Hindu-Muslim, rich-poor did not hesitate to assemble together in the running way of open wind in which Chaitanya summoned all men (i.e., persons) to go along.” 38 This was actually what Sukumar Sen sincerely believed as being the great event of social revolution and social progress, nay social renaisance indeed.

Asit Kumar Bandyopadhyay, another scholarly literary personality, also opined very clearly that “Chaitanyadeva was not a proponent or propagator of what is exactly called social-reformation or what is known as humanism in European order (i.e., system); But it must be acknowledged that the people of the lower castes in the society received special dignity in the post-Chaitanya period due to the influence of Chaitanya.” 39

This is why it is to be glaringly admitted that what the Bhakti movement of Srichaitanya manifested in reality was the clear exposition of the basic nature of renaissance and it was simply and exclusively the glorification of man—the propagation of humanism. So Srichaitanya’s Bhakti movement was of course by nature an historical event that enlightened and enthused greatly the whole of the Bengal society. It was thus really an event of renaissance. 40 It is also to be mentioned here that “If a special aspect of democracy is social mobility and revival of the backward classes, then it must be said that it is by mingling these two
features together that the Bhakti movment of Chaitanya had built up an humanitarian and spiritual platform for all.”

It is thus historically true that Srichaitanya’s Bhakti movment was actually an act of enlightenment of the Bengal society ------- a renaissance of Bengal as a whole indeed. This was thus called ‘Chitanya Renaissance’. 42 And this Chitanya renaissance in the feeteenth century was more progressive than the renaissance of Bengal in the nineteenth century that was brought about in pursuance of the European renaissance. Jadunath Sarkar, a great historian, thus aptly commented that, “The Renaissance which we (i.e., the Indians in general and Bengalis in particular) owe to English rule early in the nineteenth century had a precursor a faint glimmer of dawn no doubt (in Chitanya’s renaissance), two hundred and fifty years earlier.” 43 Quite similarly Ravindra Svarupa Dasa also, an eminent writer, wrote in his famous book Lord Chitanya and the Renaissance of Devotion that Lord Chaitanya inaugurated a bhakti renaissance and turned people’s vision to God at the same time that Renaissance of Europe turned people’s vision to man and this world.” 44

It is in this way that Srichaitanya with the help of his Bhakti movment based on Sankirtana had successfully solved the twin crises of the-then Hindu society, namely 1) Intra community dissension and Discrimination within the Hindu society and II)Muslim oppression and extortion over the Hindus and rescued the
society from degeneration and degradation and thereby saved the glorious tradition of it (i.e., of the society) and also maintained its sound survival indeed.

**SRICHAITANYA AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT:**

The historic Bhakti movement organized by Srichitanya on the basis of Sankirtana, that led to, and culminated in, the new awakening of the then parochial Bengal society in general, which was so far completely drowned in the narrow caste stratification and segregation as well as religious discrimination and disintegration, had greatly inspired and invigorated him (Srichaitanya) to launch a vigorous socio-political movement in the form of Civil Disobedience Movement against the dictatorial administrative ordinance, proudly proclaimed by Moulana Sirajuddin, the Kazi Saheb, i.e., the local Muslim ruler of Nabawip in as much as the ordinance had obstinately outlawed Sankirtana and its related devotional songs and dances and lively spiritual procession of the Baishnabite cult altogether. The Kazi Saheb, as per the historical record, had been appointed by Alauddin Hussain shah, the King of Gour, the then capital of Bengal, to act as the ruler of Nabawip region. He (the Kazi Saheb) was completely not a secular ruler, rather he had often acted as an anti-Hindu ruler. And his prohibitory ordinance on Bashnabite cult of
Sankirtana was a common instance of his anti-Hindu attitude and staunch communal sentiment.

Moulana Sirajuddin, henceforth the Kazi Saheb, though not being a complete secular ruler, had however promulgated his prohibitory order in the form of anti-Sankirtana ordinance in order to mitigate the repeated complaints against Srichaitanya and his cult of loud voiced devotional songs and dances along with the high—pitched playing of different musical instruments in the performance of Sankirtana, lodged to him by the conservative anti- Sankirtana Brahmins of Nabadwip who were not at all ready to accept loud voiced Sankirtana and its related musical performances, inculcated by Srichaitanya.

In fact, the orthodox Brahmins of Nabadwip were extremely angry upon Srichaitanya for his unceasing effort of organizing Bhakti movement based on Sankirtana that had liberally equalized all persons of Nabadwip society starting from Brahmin pandits, higher officials of the administration of the King of Bengal as well as those of the Kazi Saheb of Nabadwip, rich merchants, weavers, milkmen, fishermen, washermen, garland sellers, bittlenut sellers, conch sellers down to lower caste untouchable Shudras and even to Muslims and also widely spread social ‘Kulinism’ that was the status symbol of aristocracy only of the-then privileged Brahmins, to all persons of all castes, creeds and religions devoted to Lord Krishna and thereby given them all also equal social status. 45 It is in this way
that the Bhakti movement of Srichaitanya had gradually weakened the very foundation of the so far parochially unified Brahmin society in Nabadwip and completely shattered the age old status of ‘Kulinism’ and ‘elitism’ of the Brahmins and the very basis of their special power and privileges.\textsuperscript{46}

This is why the conservative Brahmins of Nabadwip had become very much aggrieved and agitated to Srichaitanya and the Sankirtana-based Bhakti movement organized and actualised by him. They thus used to lodge complaints against Srichaitanya and his cult of high-sounding Sankirtana to the Kazi Saheb. And the Kazi Saheb being a Muslim ruler and a very faithful member of the Muslim society, had felt mentally happy to have the repeated complaints made by a particular group (i.e. Brahmin community) of the Hindu society against another group (i.e. Basihnaba community) of the same and thus had psychologically relished the deepest bitterness of the group divisions and group-antagonism of the society itself. Out of this excessive mental relish and psychological satisfaction because of the intra-society group-divisions and group antagonism of the Hindus, the communal minded Kazi Saheb had happily proclaimed administrative injunction over Srichaitanya’s cult of Sankirtana.

In fact, the repeated complaints against the cult of high sounding performance of Sankirtana and its organizer Srichaitanya, made by the conservative Brahmins, had, however, aggravated the hidden communal feeling of
the Kazi Saheb. Being a devoted Muslim person, the Kazi Saheb was not at all satisfied with the Sankirtana cult, rather he was seriously aggrieved and mentally irritated with it. He was really annoyed with the cult of Sankirtana, in as much as he felt afraid of the fact that this Sankirtana cult and the Bhakti movement of Srichaitanya will jeopardise the unity of the local Muslim society by liberally inspiring the Muslim people to be engaged in Sankirtana and giving them proper honour and human dignity and will thereby even endanger his rule also, because at that time “Shantipur was about to be drowned and Nadia was overflowed,” i.e., “Shintipur dubu dubu, Nade bhave jay” with the flow of Sankirtana cult of Srichaitanya. He (the Kazi Saheb) was thus in annoying anxiety with the mass-awakening Bhakti cult of Sankirtana.

Regarding this mental anxiety of the Kazi Saheb of Nabdwip about the overwhelming influence of the cult of loud-voiced Sankirtana of Srichaitanya all over Nadia, Hiteswar Sanyal, an eminent literary personality of Bengal, wrote very appropriately quoting from the Chaitanyabhagat, a highly popular Chaitanya Kabya of Sribrindaban Das, “Kazi said, Hindu cult has grabbed the whole of Nadia, / I will meet out punishment for this if I get chance once” i.e, “Kazi bole Hinduani hail Nadia/ Karimu ihar shasti nagali paiya.”

It was at this background of severe psychic panic of the Kazi Saheb with the Sankirtana culture of Srichaitanya along with the repeated complaints lodged by
the conservative Brahmins against Srichaitanya and his cult of high pitched Sankirtana that he (i.e, the Kazi Saheb) mentally felt impelled to proclaim an emergent order of prohibition on Sankirtana and ultimately he did it too. He ordered that Sankirtana is strictly prohibited and its practice in any form is a punishable offence and therefore nobody will engage himself in Sankirtana and thus if anybody takes part in Sankirtana and performs it and even organises Sankirtana procession violating his order he (i.e., the Kazi Saheb) will punish him (i.e. the law breaker, the offender) severely. According to the poetic lyric of the Chaitanyabhagbat of Sribrindaban Das, the Kazi Saheb ordered seriously in the direction that “If people maintain Hindu cult violating me (i.e, my order), I will make all of them lose their caste in the city (i.e., openly)” or “More langhi Huinduani kare,/ Tabe jati nimu aji sabar nagare.” 50 In another verse of the Chaitanyabhagbat, the Kazi Saheb overtly threatened that if anybody neglects the very order of not participating in the performance of Sankirtana, “I will make him lose his caste by giving him all kinds of punishment” or “Sarbaswa dandia tar jati je laimu.”51

It is worthnoting here that not only had the Kazi Saheb ordered prohibition on Sankirtana, he had himself also used to patrol regularly in search of Sankirtana performers all over Nabadwip along with his patrolling personnel. In one evening while he was making such a search for the Sankirtana performers, he heard the loud sound of the high pitched Sankirtana procession and immediately he along
with his personnel reached the area of the procession and instantly made then indiscriminate torture over the persons engaged in the Sankirtana procession, having beaten them, broken their musical instruments and destroyed their houses.

As soon as Srichaitanya came to know the news of the order of the Kazi Saheb imposing prohibition over Sankirtana, he became extremely angry and got at once mentally prepared to violate the unjust order against Sankirtana as well as to continue Sankirtana as usual along with city procession with Kirtana songs and related dances with both the hands of the participants in the Sankirtana procession held high and widely stretched. He then instantly started to mobilise and organize the people of Nabadvip irrespective of castes and religions in favour of his ensuing attempt of violation of the indignant and arrogant order of the Kazi Saheb directly prohibiting the cult of Krishna Kirtana, i.e., Sankirtana.

According to the verse of Chitanyacharitamrita by the great poet Krishnadas Kabiraj, Srichaitanya then immediately advised Nityananda, one of his nearest companions, “Nityananda get alert, instantly go to the places of all Baishnabas, / I will perform Kirtan today all over Nabadvip/watch, who can do what action (i.e. harm) to me (i.e., nobody will make no harm to me)” or “Nityananda, hou sabdhan, Ei kshane chalo sab Baishnaber sthan./ Sarba Nabadvipe aji karimu Kirtan/ dekho more kon Karma kare kon jan”.
Not only that angry Srichaitanya, as the verse of Chaitanyacharitamrita nicely reads, had also threatened the Kazi Saheb in the very direction that “Watch, I shall set the house of the kazi on fire/And see what reaction the King does to it (i.e., the Kazi will do no harm to it)/ I shall make massive shower of bhakti of love/ Today I myself will be the jamraj (i.e. the God of death) to all the wicked and hard hearted persons” or “Dekho aji kazir porang ghar-dwar./ Kon karma kare dekho Raja ba tahar. / Premabhakti brishthi aji karibo bishal./ Pashandiganer se hoibo aji kal” 54

**ORGANISATION OF THE SANKIRTANA MOVEMENT BY SRICHAITANYA:**

Srichaitanya then instantly decided to launch a strong mass movement to disobey and dishonour the arbitrary anti-Sankirtana ordinance of the Kazi Sheb. He had thus immediately started to organize a campaign programme in favour of his prospective protest movement among the Baishnabas of Nabadwip; and his charismatic personality had done it quite successfully. He had then advised all the Baishnabas to gather together before him in the afternoon along with a lamp of light (i.e., Pradeep) in the hand of each of them, that will work as alighted torch with massive flame in the evening and he had also mentally encouraged them with
his sweetly uttered instructions not to get afraid of the possible repressive reactions to be taken on the part of the Kazi Saheb’s administration.55

Srichaitanya had very clearly informed all the people that in the evening in defiance of the prohibitory order of the Kazi Saheb against Sankirtana a great procession with lighted lamps (i.e. Pradeeps) in the hands of all the participants in the procession and loud voiced Sankirtana along with devoted dance and spiritual music will march towards the palace of the Kazi Saheb and he will himself lead, guide and direct the procession of Sankirtana movement. He told them also very categorically that all the participants in the movement will have to continue their performance of Sankirtana in front of the Kazi Saheb’s palace with loud voice and high sounding playing of the related musical instruments until and unless the Kazi Saheb becomes mentally impelled to withdraw his unjust order of prohibition on Sankirtana. After all, it would be, as he thought, their real ‘Satyagraha movement’ to the last against injustice and intolerance just for justice, tolerance and truth.

It was the firm conviction of Srichaitanya that his plan of disobedience movement against the arbitrary order of the Kazi Saheb, if successfully organized and actualized, will surely put heavy psychological pressure and moral obligation on the Kazi Saheb to withdraw his unjust order over Sankirtana and make him mentally impelled to finally withdraw it. In this way Srichaitanya had very systematically and in a very planned way devised for the first time in India an
effective plan of the first Civil Disobedience Movement and thereby become the very first organizer and the leader of such movement in India. In fact, he had thus actually appeared to be the pioneer of such Civil Disobedience Satyagraha Movement in India.

THE MOVEMENT : COURSE OF ACTION AND SRICHAITANYA:-

As per the plan, chalked out earlier by Srichaitanya, in the evening the Baishnaba people of Nabadwip enthusiastically gathered together to participate in a vigorous procession of Sankirtana movement in regard to the very object of disobedience to the Kazi Saheb’s order of unjust injunction over Sankirtana. Srichaitanya had then systematically organized the procession and seriously maintained the order of placement of the leading Baishnaba personalities like Goswami Advaita Acharya, Jaban(i.e., Muslim) Haridas, Goswami Shribas, Pravu Nityanada and so on in different segments of the procession. After having completed the preparation work of the procession systematically, Srichaitanya had finally organized and launched the Civil Disobedience Movement in the form of a great mass Sankirtana procession and taken the leading role in the movement.
In fact, Sri Chaitanya like a public leader in the truest sense had very efficiently led the protest Sankirtana movement against the anti-Sankirtana ordinance of the Kazi Sheb athrough its course and also brilliantly guided and inspired the participants in the movement to remain thoroughly united while allowing them to perform their respective roles in the Sankirtana procession and also get closely entangled with his (Sri Chaitanya’s) jovial and joyous performance of Sankirtana. In this way Sri Chaitanya had become a popular leader --- a true mass leader ---of the very Civil Disobedience Movement against the Anti-Sankirtana ordinance of the Kazi Saheb.

Sri Chaitanya had very actively organized in the evening the Sankirtana procession as the symbol of disobedience to the Kazi Saheb’s order. The civil disobedience procession had then started to move along the city roads of Nabawip with the lighted lamps in the hands of the participants and finally marched towards the palace of the Kazi Saheb.

In this highly sensitive and exhilarating Sankirtana procession, Sri Chaitanya had very emotionally chanted a nice poetic Sankirtana pada, i.e., a stanza-verse, which was composed by him and which, according to Brideban Das, was the original stanza-verse or pada in Sankirtana and that was: “My mind has stuck to, (i.e., has taken the shelter) to your feet./ Violin-holder, My mind has stuck to (
i.e., has taken the shelter) to your feet” or “Tuar charane mana lagahunre, /Sharangadhar tuar charane mana lagahunre”. 57

**THE SANKIRTANA MOVEMENT AND MASS MOBILISATION:**

**UNIQUE LEADERSHIP OF SRICHAITANYA:**

While in the Sankirtana procession Srichaitanya had been jovially performing Sankirtana along with the loud chanting of his own composed verse and other verses and songs, people on both the sides of the city roads had got really overwhelmed and greatly charmed and thereby attracted heavily to join the procession. Obviously it is with the enthusiastic participation of the huge number of ardent masses that the Sankirtana procession had really become a large one.

Even the female members of each family on both the sides of the roads, who could not directly participate in the passing by Sankirtana procession, had also energetically decorated, on the occasion of the great Sankirtana procession, the outside areas of their houses with garlands and flowers and the gateways also with Mangal Ghats full of water with mango leaves and flowers over them and continued to blow their conch-shells loudly and raised the strong sound of Ulu, i.e., unique melodious sound that occurs due to repeatedly quick movements of the tongue in between two lips from right to left and left to right consecutively. In this way the non-participant female persons had also enthusiastically supported the
Civil Disobedience Sankirtana Movement organized by Srichaitanya and thereby helped it a lot get vivacious nature and vigorous gesture. It is thus quite clear that Srichaitanya had been quite successful in mobilizing the general masses of nabadwip in favour of his Civil Disobedience Sankirtana Movement against the unjust anti-Sankirtana ordinance of the Kazi Saheb.

While mobilizing the common people of Nabadwip in favour of his mass Sankirtana movement, Srichaitanya like a perfect public leader had mentally realised very clearly that masses are to be organized and mobilised in the very way that they can easily accept and commonly follow with zeal and joy. 58 This is why he had taken Bhakti-Nam or Bhakti Mantra, i.e., Sankirtana as the only way to easily appeal to the masses and to touch their pliable spiritual mind and thereby to mobilize their whole identity too. 59 According to the great verse of Krishnadas Kabiraj, the exact feeling of Srichaitanya regarding his deliberate attempt of mobilizing the common masses was “I have made them my relatives with my promise of the sense of devotee./ It is by maintaining bhakti myself that I teach bhakti to all” or “(Ami tahader)Apane karinu bhaktabhab angikare./ Apane achari bhakti shikhai savare.” 60

It is by mobilizing the masses very effectively with the help of his Bhakti mantra and Sankirtana that Srichaitanya had really become quite capable of organizing, launching and even leading and guiding the Sankirtana movement as
the Civil Disobedience Movement and thereby he had actually appeared to be the real public leader in all respects.

**CLIMAX OF THE SANKIRTANA MOVEMENT AND SRICHAITANYA:**

When the Sankirtana procession, orderly led and expertly guided by Srichaitanya, was moving with full vigour and vivacity towards the palace of the Kazi Saheb along with loud pitched ecstatic Kirtana and the lighted lamps in the hands of the participants in the procession looking like a highly flamed toarch in the growing darkness of the evening, the messengers and the officers of the Kazi Saheb, having experienced it (i.e., the magnificent procession) with their own widened eyes with extreme amazement, had got very much alarmed and afraid and they had immediately run away quickly to take shelter in the palace of the Kazi Saheb and instantly informed him of such a great revolutionary Sankirtana procession, leading to possible gherao of and probable attack on the Kazi Saheb’s palace.\(^6\)

Having heard the news of the massive form and ecstatic figure of the Sankirtana movement, the Kazi Saheb had got really astonished and extremely frightened and then the aghast Kazi Saheb and his family members and personnel had instantly started to shiver in fear of possible attack on the part of the volatile
participants in the Sankirtana procession and become very much busy in hiding themselves in the secret and hidden chambers of the palace. The-then frightened condition of the Kazi Saheb was, according to the lively verse of the great Poet Brindaban Das, “Hearing (this news) trembled Kazi Saheb and his personnel start to run away (to hide themselves)/ As if frog and rat run away in the fear of snake” or “Shuniya kampita Kazigan sabe dhay / Sarpa bhaye jeno vek-indur palai.”

It is, however, to be mentioned in this connection that this mass Civil Disobedience Movement organized and led by Srichaitanya in the form of noble and modest Sankirtana movement with the high pitched Kirtana of the Nam-Gan, i.e., Name-Song of Lord Krishna along with the loud performance of the musical instruments in tune with the Kirtana, was not non-violent altogether. Because Srichaitanya had got mentally furious to the extreme extent against the Kazi Saheb’s unjust ordinance outlawing Sankirtana. So he was extremely excited with his Sankirtana movement against the Anti-Sankirtana order of the Kazi Saheb and got mentally prepared to make a final settlement about the very order and to nullify it ultimately as well. While conducting the Sankirtana movement towards the palace of the Kazi Saheb he thus actually wanted to mentally pressurize the Kazi Saheb quite democratically to withdraw his ordinance with the help of the heavy pressure of the enthusiastic Sankirtana movement of the undaunted common masses, rallying in the Sankirtana procession.
In fact, Srichaitanya had become eagerly ready to go to the extreme extent to pressurize the Kazi Saheb, even to take recourse to violent means, if his modest and noble democratic means of Sankirtana movement failed. This is why when the Sankirtana procession had reached the palace of the Kazi Saheb, aggrieved Srichaitanya started to shout against the Kazi Saheb, criticizing and condemning him in the deepest sense of anger and anguishment. Regarding this extreme mental agony of Srichaitanya, Brindaban Das wrote very clearly, “The Lord says in anger where the Kazi is,/ Bring the broom and catching him cut down his head” or “Krodhe bole Prabhu, aare Kazi beta kotha./Jhat an, dharia katia fel matha.”

Not only Srichaitanya alone, but the participants in the Sankirtana movement also could not at all control their anger and wrath; and they had rather gradually gone beyond any limit of control. They had started to threat the Kazi Saheb and his officials in loud voice. In deep anger they had destroyed the gate of the palace of the Kazi Saheb, deranged the forest of bananas and fruits and uprooted the flower trees in the garden and also perpetrated many other harmful activities. After having done all these things they had started to dance in great ecstasy with loud chanting of the name of Lord Srikrishna. According to Brindaban Das, “All the city dwellers (of Nabadwip, especially the procession participants), breaking the palace of the Kazi,/ continued to dance, chanting the name of Hari in
great joy” or “Kazir bhangia ghar sarba nagaria / Mahanande Hari boli jayen nachia.”

**DIALOGUE PROCESS AND THE PEEPING OF SUCCESS OF THE SANKIRTANA MOVEMENT:**

The Kazi Saheb had become really frightened at the ferocious motion of the Sankirtana movement of the lively and ecstatic masses and got thus mentally worried seriously. In fact, the harmful activities along with the continuous volatile but vivacious Kirtana-songs and dances of the huge number of the participants in the Sankirtana movement, now gathered all around the Kazi Saheb’s palace at the end of their estatic city-procession, had put a heavy mental pressure on him (i.e., on the Kazi Saheb). He had thus become very much eager to reduce the pressure and to find out a way out to overcome the pressure.

In order to reduce his this mental pressure as well as to maintain safety and security of him and his family members, associates and officials, the Kazi Saheb thus mentally felt impelled to settle the Sankirtana issue and to lighten the serious gravity of the-then Kirtana-excited situation. He had then instantly decided to meet and talk to Srichaitanya, the organizer and leader of the Sankirtana movement to make an amicable settlement of the issue of the Sankirtana movement arising out of his anti-Sankirtana ordinance. He had thus immediately sent his messenger
to Srichaitanya to inform him of his (the kazi Shaeb’s) attitude to dialogue-process to amicably put an end to this rising issue. Herein started the process of victory of the very Ordinance Disobedience Movement, organized, launched and led by Srichaitanya.

SUBMISSION OF THE KAZI SAHEB TO SRICHAITANYA AND THE PROCESS OF VICTORY:

Accordingly the alarmed and anxious Kazi Saheb had himself come to agitated Srichaitanya to talk to him to make an effective solution of the problem arising out of his anti- Sankirtana ordinance. Having approached to Srichaitanya, he had passionately addressed him in public as ‘ Bhagne’ or nephew, i.e., his local sister’s son and thereby publicly made an attempt to establish a close village-based relationship with him (Srichaitanya) instantly\textsuperscript{67} and also sought to soften the-then tensed situation as well as to prevent the excited participants in the Sankirtana movement from attacking him and his personnel and property.\textsuperscript{68} Moreover the frightened Kazi Saheb had then repeatedly requested Srichaitanya to put an end to this rising resentment and also to make an amicable settlement of the present grave situation.
Srichaitanya, an embodiment of ever kindness and forgiveness as well as of love and peace had immediately become utmost calm, cool, modest, patient and humble enough at this pliable and polite as well as submissive and surrendered gesture of the really afraid and aghast Kazi Saheb⁶⁹ and then gently assured him of safety and security and also of no harm to be committed to him and his family members and personnel. He had then very humbly requested him (the Kazi Saheb) to withdraw his anti-Sankirtana ordinance in the way Brindaba Das had nicely portrayed that “(Please see) Sankirtana does not get stopped in Nadia” or “Sankirtana bad thaichhe na hoi nadiyay.”⁷⁰

WITHDRAWAL OF THE ANTI-SANKIRTANA ORDINANCE

BY THE KAZI SAHEB:

The Kazi Saheb had accepted and fulfilled this humble request of Srichaitanya instantly with the greatest sense of veneration to him and immediately agreed to withdraw his anti-Sankirtana ordinance without any hesitation. Not only that he had also promised very spontaneously that no member of his family and even of his generation to come as well will ever issue injunction over Sankirtana. Kumudanath Mallick, an eminent historian of Bengal, wrote in this regard in his famous book Srigouranga that “At this pitiably distressed gesture of the Kazi (Saheb), Lord (Srichaitanya) had become kind to him and said that (you do) accept
it that you will never create obstacle in Kirtana. Then “The Kazi (Saheb) said I will oust from my race the descendants, going to take birth in the race / They will not obstruct Kirtana (i.e., if they obstruct kirtana)” or “Kazi Kahan mor Bangshe Jato upojibe/Tahake talak dibo Kirtana na bodhibe”\textsuperscript{71}

It is quite interesting to mention here that the Kazi Saheb had not only promised not to create any obstacle in Sankirtana, but also he had himself then participated most gladly for some times in the mass Sankirtana procession walking along the road.\textsuperscript{72}

**VICTORY AT LAST: ECSTASY OF SUCCESS**

In this way the Kazi Saheb was mentally impelled by the heavy democratic pressure of the Sankirtana procession as the mass Civil Disobedience Movement, organized and guided by Srichaitanya very successfully, to withdraw his unjust ordinance of prohibition on Sankirtana. Consequently the cult of Sankirtana had now become free from any censorship and got reinstalled vigorously with the official acceptance and recognition of the Kazi Saheb to it. Thus Srichaitanya and his mass Civil Disobedience Movement had experienced glorious victory.

Having thus conquered the Kazi Saheb and thereby made his Civil Disobedience Movement victorious, Srichaitanya had started to perform Kirtana chanting the name of Lord Hari very loudly and then he had pronounced to all his
followers who gathered there together the message of the victory of their Civil Disobedience Movement. Then all of them present there had started to enjoy their victory with the exhilarating performance of Sankirtana in a pleasant mood and also with great joy and ecstasy.

After the glowing victory of his Sankirtana Movement Srichaitanya had organized another ecstatic Sankirtana procession all around the city of Nabadwip with all the victorious people in order to celebrate and mark the historic victory of his Civil Disobedience Movement against the mightier royal power.\textsuperscript{73} And this victory-procession had also become highly enriched with the spontaneous and lively participation of the common masses with great exhilaration and immense pleasure. Brinadaban Das had depicted the victorious Sankirtana procession of Srichaitanya in the very nicely manner: “Uproar of victory was in each city/All persons got floated in the ocean of joy” or “Joi kolahal prati nagare nagare/Bhasoye sakal Lok ananda sagore”\textsuperscript{74}

It is in this way that the historic Civil Disobedience Movement in the form of mass Bhakti-Kirtana movement based on the cult of Sankirtana and organized, launched, directed, guided and completely led by Srichaitanya had finally become successful and thereby Srichaitanya had historically appeared to be the sole pioneer and successful organizer of Civil Disobedience Movement in the whole history of India.
ATTITUDE OF THE KING HUSSAIN SYED SHAH TO SRICHAITANYA AND HIS SANKIRTANA CULTURE:

It is highly interesting to mention in this connection that the-then Nabadwip, ruled by the Kazi Saheb Moulana Sirajuddin, was under the territorial jurisdiction of the independent kingdom of Gour and the King i.e.,Nawab Syed Hussain Shah then used to rule the whole of Gour Kingdom quite independently. Even Nawab Hussain Shah had also accepted the cult of Sankirtana of the Baishnaba society of Nabadwip and used to maintain a sense of respect and reverence to Srichaitanya and his Baishnabite religious belief and his Sankirtana culture as well .He had thus no intention to impose any prohibition or injunction over the performance of Sankirtana by Srichaitanya and his followers.

In fact, Nawab Syed Hussain Shah used to hold Srichaitanya in high esteem. Though he was not altogether a secular ruler and though he had so far maintained discriminatory attitude towards the Hindus and even though there are a lot of historical records of destruction and demolition of Hindu Temples and Mathhs and also of ruthless plundering of the wealth of them (Temples and Mathhs) by Hussain Shah and his soldiers and personnel, still it is equally true as per the historical evidence that he had really a sense of especial respect to Srichaitanya due to his charismatic personality that always used to draw spontaneous regards and
respects of the masses and also to his honest, transparent, liberal and equalitarian
gesture that used to attract the people a lot to come to him and to get in touch with
him all the time.

Really speaking, Hussain Shah was, greatly surprised to the very fact that
despite being a common penniless Hindu Baishnaba monk, having no money to
give and purchase the people and only having the invaluable wealth of love and
respect to all that used to act magically to draw them all to him, Srichaitanya had
immense popularity among the people and overwhelming influence over them as
well. This is why people used to rush to him (Srichaitanya) wherever he went and
to see him and show respect to him as well as to perform Sankirtana with him with
the loud voiced Kirtana of Lord Hari. This incident of immense mass-influence of
Srichaitanya and his wide popularity among masses had mentally impelled the
King Hussain Shah to consider him (Srichaitanya) to be God or at least godly
personality in reality.  

Hussain Shah had got the trace in such godly personality in Srichaitanya
when he (Srichaitanya) had made a socio-cultural tour over the village Ramkeli on
the bank of the river Ganges under the territorial jurisdiction of him (Hussain
Shah). As soon as Srichaitanya had reached the village Ramkeli from Fulia of
Nadia district, common people in huge number rushed there with a view to just
seeing him and paying homage to him as well. They were in such a great number
that once there occurred a collision among them due to the close Proximity and deep density of the crowded people. Having heard the news, Hussain Shah had really got highly anxious and greatly worried and he then along with the Commander-in-chief of his army had immediately reached the village Ramkeli just to make an enquiry about the true intention of the tour of Srichaitanya over the village. On experiencing with his own eyes the rush of the great number of people to the altar of Srichaitanya, he (Hussain Shah) had really got not only astonished, but astounded too. In fact, this very incident of the great gathering of the people around Srichaitanya at the village Ramkeli had directly made him (Hussain Shah) sincerely feel the very godliness of him (Srichaitanya).

Hussain Shah, as per the description of Sundarananda Bidyabinod in his famous book Srichaitanyadeva, had got deeply astonished to notice that without giving anything either cash or kind to anybody Srichaitanya could easily attract a large number of people and successfully draw their spontaneous attention and modest veneration simply due to his incomparable charismatic personality and devinely identity. This very sense of astonishment and amazement had ultimately made him (Hussain Shah) become more submissive and more respectful to Srichaitanya. And out this sense of especial regards and respect to Srichaitanya, he (Hussain Shah) had ordered his persons including his bureaucrats, officials and personnel not to anyhow disturb Srichaitanya being a divinely personality and let
him remain however and wherever he pleases and do whatever he likes. With this sense of the heartiest veneration to Srichaitanya he had thus said to his officials with a very melted mind, as per the immortal verse of the Poet the Krishnadas Kabiraj that “Let you know that he is surely the Gosanai (i.e. Goswami)/ Behind whom so many people are there without any gift” or “Bini dane eto lok jar pichhe hoi, / Sei to Gosanai Janiho nischyoi.”\textsuperscript{79}

This very feeling of immense respect and reverence of Hussain Shah to Srichaitanya had been nicely depicted in the Chaitanyakandrodhayay in the poetic gesture that.

“The king said, he (Srichaitanya) is the demi god as if direct god. / Having seen the huge number of people, I got afraid. / With taking great care I despite being the great king / Could not gather people at least two or four lacs in number. /(But) people- men and women – being delighted and leaving their households/ Go along with his (i.e., Srichaitanya’s) company without any (bait of ) gift (on the part of him ). / So he is not a common man at all./ Oh the Kazi, don’t say anything to him , but praise him only “ or “Raja bole basu iho sakshat iswar./ Loker samuha dekhi mor lage dar./ Ami Maharaj jadi maha jatna kore/ Dui chari laksho lok jutate na pare./ Ghar-dwar
chhari lok anandita hoiya/ Bini dane stri purush chale lag loiya.
/Atoeb manushya na hoi ei jon./ Ihare na kaho kichhu Kazi bakhan.”80

This is why this highly respectful and modest attitude of Hussain Shah to Srichaitanya had really made him become especially careful to him (Srichaitanya) and his followers and allow them quite liberally to continue their cult of Sankirtana. He had thus neither accepted nor recognized the prohibitory injunction over the Sankirtana culture , proclaimed by the Kazi Saheb of Nabadwip. He had therefore issued an emergent order very categorically, as per the unique description of Krishnadas Kabiraj, to the Kazi Saheb directly dictating him that “ The Kazi , the Muslim, do not envy him (Srichaitanya)./ Let him speak whatever his mind likes” or / “Kazi jaban ihar na Kariho hingsan./ Apan ichchhai balun janha uhar man.”81 In the verse of another poet Brindaban Das, the order of Hussain Shah to the Kazi Saheb was that “The king said , I am telling this to all/ Don’t disturb him (Srichaitanya) ./ Let him stay wherever he desires./Let him preach his own scriptural belief./ Let him perform Kirtana along with all people/ Let him stay in solitude if his mind so deserves./ If the Kazi or kotal or any person / Says anything to him I will take his life(i.e.I will kill him )” or “Raja bole ei muin bolinu savare/Keho pachhe upadrab karoye tanhare./Jekhane tahan ichchha, thakun sekhane/Apan shastramat karun bidhane/ Sarbalok loi sukhe karun Kirthan./ki
birale thakun, je loi tanr mon/ Kazi ba kotal ba tanhake kon jane/Kichhu balilei tar loimu jibane.”

It is in this way that the king syed Hussain Shah had directly ordered the Kazi Saheb of Nabadwip to withdraw his prohibitory injunction over Sankirtana performed by Srichaitanya and his followers and strictly prohibited all starting from the Kazi Saheb, his kotal and officers even to common people from creating any obstruction to Srichaitanya in his performance of Sankirtana along with his devotees and followers. This is indeed a glamorous victory of the Injunction Disobedience Movement of Srichaitanya and his associates and this victory of Srichaitanya had been sincerely acknowledged and appreciated even by syed Hussain Shah, the king of Gour.

AN OBSERVATION: THE FIRST CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT IN INDIA:

It is to be mentioned in this regard that the mass Sankirtana movement of Srichaitanya, culminating in the success of withdrawing the anti-Sankirtana ordinance proclaimed by the Kazi Saheb of Nabadwip, had actually taken, as we observe very categorically, the very shape of the First Civil Disobedience Movement in the whole history of the socio-political movement against the ruling power in India and had created a glorious history of non-violent mass movement
against the excessive power of the ruler. Kananbehari Goswami, an eminent writer, thus mentioned quite clearly and very nicely that “This incident (i.e., that of Srichaitanya’s Sankirtana movement against the arbitrary injunction of the Kazi Saheb over Sankirtana) was the first massive non-violent movement, so to say, mass Satyagraha against the unjust order of the royal power, prevalent all over India. This movement had later on paved the way of non-violent non-cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi in the British ruled South Africa and India.”

Dr. Sukumar Sen, another important personality, had considered this Sankirtana movement of Srichaitanya as the First Civil Disobedience Movement in India. He thus wrote very sincerely with all authentic seriousness that “It was perhaps the first act of Civil Disobedience in the history of India.”

**OUR BELIEF REGARDING CHAITANYA’S MOVEMENT:**

We do thus sincerely believe that Srichaitanya had organised and launched the very first Civil Disobedience Movement in India in the form of mass Sankirtana movement against the unjust and arrogant prohiobitory ordinance over the highly cherished cult of Sankirtana of the Hindu Baishnabas, proclaimed by the Kazi Saheb Moulana Sirajuddin. In fact, Srichaitanya’s Sankirtana movement was exclusively directed against the-then royal power in India and ultimately got absolute success through the democratic means of non-violent dialogue process.
Though the Sankirtana movement of Srichaitanya was by nature a Bhakti movement still it was not solely confined to the bhakti sentiment or spiritual issue. It was rather widely extended to the socio-political issues and democratic sentiment of the right and liberty of the citizens and thereby it had gloriously paved the very way of non-violent mass movement enriched with and energized by the spontaneous participation of the enthusiastic and energetic people that was later on whole-heartedly followed and actualized by Mahatma Gandhiji in the early part of the Twentieth Century in his popular movements against the highly powerful British Raj in India during the period of India’s struggle for freedom. Srichaitanya had thus created a glorious and glamorous history of Civil Disobedience Movement in India in the shape of mass Sankirtana movement. His movement is thus, we do sincerely acknowledge, an historical phenomenon in the whole history of India indeed.

2. NO-TAX SATYAGRAHA-MOVEMENT AT TEHATTA

“The no-tax Satyagraha at Tehatta (1932-33)” ⁸⁵ was no less alluring and inspiring than any other Satyagraha-movement, launched and guided by Gandhiji, in the whole history of the freedom struggle of India, in so far as it appeared ,to speak historically, as an integral part of the “2nd Civil Disobedience Movement”
(henceforth 2nd C.D. Movement) of 1932. In fact, when the 2nd C.D. Movement had created a romantic sensation in favour of the national liberation movement all over India, the Tehatta no-tax Satyagraha then took place with a high hope of precipitating as well as facilitating the C.D. Movement.

TEHATTA AS A GEO-SOCIAL ENTITY:

Tehatta, it is to be noted in this regard, is a village and a police station under the district of Nadia. In the pre-independence period, when this no-tax Satyagraha was launched, Nadia district was undivided and was comprised of the Sub-divisions of (1) Krishnanagar, (2) Ranaghat, (3) Kushthia (4) Chuadanga and (5) Meherpur. and Tehatta was then under the Meherpur Sub-division and is now itself a Sub-division (since 1983). Men of different communities used to live there together. Majority of the Tehatta population were Muslims; but Hindus, Christians and others were also there. Still communal harmony was never jeopardized at Tehatta. Rather the people of all the communities used to fight jointly if there was any chance of jeopardy of their communal amity. And it was this sense of communal harmony of them that had directly inspired them to jointly launch the No-Tax Satyagraha at Tehatta in the period of 1932-33.

However, for the easier understanding of this Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha, we would analyse it from (its) certain specific angles. In the first place, we would
try to enlighten the all India socio-political background from which the Tehatta Satyagraha had directly secured its life-blood.

ALL INDIAN SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION

It has already been mentioned that the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha was an integral part of the 2nd C.D. Movement, launched on an India-wide scale in 1932. Naturally this Satyagraha had a direct link with the all India socio-political situation. And at the national social situation, we find that the then British imperialist rule reached its extreme pitch; no sign was there of good administration. Rather injustice prevailed all over the country. There was wholesale exploitation in the name of administration. Governmental repression had spread out its black-hands in every nook and cranny of the social life of India. Due to this anti-humanistic imperialist rule, India’s social life gradually began to be fragmented and endangered. And her economic life, needless to say, had already been paralyzed by this time by the British imperialist economy, for, “it was the British intruder who”, as Karl Marx wrote, “broke up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning-wheel”. 92 British industrial economy had completely shattered the then self-sufficient village economy of India. Lenin thus once aptly observed, “There is no end to the violence and plunder which is called British rule in India”. 93
However, against this exploitative imperialist rule of the British Government in India, the leaders of the national liberation movement, especially Gandhiji, started in 1930 the First Civil Disobedience Movement with different techniques including non-payment of taxes.⁹⁴ But at the very moment of its sheer success, it was forced to lose its gravity, and was also finally withdrawn as a result of the historic **Gandhi-Irwin Pact**, signed in March 4th, 1931.⁹⁵ No doubt that this Pact weakened the freedom struggle at that moment. Yet it very brilliantly proved the very fact that this was the first time that the British Government had felt impelled to make compromise with the Indians. “This fact”, as R.P. Dutt observed, “Produced at first a wide-spread sense of elation and victory” in the mind of the Indians.⁹⁶ Even the then ‘Indian League Delegation’, in its 1934 Report,⁹⁷ considered this pact as “the complete surrender” of the British Government.

Due to this apparent failure as quite evident in the Pact, the British Government became too much infuriated and thus took severe measures in order to resist the India’s freedom struggle and also to restore its (Govt.’s) eroding prestige.⁹⁸ For this purpose, the Government had immediately declared different serious laws and ordinances. Among them the most mentionables are the ‘Emergency Power Ordinance’, ‘Unlawful Instigation Ordinance’, ‘Unlawful Association Ordinance’ etc.⁹⁹ With the help of these laws, the Government declared illegal all organizations including the Indian National Congress,¹⁰⁰ and banned any kind of
organized activities. Along with this, the police of the British Government had arrested all the important leaders like Gabdhiji. And it is in this way that the British Government had violated, for the first time, the Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931.

In active protest to this violation of the Pact by the Government, the All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C), guided by Gandhiji, took, and actualised, the decision of starting the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Civil Disobedience Movement. Accordingly they had strongly started the 2\textsuperscript{nd} C.D. Movement with full vigour and vivacity on the all-India level. And within a short-span of time the movement had got a wide currency all over India. Exploited and degraded by the police, the local agents of the imperialist rule, Tehatta, a tiny village of Nadia District, was also greatly influenced by the Movement. The leaders and workers of Tehatta had thus become really invigorated to launch a stronger Satyagraha movement at the local level of Tehatta and for this purpose they had formed a Satyagrahi Committee to launch and lead the movement properly. This is why the Tehatta no-tax Satyagraha was vigorously launched in order to strengthen the C.D. Movement.\textsuperscript{101}

**PURPOSE:**

As soon as the No-Tax Satyagraha was launched, the people of Tehatta began to stop the payment of taxes. The only reason behind this Satyagraha
technique of non-payment of taxes is to weaken the British Government economically by refusing to pay taxes to its fund. Because the Satyagrahis sincerely believed that to give taxes in the British coffer is nothing but to strengthen the economic power of the imperialist government, and thereby to invigorate the governmental repression and mal-administration; so payment of taxes is to be stopped. This is why the sole but serious aim of the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha was to weaken the financial capability of the British Government and thereby to demoralize and derange the Government itself.

NATURE:

With a view to securing this very aim, some unorganized attempts were already taken. But now the 2nd C. D. Movement having started, the attempts had become greatly invigorated this time with a unique speed. On the 13th April, 1932, the Tehatta no-tax Satyagraha was launched. The day 13th April was chosen in order to commemorate the day 13th April, 1919 of the Jalianwalabag massacre—a mass massacre, perpetrated by the British authority under the direction of General O. Dyer, over the innocent Indians in an enclosed area of Amritsar. However, immediately after the starting of the Tehatta Satyagraha, a great enthusiasm for refusing to pay taxes had become quite evident in every nook and cranny of the village Tehatta. We will discuss the movement through two definite and distinct phases of its course of action.
THE FIRST PHASE:

With a view to strengthening this no-tax Satyagraha, the Satyagrahi Committee took certain effective decisions, which are: (1) resisting all kinds of repressive activities of the government, (2) boycotting the British Judicial system, (3) boycotting the foreign goods, (4) improving the standard of the indigenous goods, (5) establishing self-government, (6) establishing Satyagrahi camps and training centres and above all, (7) refusing the payment of taxes. With the adoption of these decisions, a great wave of the no-tax Satyagraha came into being and the Committee had vigorously started to mobilize the people of Tehatta and its surrounding areas in favour of the Satyagraha movement. Consequently the British Government became too much infuriated. All the organized activities were declared illegal and the Section 144 Cr. P. C. was proclaimed by the local authority of the Government.

But with the increase of the governmental repression and exploitation the wave of the No-Tax Satyagraha had become stronger, and the Satyagrahis, without at all being afraid of the governmental repressive measures, picketed at the day of the session of the Union Board and gheraoed the Union Court as well. The Police, Catching hold of the braids of the female Satyagrahis while they were picketing, made them stand in the heat of the scorching sun and also often threatened them at the point of arms. And the distress of the male Satyagrahis in the hands of the
police knew no bound. In protest to such inhuman police-atrocities, the chowkidars and dafadars of the village resigned and joined hands with the Satyagrahis. At last, the sessions of the Union Board and the Union Court were naturally suspended. 108 Obviously the No-Tax Satyagraha was now turned into a stimulating and exciting mass-movement.

But this movement reached its absolute pitch immediately after the arrest of Haripada Chatterjee—-the main personality of the movement. It was he who used to organize, in disguise, the mass opinion in favour of the movement. Having toured tirelessly all over Nadia District, he had been successfully inspiring the people for a long time to sincerely support the Tehatta No-Tax Movement. 109 Besides, he was the first man in Nadia District to start ‘fasting’ against the anarchic rule of the imperialist government. Consequently he fell in the wrath of the government, and was ultimately arrested when he was delivering a passionate lecture in favour of the movement in a public meeting. 110

The news of the arrest of Haripada Chatterjee had instantly spread out an extreme excitement all over the Satyagrahi region. All the leaders, known and unknown, now began to work hard to make the Satyagraha reach its absolute pitch. They thus began to tour the neighbouring villages of Tehatta with a view to organizing mass-support. 111 The British Government had however arrested one by one all the most notable figures like Smarajit Bandyopaghyay, Amarendranath
Chatterjee, Satyesh Chandra Bhattacharya, Haridas Mukhopadhyay, Ramesh Chandra Ghowami, Mani Mohan Chakraborty, manmath Biswas and many others. Female Satyagrahis were also not lagging behind. They rather wholeheartedly fought for the movement. Among them Nirmal Nalini Ghosh, Pramoda Das, Sabitri Das, Mrinalini Sanyal and many others were important figures. Quite obviously the No-Tax Satyagraha at Tehatta had now had vigorous adolescence.¹¹²

In fact, as a result of the whole-hearted participation of a great many men and women, “Nadia came into the fore-front of the Civil Disobedience Movement of Bengal as well as of India. It secured the headlines of the newspapers”.¹¹³ In fact, “The freedom history of Nadia” wrote Naresh Chandra Chaki in his book ‘Nadiar Parichiti’, “is resplendent with the participation of a large and innumerable famous and unfamous as well as known and unknown men and women”.¹¹⁴

**STATE OF INERTIA:**

But when the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha reached the climax point in this way, just then it had to face an astonishing immobility; for Gandhiji, who started the 2nd C.D.Movement on an all India level, now all on a sudden, withdrew the movement and started enthusiastically, in its place, ‘the Anti-Unthouchability Movement.’¹¹⁵ Naturally a state of inertia was hovering over the national politics
of India. And this is what ultimately led the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha to an
unwarranted inertia. A state immobility grabbed the Tehatta Satyagraha.

THE SECOND PHASE:

But the history of the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha did not stop here
altogether, it rather went ahead farther. Despite the unwarranted suspension of the
C. D. Movement, the leaders of Nadia district were not at all mentally prepared to
stop the Satyagraha; they rather wanted to continue it [the Satyagraha]. In order
to reinvigorate the drowsy Satyagraha, the leaders now became very much active,
and for this purpose they now went from door to door with a view to encouraging
the local people to enthusiastically participate in the Satyagraha. And the villagers
then, in their earnest call, came forward to fight along with them against imperial
injustice.

Quite obviously the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha had thus now isolated itself
from the national freedom struggle, especially the C. D. Movement, and presently
it rather more or less took the shape of a ‘Subaltern movement’. i.e., a
movement of the subordinate and common masses, in as much as it began to be
newly organized with the vivacious participation of the common villagers and
without any direct instruction of the leaders of the national politics.
Consequently a new sensation about the Satyagraha became evident, though on local basis.

With the emergence of such pro-movement sensation, the drowsyness of the Satyagraha began to gradually fade away. The leaders now began to renovate the Satyagraha with the help of the local people. \(^{119}\) And for this purpose, they met at the 3\(^{rd}\) (illegal) session of the Nadia District Congress Committee (NDCC), 1933, at the village ‘Bara-andulia’ under the Police Station of Chapra, the main spot of the no-tax Satyagraha. \(^{120}\) The session was presided over by Sri Haripada Chatterjee, the main figure of the Satyagraha.

But while the conference of the NDCC was going on, the infuriated armed Police appeared there like the beaten tigers. At the presence of the then Police Super, the police made an indiscriminate lathihcharge in the on-going conference. Sri Haripada Chatterjee, Sri Narayan Chandra Sarkar, Sri Haridas Mukherjee and many others were arrested. Their arrest raised a strong mass-resentment against the police, and in raising the resentment, the female participants took the leading part. The police thus arrested Nirmal Nalini Ghosh, Parmoda Das, Nandarani Biswas and a few others, and even some of them were imprisoned and sentenced \(^{121}\). This inhuman treatment over the Satyagrahis on the part of the police once again made the villagers alert about the necessity to raise a strong protest against the
Governmental injustice. Obviously the Satyagraha once again became sparkled in the strong resentment of the local people.

**PREMATURE-DEATH:**

But to speak painfully enough, the No-Tax Satyagraha at Tehatta could go no more ahead as a result of the rapidly increasing repression of the police, the local agents of the imperialist authority.\(^{122}\) Though the Satyagraha, at its last phase, had become more or less a ‘Subaltern movement’, and even though it had severed its direct link with the 2\(^{nd}\) C. D. Movement, yet an indirect impact of the C. D. Movement was certainly there upon the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha in so far as it was originally launched, none can at all deny, in the lofty ideals of the C. D. Movement. And this is why as soon as the 2\(^{nd}\) C. D. Movement was ultimately called off as a result of Gandhijis ‘self purificatory fast’ of 21 days, started on the 8\(^{th}\) May, 1933 with a view to strengthening the social status of the Harijans (i.e., the people of the lower untouchable caste) as well as ensuring their dignity in the society as human beings, the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha too had to face a premature death. It is, sincerely speaking, a pathetic history in the Nadia’s role in the struggle for Indian freedom.
RESISTANCE OF THE REACTIONARY AUTHORITY:

Though the Tehatta Satyagraha ultimately came to a pre-mature end, yet the reactionary government authority had forcefully sought to nip it in the bud through repression and oppression. The reactionary local agents of the imperialist authority carried on repressive policies in full swing. Arrest of the Satyagrahis was then a daily affair. In the events of 1932-33, according to an official Report, 123 145 persons were arrested in the Nadia District, 465 persons were imprisoned out of which 15 persons were female. Besides private properties were illegally attached. According to the Report, 124 the value of the attached properties was expected to be Rs. 3068/- and 10 annas, and according to another Report, 125 it was about Rs, 40,000. Besides, continuous lathicharge, beating and other atrocities were also there.

In order to suppress the No-Tax Satyagraha at Tehatta additional forces (both armed and unarmed) were brought in from Calcutta at the time of Satyagrahi meetings, conferences, picketing, gheraos etc. The police often used to prevent the people from attending the meetings or conferences of the Satyagrahi Committee and the District Congress Committee of Nadia by severing all kinds of communication—rail, road and water. Railway lines were cut off and trains were announced cancelled. Severe police patrolling was often set up in the streets,
vehicles were unnecessarily stopped, ferry service was often banned, ferries were drowned and so on. ¹²⁶

But in defiance of all these repressive activities, people of Tehatta and the adjacent areas often used to gather together in the Satyagrahi meetings, conferences, picketings etc. But the police used to make lathi-charge and firing in the mass-gathering. In the 2nd session of the Nadia District Congress Committee on the 19th June, 1932, where about 20,000 people assembled, the police then broke in violence. Lathi-charge was made there indiscriminately and the police began fire blindly. In this inhuman attack, Sri Satish Sardar, an innocent common peasant living in the village Chanderghat more or less adjacent to Tehatta, was barbarously shot down, and many others were injured. ¹²⁷ As a result resentment against this police atrocity now reached its absolute pitch. Public opinion also became stronger against this police repression in Tehatta. Local people now vehemently launched a protest movement against the repressive rule of the local agents of the imperialist authority.

**THE ROLE OF THE INDIAN LEAGUE DELEGATION:**

When the public protest and resentment against the repressive rule of the imperial power became highly tremorous all over India, the British Government in London took the matter sympathetically and appointed and sent to India the ‘Indian
League Delegation’ in order to realize the real nature of the British rule in India and also to find out whether this public resentment was justified. Mr. Leonard Metters and Miss Ellen Wilkinson, the two British M.P.s and other members of the League Delegation came to Tehatta in order to have eye witness of the inhuman atrocities, perpetrated by the local agents of the British authority at Tehatta. They were pompously welcome, when they reached Tehatta, by near about ten thousand people. 128 The members of the League Delegation, after observing all records and analyzing the pros and cons of the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha, made a very pathetic Report. 129 According to this historic Report, in a conference of the Nadia District Congress Committee held at Tehatta on the 19th June, 1932, four or five thousand people according to police report (and about 20 thousand people according to another report) gathered. The very Report of the Indian League Delegation runs very touchingly:

"The crowd was not violent, police broke up the gathering with lathis, bayonets and butts of rifles. The police now opened fire and wounded about twenty five people and killed Satis Sardar (who was not a Congress man but a (mere) spectator. He leaves a widow and five children between the ages of one and twelve. A number of people, including the wounded, were later on tried and sentenced to six month’s rigorous imprisonment each. During the trial the police
alleged that the brickbats were thrown at them, but no independent witness were called..."  129a

This League Delegation Report, giving so many pathetic information, is thus considered to be “a very valuable record of acts of terrorism perpetrated in 1932” by the reactionary force.  130

**ORGANISATION AND MASS-MOBILISATION:**

But whatever severe the reactionary force would have been , the people of Tehatta and the adjacent areas did not at all care for it. The people of all communities---Hindu, Muslim, Christian and others whole-heartedly supported the No-Tax Satyagraha. They never felt any hesitation to help the Satyagrahis.  131 They used to save and protect the Satyagrahi leaders from the police atrocity and arrest by hiding them in secret places. They used to gather together in a massive number in any large-scale meeting of the Satyagrahis.

In making the people so politically conscious and so active workers of the Satyagraha, the organizing skill and mobilizing efficiency of the Satyagrahi leaders of Tehatta undoubtedly deserve special attention. All the leaders including Haripada Chatterjee used to tour the neighbouring villages and organize the mass opinion in favour of the Satyagraha. They organized “Parallel Government”,(i.e., Self-government parallel to the British one) and used to perform the administrative
activities in the locality. Even they also used to try and judge the local disputes with the principles of conscience, justice and neutrality.

At the earnest call of the Satyagrahi leaders for making the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha a success, the shops and temporary stalls of wine and opium began to be gradually closed, the Chowkidars and Dafadars resigned, the members of the Union Board resigned, the people boycotted the governmental postal service with the growth of the “Parallel Postal Service” conducted under the Seal and Stamps of the Congress Party by the local volunteers, and even the people completely refused to pay any tax in the British coffer.

Besides, the leaders used to keep the people always informed of the last situation and latest development of the No-Tax Satyagraha by circulating the cyclostyled copies of the ‘Agnishikha Patrika’. Moreover, through the highly idealized leaflets, street lectures, organized meetings and so on the leaders used to preach the message of liberty, equality and fraternity, and, above all, that of unity. In this way the sense of patriotism and love for the Satyagraha were injected in the minds of the people. It is an excellent product of a unique organizing capacity of the leaders of Tehatta in particular and of Nadia district in general, no doubt.
WHETHER IT IS REALLY A SATYAGRAHA

Needles to say, due to the lofty organizing achievement, the Tehatta no-tax Satyagraha has created an energetic sensation in the Indian politics during the period of 1932-33. But a very consistent question here arises as to how far this Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha is a Satyagraha in the Gandhian sense? Is it at all a pure Satyagraha?

In reply to such question, we can certainly say that the Tehatta no-tax Satyagraha is really a Satyagraha in all aspects, for a Satyagraha, in the Gandhian sense, is nothing but a “non-violent direct action”. And the Tehatta Satyagraha had also followed this Gandhian principle of non-violent direct action from its cradle to the grave. While following the principle of “non-payment of taxes”, another major technique of the Gandhian Satyagraha, none of the leaders of this Satyagraha and its workers, supporters, participants etc. had forgotten the principle of “non-violence”. While refusing to pay taxes, they had been lathi-charged, arrested, beaten and even shot down, but had never thrown “tit for tat”. The police often accused the Satyagrahis of throwing “brick bats”, but could not, as per the Indian Leaguage Delegation Report, indicate or prove this charge with justified witness.
In fact, whole course of action of the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha was always in non-violent manner. Not only that, Satyagrahi leaders had minutely followed another Satyagrahi principle of establishing “self-government,” “self-postal service” and “self-judicial System” parallel to the British ones. They had also followed another Gandhian Satyagrahi principle of “fast” (i.e. Starvation) in order to magnify and dignify the Satyagraha.

So when all these remarkable Satyagrahi principles were perfectly followed in this Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha, then can’t we consider this Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha to be a pure Satyagraha? Certainly we can.

But if we consider the case of the Tehatta No-Tax Satyagraha at the background of an heuristic observation, we will face a grave difficulty in recognizing the Tehatta Satyagraha as a pure and perfect Satyagraha. In fact, there is a room for doubt and hesitation as to whether the Tehatta Satyagraha, like all other Satyagrahas---namely Bardoli Satyagraha, Champaran Satyagraha, Ahemedabad Satyagraha and so on --- can at all be called a Satyagraha in its truest sense, i.e., in the Gandhian sense, for, in this Satyagraha though there was no physical force on the part of the Satyagrahis, yet there was certainly the moral force and mental pressure on their own part (i.e. the part of the Satyagrahis) in so far as no Satyagraha movement can at all run or be organized without the force of morality and psychology of the Satyagrahi leaders and workers.
OUR REALISATION OF THE MOVEMENT:

But we must have to admit here that Gandhiji sincerely believes in the ‘non-violent’ character of any Satyagraha. That is to say, there will be no force, according to Gandhiji, in a Satyagraha. But now the pertinent question is that if the Gandhian Satyagraha really means the absence of violence or force or pressure, no matter whatever it be---be it physical, moral, mental, phychological, spiritual, technological or anything else, then how can we recognize the ‘Tehatta No-tax Satyagraha’, like all other Satyagrahas, imposing moral and psychological pressure on the part of the Satyagrahi leaders, workers and supports against the imperial injustice, a Satyagraha in the truest sense of the term? We can not at all do so, as our heuristic analysis is sure to say this.

THE ENRICHED TRADITION OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN NADIA:

So we find that the district of Nadia had glowingly experienced enriched and energetic socio-political movements before it organized and launched the ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942. In fact, before launching the ‘Quit India’ movement, Nadia had been greatly influenced by the rich legacy of political movements, kept for it by different enriched political movements and revolts. It is in this respect that the First Civil Disobedience Movement organized and directed by Srichaitanya of
Nabadwip and the No-Tax Satyagraha-Movement at Tehatta organized in favour of the Gandhiji-led 2nd Civil Disobedience Movement in India deserve our especial attention in as much as both these historic movements are mainly the Civil Disobedience Movements, both are highly organized, systematically arranged and dedicatedly directed and both are greatly enriched with the enthusiastic participation of the common masses. It is in this sense that both the historic movements are identical.

OUR SENSITIZATION REGARDING THE TRADITION OF THE HISTORIC MOVEMENTS IN NADIA

It is, however true that the First Civil Disobedience Movement organized by Srichaitanya had experienced glorious success while the No-Tax Satyagraha-Movement at Tehatta had ultimately failed. Still both the historic movements had very brilliantly set up a glorious tradition of political movement before the district of Nadia. In fact, both the movements had glowingly set before the district the ideal of political protest and resentment against injustice and mal-administration. Both of them had also put forward the example that Nadia can fight for justice and organize movement for sound survival. Both these movements had thus become an endless inspiration to Nadia to organize, launch and develop the ‘Quit India’
movement in 1942 and fight to the last to compel the British Government to quit India in reality.

So we do sincerely believe that both the ‘First Civil Disobedience Movement’ organized by Srichaitanya of Nabadwip and the ‘No-Tax Satyagraha-Movement at Tehatta organized in favour of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Civil Disobedience Movement in India had brilliantly kept a glorious legacy of enriched political movement for the district of Nadia; and the district, having been greatly fertilized with the legacy, had very vigorously and quite bravely organized the ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942. Herein lies the especial significance of the two historic political movements of Nadia, indeed.

**NOTES AND REFERENCES:**


6. Hena Sinha, ‘Bharatiya Nabajagaraner Pratham Pathikrit Srichaitanya’ in S. Paul and S. Roy (eds.) op. cit., p.188


9. Brindaban Das, *Chaitanyabhabgat*, chapter iv, pp.411-12. Regarding the communal nature and anti Hindu stature of Syed Hussain Shah the-then King of Gour (Bengal), Brindaban Das had vividly written that “…… Hussain Shah in the whole of Orissa / had broken the images of Gods in some particular temples./…In Orissa he had broken crores of palaces of images (of Gods and Godesses)/(and) used to endanger many others…” or “ …Hussain Shah sarbbo Uriar deshe/Debomurti bhangilen deul bisheshe./… Odrodesh koti koti Pratima Prasad/ Bhangilek, kato kato karito pramad../”

10. Krishnadas Kabiraj, *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, chapter 25. Here the poet Krishnadas Kabiraj had given a lively description of how Syed Hussain Shah, the King of Gour (Bengal) had very inhumanly and quite ruthlessly made
Subuddhi Roy, a Brahmin person and once the employer of Hussain Shah, lose his caste. According to his description:

“Earlier when Subuddhi Roy was the owner of Gour/syed Hussain Khan used to work under him. In order to dig a Large pond he appointed him (Hussan Khan) in the work. Having found shortcoming Roy had scourged him. Later on when Hussain Shah had become the King of Gour, his anger to Subuddhi Roy had been increased a lot. His wife having seen the beating marks on his body requested him to beat Subuddhi Roy in the palace of the King. … The wife wanted to beat him, the King was thus in problem. / He then poured the water of Karoya into his mouth / (and thereby made him lose his caste)” or: “Purbe jabe Subuddin Ray chhila Gour adhikari, Syed Hussain Khan kare tahar chakri. Dighi khodaite tanre manasib kailo, Chhidra pan Ray tare chabuk marilo. Pachhe jabe Hussain Shah Gour Raja hoilo, Subiddhi Rayere tenha bahu barailo, Tanr Stri tanr ange dekhe maraner chinhe, Subuddhi Rayere marite Kahe Raja sthane. … Stri marite chahe, Raja sankate parila, Karoyar pani tar mukhe deyaila/(evabei jat tar raja je marila)” [Brackets are ours].

12. ibid.


17. Sukanta paul, op.cit., p. 202


22. Biswajit Sarkar, _op.cit., p.173._


24. Dinesh Chandra Sen, _History of Bengali Language and Literature_, Calcutta University, Calcutta,1911, pp.413-14. (2nd brackets are ours and the 3rd bracket is original).


27. Mohammad Shahnurur Rahaman, _op.cit., p.68._

28. Brindaban Das, _Chaitanyakdhaghat, 2/1._

29. Quoted by Biswajit Sarkar, _op.cit., p.177._


37. Parthasarathi Chowdhury, op.cit., pp.94-100.

38. Sukumar Sen, _Bangla Sahityer Itihas_, vol.I, Kolkata, p.253. (Translation from Bengali to English is ours and the bracket is also ours.)

39. Asitkumar Bandyopadhyay, _Bangla Sahityer Itibritto_, vol.II, Modern Book agency Private Limited, Kolkata, p.191. (Translation from Bengali to English is ours and the bracket is also ours.)

41. Debashis Dutta, Quoted in Bhaskar chowdhury, *Madhyajugia Samaj o Sahitye Chaitanyadeb*, p.65. (Translation from Bengali to English is ours and the bracket is also ours.)

42. Parthasarathi Chowdhuri, op.cit.,p.96. See also Hena Sinha,op.cit.,p.186.

43. Sudhiranjan Chattopdhyay, *Bharatiya Darshan Prosthane Baishnab Sadhanar Dhara*,p.45. (bracket is ours.)


47. Hena Sinha,op.cit.,p186 and see also Sukanta Paul,op.cit.,p198.

48. Subrata Roy,op.cit.,p.48.(Translation is ours).

49. Hiteshshranjan Sanyal, op.cit,PP.54-55. (Translation is ours).See also Brindaban Das,op.cit.,P2/23. (Translation is ours) for the detailed statement of the Kazi Saheb.

50. Brindaban Das ,op.cit.,quoted by Hena Sinha, op.cit.,p.187. (Translation is ours the and bracket is also ours).

51. Bindaban Das ,op.cit.,2/23. (Translation is ours).
52. Hiteshranjan Sanyal, op.cit.,p.54 (Translation is ours). See also Abdul Karim, Social History of the Muslim in Bengal(Down To A.D.1583), Baitush Sharaf Research Institute, Chittagong, 1985, pp. 256-57 and also Sundarananda Bidyabinod, Srichaitanyadeb, p.5.

53. Krishnadas Kabiraj, op.cit., p.2/13. (Translation is ours and the brackets are also ours).

54. ibid., (Translation is ours).


57. ibid. See also Alakh Mukhopadhyay, ‘Pran na Thakle Ki Kore Peroy Prajanmantar’ in Anandabazar Patrika, Nadia issue, Kolkata, 16.2.2016, P.13(8).


59. Hina Sinha, op.cit., p188.

60. Krishnadas Kabiraj, op.cit., quoted by Hina Sinha, op.cit., P18. (Translation is ours and the bracket is also ours).


63. Biswajit Sarkar, op.cit., p.180-82. Here Sri Sarkar has given a short description of anger of Srichaitanya on the Kazi Saheb.
64. Brindaban Das, op.cit., 2/23. (Translation is ours).

65. ibid.

66. ibid. (Translation is ours and the bracket is also ours).

67. Krishnadas Kabiraj, op.cit., Quoted by Abdul Karim, op.cit., p.261 and also by Hena Sinha, op.cit., P.190. In the verse of Krishnadas Kabiraj, we find that the Kazi Saheb was modestly addressing Srichaitanya as his ‘nephew’ or ‘Bhagne’ to soften the anger of him (Srichaitanya). According to Krishnadas Kabiraj: “In the village relationship (Nilambar) Chakraborty is my uncle/ This village-based relationship is more genuine than body-based relationship (i.e., blood relationship)./ Nilambar chakraborty is your maternal grandfather,/ In that relationship you are my nephew or bhagina” or “Gram sanbandhe (Nilambar) Chakraborty hoi mor chacha/ Deho sambandha hoite hoi gram sambandha sancha./ Nilambar Chakraborty hoi tomar Nana/ Se sambandhe hou tumi amar bhagina.” (Translation is ours and Brackets are also ours).

Not only that Kazi Saheb had also told aggrieved Srichaitanya very caringly in order to soothe him, as Krisnadas Kabiraj wrote, that:

“Maternal uncle must … tolerate the anger of nephew/ (So) nephew does not take into account the fault of maternal uncle” or “Bhaginar krodh mama
abashyoi sahoi / Matuler aparadh (tai) bhagina na loi.” (Translation is ours and brackets are also ours).

68. Subrata Roy, op.cit., p. 50.


70. Brindaban Das, op.cit.,2/23. (Translation is ours and bracket is also ours).


73. Ibid.

74. Brindaban Das, op.cit.,2/23. (Translation is ours).


76. Ibid.

77. Netai Mullick, Srirkrisner Oitihasikata Ebang, Patralekha, Kolkata 2015, pp.118-19


79. Krishnadas Kabiraj, op.cit., quoted by Netai Mallick, op.cit.,119. See also Subrata Roy, op.cit., p.51. (Translation is ours and the bracket is also ours).

80. Kumudnath Mallick, op.cit.pp.107-8. (Translation is ours and the bracket is also ours)

81. Krisnadas Kabiraj, op.cit., quoted by Subrata Roy, op.cit., p. 51. (Translation of the verse is ours and the brackets are also ours).
82. Bindaban Das, *op.cit.*, quoted by Subrata Roy, *op.cit.*, p.51. (Translation of the verse is ours and bracket is also ours.)


84. This comment of Sukumar Sen has been quoted by Biswajit Sarkar, *op.cit.*, p.184.


87. *ibid.*

88. Naresh Chandra Chaki, *Nadiar parichiti* (in Bengali), Ranaghat, 1976, p. 2. See also *Nadia*, Nadia District Citizens’ Council, Krishnanagar, 1973, p.1. In the pre-independence period Tehetta was under the Meherpur Sub-division and in the post independence period it was under the Krishnanagar Sub-division till 1983 and in 1983 it has been made a Sub-division itself by dividing the Krishnanagar Sub-division into Krishnanagar and Tehatta Sub-divisions.

89. Tarun Kumar Banerjee, *op.cit.*


95. Ibid, p. 373.

96. Ibid, p. 347.


100. Swadhinata Sangrame Nadia, op. cit., p. 169.

101. Ibid.


103. Ibid.

104. R.P. Dutt, op. cit., p. 388.

105. Swadhinata Sangrame Nadia, op. cit., pp. 147-75.


110. Tarun Kumar Banerjee, op.cit.

111. Swadhinata Sangrame Nadia, op.cit., p.176.

112. Ibid, pp.175-76.


117. ‘Subaltern movement’ refers to a ‘movement from below’, i.e, a Movement launched by the subordinate and common masses. For a systematic and detailed analysis of the movement, see Ranjit Guha ed. Subaltern Studies, Vol.I, Delhi, 1982.
118. Interviews with Smarajit Bandopadhayay, Shibaram Gupta, and Nani Gopal Singha on 14.2.1985 and 16.7.85. respectively, and also with Achintya Majumder on 16.6.85.

119. ibid.

120. Swadhinata Sangrame Nadia, op.cit., p.179.

121. op.cit., pp.180-81.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

124. Ibid.


128. Ibid.


129a. ibid. (brackets are ours)

131. Tarun Kumar Banerjee, op.cit.

132. ibid.


135. Ibid p.178.


137. For the Report’s excerpts, see R.C.Majumder’s History of the Freedom Movement op.cit., pp.414-22.