

FLASHING ON FOOD MOVEMENT IN 1959 IN THE LIGHT OF MIDNAPORE

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Office: 1/199, Jodhpur Park, Gariahat Road, Kolkata - 700068

City Office: Maghlaya Apartment, Dum Dum, 6 Jossore Road, Kolkata - 700028

Phone: 9735768900

website: www.amitrakshar.co.in

Price: ₹ 400.00

ISBN : 978-93-6008-434-9



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First Published in 10 Dec. 2023

By

**Amitrakshar™
Publishers**

Kolkata -700068

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ISBN: 978-93-6008-434-9

Price: 400.00

**Title of the Book: Flashing on Food Movement in 1959
in the Light of Midnapore**

Author by Dr. Tapan Hazra

Language: English

Publisher and Type setter: Amitrakshar Publishers

Typeset in Times New Roman

Page No.: 220

Printed by: M. Enterprises

Website : www.amitrakshar.co.in

Email id: amitraksharpublishers@gmail.com

Phone number: 9735768900

Published by:



Office: 1/199, Jodhpur Park, Gariahat Road, Kolkata- 700068

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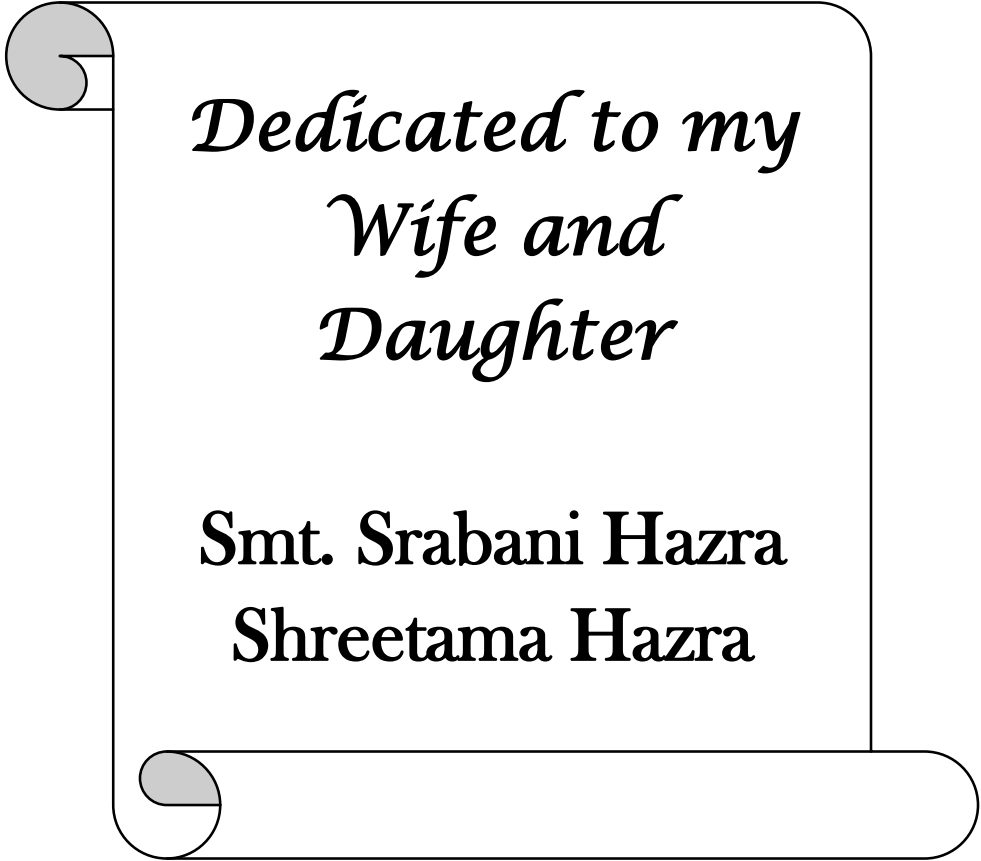
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*Dedicated to my
Wife and
Daughter*

**Smt. Srabani Hazra
Shreetama Hazra**

PREFACE

Flashing on Food Movement in 1959 in the Light of Midnapore – is an incisive and original contribution to the understanding of the origin and the development of the food movement in Bengal as well as in the local level, such as in the district of Midnapore which is also an epicenter of all trends of the national movement including the revolutionary movement in colonial period. Based on extensive use of archival material, newspaper and rare documents, the book explores communist leader's role, strategies and techniques for mobilizing masses under the ideological umbrella of communism to take part in the food movement on the one hand, and the internal factionalism within Communist party, people's cardinal desire to participate in the food movement for their survival and existence, the internal contradictions among the different segments of society on the other hand. Despite the dominance of Indian National Congress and its hegemony on the mid twentieth century Bengal society as well as the manifestation of the harsh reprisal of the state government, the food movement gained a swift momentum and left identical insignia after completion.

Besides, the book touches on the kind of ideological ambivalence and pragmatic political practice of the Communist leaders in Midnapore in the backdrop of the shift and turns of the Bengal province communist movement. In this context the author tries to explore the process through which the Communists in Midnapore were divided in two groups (pro Chinese and Pro – Russian), the pro Chinese executed the actions and programmes of the food movement and thereby the Party emerged as reinvigorated a mass based vanguard political party. The food movement shattered the foundation of the government and it sounded the doorstep of the Communist party in power. It is necessary to say that the food movement exposes the weakness of the government, government

pays price taking the food scarcity superficially, commits a huge mistake for levelling food movement as the conspiracy of the Communist party. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that the success of the food movement is constructed with the combination of the consequence of the perfect maneuver of the communist party as well as the result of misjudgment and underestimation of the Congress government.

Dr. Tapan Hazra

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The book is consist of detailed description of a single event of food movement in 1959 in the district of Midnapore. Actually this is the first endeavour to write a book on the food movement in the regional level and I am fully aware of glorification of local history which destroys the conception of historical event of national history. The food movement in 1959 was started first in Midnapore and it is worth to mention that this district took prominent role in shaping the food movement in West Bengal like all other peasant movements, national movements, left – wing movement in colonial period. In this book I am trying to find out the rebellious psychosis of the general masses of Midnapore and why they went in advance to launch food movement against indigenous government led by the Indian National Congress party which became the symbol of liberation of common people in colonial times but it assume the character of oppression and tyranny government like their predecessor British government. This book unfurls struggling spirit of the general masses for keeping up their livelihood and existence even after the independence of India.

The book is written basically on the primary sources available in the state archive in Kolkata, District Intelligence branch in Midnapore, Intelligence branch in Kolkata. I have also used oral testimonies, pamphlet literature, contemporary newspaper, journals, literature and the essays and the articles available in the Google website. I have received helpful cooperation and assistance from the staff of – National Library (Kolkata) National Archives of India (New Delhi), the State Archives (Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata), Ajay Bhaban Library (New Delhi), Bhabhani

Sen Library (Kolkata), the intelligence branch of the West Bengal Police (Lord Sinha Road, Kolkata) and Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of West Bengal. I would like to thank all of them. I would like to thank all the Google scholar who help me for shaping my conception sharper and wider on food movement. I am really grateful to Nishikanta Patra for his laborious work of correcting manuscript. I am also thankful to Prof. Ujjayan Bhattacharyya for his continuous inspiration to materialize this book from the cancelled document of my Ph. D thesis.

Last, not the least I am thankful to Srabani, my wife and Shreetama, my daughter for the innumerable little ways in which they helped me..

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