

Dhubulia and Chandmari Refugee Camps of Nadia in 1949-1950: A Case Study

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Abstract

In post partition period, the refugees from East Pakistan migrated to West Bengal. Initially the central government of India, took the policy of relief and rehabilitation. Gradually camps were built up to shift the refugees. In post 1950 period, some camps grew up. Nadia district was the most important area where the refugees concentrated. Cooper's camp, Dhubulia, Chandmari camps were established in Nadia district. In academia, most of the research work has been done on the Cooper's camp. In this particular article the author has focused on the Dhubulia and Chandmari camps.

Keywords- Refugee camps, Dhubulia camp, Chandmari camp, Cooper's camp, relief, rehabilitation.

Introduction

Undivided Bengal experienced partition and freedom more or less simultaneously. But the partition came earlier. Thus it became difficult to disassociate the trauma of partition from independent Bengal. Trauma is a Greek word, used in English for centuries. Its literal meaning was 'of an external wound'. Toward the end of nineteenth century, it was extended, to also mean, a 'psychic wound'. It shows how and apparently trivial circumstance attend the dignity of trauma by summated effects with other stressful events.¹ The history of post-1947 Bengal, is that of a truncated Bengal, divided in East Pakistan(former East Bengal) and India (West Bengal). Similarly Punjab was divided into two sections. In the midst of the changing processes, two nations were born- India and Pakistan.²

India's partition brought violence, bloodshed, abduction, arson, and looting. Raw violence was, more rampant on the eastern frontier of the country. In the eastern part, gory violence was more localized. Certain places including Noakhali, Dhaka, and specific pockets of Khulna being the most affected. Somewhat lesser bloody violence were however prevalent across entire face of eastern Bengal. Violation of social and personal belongings, conversion, uprooting and a forced migration – were a dramatic example of brutal violence. It was not absent in these areas as well.³ Jayanti Basu focused on "uprooting on what she preferred to call a soft violence. Almost none of the respondents whom she selected, had to flee their homeland as a result of violent attack by a mob of killers. In some cases, there were threats of killing or conversion. Most of them had heard of rumours of violence, seen arson, from a distance, heard war cries: some had even participated in riots. However none of Jayanti Basu's respondents migrated to India in the wake of direct assault on themselves and none had lost their first degree relatives. The respondents themselves or their family members apprehended violence, assessed and interpreted the gravity of the political situation, tried to deal with the problem, occasionally by migration within East Pakistan, and finally at some point decided to move to India".⁴

¹ S. Freud, in Strachey edited and translated, *The Standard Edition of Complete Psychological Works, Vol .2,* pp.3-17, 1927, cited in Jayanti Basu, *Reconstructing the Bengal Partition, The Psyche under a Different Violence,* Kolkata: Samya, 2013, p.110.

² Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, *West Bengal Camp Refugees, Dispersal and Caste Question, 1950-65,* Kolkata: Sreejoni, 2019, p.1.

³ Jayanti Basu, *Reconstructing the Bengal Partition,* p.4.

⁴ Ibid., p.4.

Hiranmay Bandhyopadhyay who was the relief and rehabilitation commissioner at that time, identified three distinct categories, amongst the massive number of refugees who arrived in West Bengal. First of all, there were those energetic and rich who did not take government's help but depended on their own resources for rehabilitation. Secondly, there were those who were energetic but lacked resources. They occupied uninhabited houses or fallow lands. Thirdly there were those, who were poor and lacked the will to stand on their feet. It was the refugees of the last category who sought shelter, in government camps. These persons were poor Hindus, Namasudras, and fishermen. "They moved out due to riots, forcible occupation of their land and house and economic pressure put on them with full connivance of those in authority".⁵

In the early years of 1950s, the central government's policy toward the East Bengal Refugees, was only relief and rehabilitation. With this end in view, relief camps, were established by the government in West Bengal. But there were some exceptions. The families headed by old and infirm and women were placed under, the direct responsibility of the government. As per the direction of the central government, relief camps were opened at Chandipur and Bagda and Tangra villages (Bongaon).⁶

There was a fresh influx of refugees. It needed establishment of new camps. There was an old camp called Rupashree Pally in Ranaghat. It was remodeled to make living space for the marginal people. During the Second World War, large tracks of land were set aside, for military purpose at Ranaghat and Dhubulia. These places were used for war purposes. The government decided to use these huts for the refugees. Gradually transit camps were established in Godowns on both the banks of Bhagarathi river.⁷ With the continuing refugee exodus in West Bengal, government opened camps for the refugees. The monthly rate of arrival to the asylum camps was very large. Mostly they camp from East Bengal. Gradually all the camps, were grouped into three categories: 1) transit camps where able bodied men who could be rehabilitated were kept. Cooper's camp, Dhubulia camp and some camps of Burdwan were included in this group. 2) Permanent liability camps were established to keep the families headed by old, disabled. Rapashree Pally and Chandmari fell under this group. Later, Cooper's camp turned into a permanent liability camp. 3) Women's camps were established for families headed by unattached women and widows. Titagarh and Karthikpur of 24 Paraganas, Rupashree Pally of Nadia, Bhadrakali of Hooghly, and a part of Dhubilia camp were some of these women's camps.⁸

Existing Historiography

When Bengal was partitioned, about 42% of Non- Muslim population remained in East Pakistan. According to Prafulla Chakrabarti's reckoning, about 11,00, 000 of them had migrated to West Bengal. According to the statistics of relief department of the government of West Bengal, the figure was more than 1200000 in April that year. About 66% of them, settled in Calcutta, while rest were scattered over 13 districts of West Bengal. The majority of them had settled in Nadia. Sekhar Bandhyopadhyay described it as a bitter taste of freedom.⁹

According to Joya Chatterji, in the past, "we have seen men from Eastern Bengal, had not been keen to migrate Westwards. Bengali women, in contrast, traditionally went where their husbands lived. Historically this has led to a fair amount of migration of brides between, the districts adjacent to the border, most directly affected by partition".¹⁰ "Peasants forced to flee from the east, may have had no previous experience of living and working in the west, but in many cases, had relatives by marriage 'on the other side'. Circumstances now force them to utilise these connections in ways which would have

⁵ Hiranmay Bandhyopadhyay, *Udbastu*, Cited by Monica Mondal, *Settling the Unsettled, A Study of Partition Refugees in West Bengal*, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata: Manohar, 2011, p.127.

⁶ Hiranmay Bandhyopadhyay, *Udbastu*, Kolkata: Sahitya Samsad, 1970, pp.65-67.

⁷ Ibid., pp.65-67.

⁸ Ibid., pp.65-67.

⁹ Sekhar Bandhyopadhyay, *Decolonization in South Asia, Meaning of Freedom, in Post-Independence West Bengal, 1947-52*, London New York : Routledge, 2009, p.32.

¹⁰ Joya Chatterji, *Spoils of Partition, Bengal and India, 1947-67*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.124.

been unthinkable in more ordinary times, given the strong taboo in Hindu family, custom against accepting hospitality from the in-laws, of daughters, given in marriage. But now this taboo, was broken by harsh necessities of abnormal times. Nakatani's study of a border village, into which Namasudra refugees flooded, shows that about half the families, who found shelter in this village, came through relatives, utilising not only ties of kinship, but also affinal relations".¹¹ Several refugees appeared in Nadia after partition.¹²

Nakatani cited several reasons for arrival at village M in Nadia. 1) Relatives (patrilineal) were there. 2) Relatives affinal were there. 3) Relatives (matrilineal) were there. 4) People from same locality were there. 5) Persons of the same caste were there. 6) Keen in distant relationship were there. 7) Through the exchange of properties with Muslims. 8) Business or service. 9) By government rehabilitation. 10) Without any connection. 11) Other reasons. 12) Unknown reasons. Total of 188 families arrived in Nadia.¹³

The articles published in Calcutta Research Group, in 2009, written by Anushua Basu Raychowdhuri, and Ishita De, focused on camp refugees. The Cooper's camp is the central theme of both the articles.¹⁴ Anusua Basu Raychowdhuri, in other articles also referred to the camp life of the refugees. She dealt with the role of different organisations of different refugees¹⁵. She devoted a separate section on the life and times in refugee camps. She focused on PL Camps, Women's camps and worksite camps. She spoke about mainly the Cooper's camp. The theme of the articles published by Calcutta Research Group focused on camps refugees with special reference to Cooper's camp. Anusua Basu Raychowdhuri dealt with life and times in the refugee camps. She in the article 'Living another life, Unhomed in camps', discussed mainly the life and condition of Cooper's camp. Here we find a genesis of relief camps (Cooper's) in West Bengal. The author touched the nature, caste composition, of the refugees of the Cooper's camp. She also cited some cases of refugee agitation. Her arguments were mostly based on interviews with the residents. She spoke about Dandakaranya scheme. She wrote a few words on protest movements of the refugees, role of United Central Refugee Council, and the role of Praja Socialist Party. But no detailed analysis of refugee movement is found in the article. She traced the history till Marichjhapi.¹⁶

Ishita De wrote an article, which was related mostly to Cooper's camps. She focused on Cooper's camp, largely depending on interviews with camp residents. She started with the question of migration to Cooper's camp. She gave glimpses of the government policies of rehabilitation and refugee protests organised by Cooper's camp. She gave a detailed account of residents' of homes and infirmaries. She shifted her focus to perception of citizenship and rights. She also brought in the idea of infiltration and migration. Section three of the article is titled 'from transit camps to ex-camp site'. The refugee movement in Cooper's camp is her perspective. Then she dealt with Cooper's camp's agricultural scheme. She ended her last section with the segment – 'camp site at crossroads of development and statecraft'. This article mostly dealt with Cooper's camp and women's camp.¹⁷

According to Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, Cooper's camp was established in Nadia district in 1950. It was supposed to accommodate nearly 40000 displaced persons. The camp's population reached 30,000 in May 1950 (inmates belonging to 6300 families). In this particular article, she dealt with, the role of some scheduled caste leaders in 1950s, like Jatin Saha, Ratish Mallick, Hemanta Biswas and Jogendranath

¹¹ Tetsuya Nakatani, 'The Strategies of movement and settlement of refugees from East Pakistan to West Bengal, India', Unpublished paper, presented at Indo-Dutch Conference on Displaced People in South Asia, Chennai, March 2001, cited in Joya Chatterji, *Spoils*, p.125.

¹² Joya Chatterji, *Spoils*, p.125.

¹³ The figures are replicated without amendment from the original, Tetsuya Nakatani, 'Away from home, the movement and settlement of refugees from East Pakistan into West Bengal, India', *Journal of Japanese Association for South Asian Studies*, 12(2000), p.89, cited in Joya Chatterji, *Spoils*, p.125.

¹⁴ Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, *West Bengal Camp Refugees*, pp.4-5.

¹⁵ Anusua Basu Raychowdhuri, 'Living Another Life, Unhomed in Camps' in Calcutta Research Group Series on Politics and Practice, No.21, Calcutta: Calcutta Research Group, 2009.

¹⁶ Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, *West Bengal Camp Refugees*, pp.4-5.

¹⁷ Ishita De, 'On the margins of citizenship', published in CRG series on Politics and Practices, no 21, Calcutta:CRG, 2009, cited in Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, *West Bengal Camp Refugees*, p.5.

Mandal.¹⁸ In the book *West Bengal Camp Refugees*, Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, showed various aspects of Cooper's camp of Nadia in the 1950s, their internal condition and a number of protests that occurred in early 1950s, including the role of Cooper's camp in anti-Dandakaranya Struggle. Here she showed growth of unit of United Central Refugee Council and also the role of Revolutionary Communist Party of India's unit.¹⁹ In another article,²⁰ she dealt with the struggles of refugees in various camps in 1948 to 49-1950s. She dealt with various camps of Burdwan in the years preceding 1950s. During the same period(1948-49), Salboni camp of Midnapur witnessed similar struggles. After 15th May 1949, some members from Salboni camp(Members of Kalyan Samiti) were ordered to be transferred to Dudkundi camp. A tension developed between the refugees and the authorities. She focused on spontaneity in the years 1948-49 and early unionism in 1950. Cooper's camp was established in 1950 in Nadia district. In this article, Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, showed how some inmates of the camp, came under the influence and leadership of one Santosh Pal. He propagated amongst the refugees, against the camp authorities and the government. Pal and others urged the refugees, not to go beyond the borders of West Bengal. 20 refugees, were arrested who had refused to leave the camp. Throughout 1950s, a number of incidents took place in Cooper's camp. It came under the influence of RCPI, even before the establishment of branch of UCRC, in Cooper's camp. RCPI's organisation played an important role in the post 1950 period. It had been mentioned branch of UCRC was established in Cooper's camp in 1952. This article mainly showed how the Cooper's camp of Nadia reached its adulthood.

From the study of the early historiography on the camps of Nadia district, it is apparent that all the authors mainly stressed on the Cooper's camp of Nadia. In my present article, I would like to deal with some camps of Nadia (1950s), such as Chandmari and Dhubulia.

Refugee camps of Nadia: Chandmari Camp

During the initial stage of struggle, RCPI (Soumendranath Tagore), played a prominent role in the Chandmari camp. Soumendranath Tagore(RCPI), along with Purnananda Dasgupta(SP) of Calcutta visited the Chandmari refugee camp on 27th December 1949 and held a meeting of the refugees (1000) at local H.E. School. The meeting was presided over by Nagendranath Mukherjee (a refugee), Soumendranath Tagore , Purnananda Dasgupta, Dharendra Roy(RCPI of Shantipur). Nagendranath Mukherjee, Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee(refugees) and others spoke in the meeting. They urged the refugees, to be organised, and fight for 50 *kathas* of land, and Rs.1500 for each family. Tagore asked the refugees, not to leave the camp. He assured them that he would lead a refugee movement, in case their demands were not conceded by the government.²¹

On 5th January 1950, refugees of Chandmari Camp number 3, assembled with a demand to continue the supply of free doles, till they were rehabilitated at Gayespur. The commandant of the camp was forced to grant them three days' worth of ration. In the evening there was a meeting in the said camp. Tagore and others delivered speeches urging the refugees not to leave the camp till all their demands were met. ²² On 6th January 1950, about 1000 Hindu refugees, surrounded the office of commandant of the Chandmari refugee camp and demanded of doles, wages of daily labourers and sweepers. The situation was brought under control by the Circle Inspector, Ranaghat, who reached there with armed forces, on receipt of

¹⁸ Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, 'Role of Some Prominent Scheduled Caste leaders in 1950', *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, Vol. LIV, No 1 &2, April – September 2014, pp.166-178.

¹⁹Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, *West Bengal Camp Refugees*.

²⁰Swati Sengupta Chatterjee, 'Agitation in Refugee camps 1948-49, to Early 1950s: Spontaneity and Early Unionism', A Multidisciplinary Online Journal of Netaji Subhash Open University, India, NSOU Open Journal, Volume 2, Number 2, July 2020.

²¹West Bengal State Archives, Report of Political Activities of Refugees, on ... 8th January 1950.

²² WBSA, Report of Political Activities of Refugees, Dated 8th January 1950 and Corruption of Refugees Camps Week Ending Dated 8th January 1950.

information. He safely escorted the commandant to his quarters. Printed leaflets captioned 'call for formation of a Panchayat in order to fight the cause of refugees', were circulated in the camps.²³

In the Chandmari camp, RCPI(Tagore) was very vocal about the refugees. We should mention here, Arun Banerjee was a member of RCPI(Tagore) group.²⁴ Banerjee used to visit refugee camp number 2, of Gausala. He lived with his father-in-law, Suresh Chandra Mukherjee. There he urged the refugees not to settle at Gayespur.²⁵ Tagore discussed with Mukherjee and Gour Shankar Basu of Chandmari camp about the possibilities of forming a unit of RCPI at Gausala camp. Suresh Chandra Mukherjee promised to communicate this to Tagore in the camp.²⁶ Towards the end of January 1950, the government completed the rehabilitation of refugees of Chandmari camp to Goyespur. The promised visit of Tagore, Lila Roy to the camps had been postponed.²⁷

Prabhat Mukherjee and Amalendu Neogi, both the refugees of Chandmari camp, actively organised the members of the camp on RCPI ideology. Some of the employees of the railway workshop regularly visited the Chandmari camp particularly at night and preached communist ideology.²⁸

Some of the members of RSP, moved regularly and visited the Chandmari camp and kept close contact with Narandra Majumder, and Kalipada Biswas of the camp. Members of RSP, handed over a bundle of leaflets for distribution amongst different camps. The leaflet urged the formation of Panchayats of their own to fight for their rehabilitation. Different political parties, tried to form their units since the establishment of the camp of Chandmari, P.S Chakda. The forward block succeeded in forming unit in Chandmari camp number 3, Gausala camp 1. RSP also formed units at Chandmari camp 3. RCPI(Tagore group), formed units for Chandmari camp and 2 units in Gayespur refugee colony. This party, exerted greatest influence over the refugees. Under the common flags enlisted, themselves as congress members, captured congress Panchayats.²⁹

On 22nd September 1950, Biswanath Das Roy, Tapan Gupta, of Chandmari camp with some other refugees, decided to hold an open meeting to protest against, the Dhubulia incident. What had transpired was, in Dhubulia camp a boy was killed. Some employees of Chandmari camp joined with the inmates. The refugees of the said camp circulated a leaflet captioned "let the externment order on Prabhat Mukherjee, president of Refugee Welfare Samiti," be withdrawn. The refugee the immediate withdrawal of restriction order on Prabhat Mukherjee, to enable him to return to his field of activities and serve the distressed refugees of the Nadia district.³⁰

On 24th September 1950, there was a meeting held at Chandmari camp. 250 people attended it. The meeting was held to protest against the atrocities of the camp commandant of the Dhubulia camp and portrayed Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel as "Gundas". Eventually they moved in a procession, shouting their usual slogans against the government.³¹

November day was observed by the refugees in Chandmari refugee camp by holding a meeting on 7th November 1950. Arun Banerjee chaired the meeting. Significance of November day was explained through the speeches. The people were urged to follow the doctrine of Lenin, to prevent the activities of the capitalist government. In the meeting, there was a proposal for mass revolution. But the revolution should not follow the doctrines of Stalin. Biswanath Das Roy, Budhheswar Das Roy, Tapan Gupta, and Kalipada Biswas created 'trouble' and excitement, in many ways in the camp. They were rehabilitated, with government money, but they still continued their own efforts, to procure lands from the government and

²³WBSA, IB File No. 1838/48, Political Activities of the Refugees, IB Department.

²⁴ WBSA, Report Dated 1st January 1950.

²⁵ WBSA, Report of Political Activities of Refugees and Corruption in the Refugee camps, week ending, Dated 1st January 1950.

²⁶ WBSA, Report of Political Activities of Refugees in the Camp, Dated 8th January 1950.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸ WBSA, IB File No. 1838/48, Report of political situation and activities of refugees, weekending, 7th July 1950, IB Department.

²⁹WBSA, Report of political activities of refugees Dated 27th August 1950, IB Department.

³⁰ WBSA, Report of political activities of refugees, weekending 8th October 1950.

³¹ WBSA, Report of political activities of refugees weekending Dated 29th October 1950.

occupy those lands. They occupied some rooms in the camp number 1, and urged the refugees, to occupy forcibly, land acquired by the government, and built huts. About 25 huts were constructed in those lands. Suresh Mukherjee, Arun Banerjee, Amalendu Neogi, and some refugees of the camp, occupied about 175 bighas of government acquired lands. There were 350 families. Each family received 10 kathas of land. 4-5 families already had started construction of huts on these plots.

A meeting of *Bastuhara Krishak Samiti*, was held at Chandmari camp on 30th October and it was attended by 35 unregistered doctors and *Kabiraj*(all refugees). Resolutions were adopted to move the government to treat quacks as qualified doctors and grant Rs.5000 and Rs.3000 per Kabiraj. Moreover they demanded allotment of 10 kathas for each family. Biswanath Das Roy, Buddheswar Das Roy, Arun Banerjee, Prabhat Mukherjee, held frequent meetings in the camps.

At a secret meeting, in the house of Buddheswar Das Roy, of Chandmari refugee camp held on 5th November 1950, was attended by many, including Soumendranath Tagore. The speakers criticised the government for mal-administration and food problems and asked the refugees to prevent the food crisis. At a meeting of Kachrapara Gana Panchyat Camp, speakers criticised the SDO Ranaghat for shifting the relief office.³²

Inside the camp, one refugee named Manahar Roy, started a refugee organisation named *Purba Bharat Bangio Bastuhara Samiti*. He became the secretary. He organised the scheduled caste refugees of the camp. He claimed himself to be the right hand man of Jogen Mandal, ex-minister of Pakistan. Roy saw Mandal and Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in Calcutta. He apprised them of the local situation.³³

Camps of Nadia: Dhubulia Camp

Maya Saha, 78 years old resident of Dhubulia camp, which the biggest relief camp situated near Krishnanagar, the district Head Quarter of Nadia, West Bengal, expressed the plight of the camp inmates. Due to the riot she had to leave her native place Barishal and reached the border where she was registered as a refugee. At first she was sent to Cooper's camp, then she relocated to Dhubulia camp. The camp was very crowded and there was no privacy.³⁴

Bimala Das of the said camp expressed that how the sheer economic necessities, had brought them, out of the camps to work in the adjoining cities and villages. They went secretly and engaged in Biri and paper making.³⁵ According to Bimala Karmakar, of Dhubulia camp, the camp had bamboo walls and sheds. The government provided 2kgs of rice, 4kgs of wheat, and also cash dole amounting to Rs. 9. But to supplement these dole, she had to roll Biris. Lilabati Dutta of the same camp, described the condition of the camp, specially, regarding the supply of food to the lactating children.³⁶

In mid 1950s, the death toll at the Dhubulia camp reached 685. People died of various diseases. For example, people died of cholera, amebiasis, small pox, fever, diphtheria, malnutrition. These were major causes of child death. During the period mid-June 1950- July 1952, 7 wards of the camp, suffered. There were many deaths.³⁷

There were protests of refugees, of Dhubulia camp, from 1950. 3 refugees, residing in the camp, including 1 woman, resorted to hunger strike, from 20th May 1950(morning), by way of protest against the latest order of the government, to stop the doles to the able bodied refugees. 300 refugees, in order to publicize their demands, held up on 21st May 1950, two down trains, one up, at Dhubulia railway station for a short time. DM and SP came to the spot and prevented the recurrence of such incident. The government decided to advance money to the able bodied refugees, whose doles had been stopped. They were

³² WBSA, IB File, weekending, 26th November 1950.

³³WBSA, Report of political situation, week ending dated 19th November 1950, IB Department.

³⁴ Anusua Basu RayChoudhury, 'living another life, unhomed in camps'.

³⁵Subhashri Ghosh and Debjani Dutta, in Joghoshara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta eds. *Trauma and Triumph, Gender and Partition in Eastern India*, Vol.2, Kolkata:Shree, 2009, p.199.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Tushar Sinha, *Maranajayi Sangrame Bastuhara*, Kolkata: Dasgupta, 1999.

offered works in work scheme centers. They would receive wages for it. The government would adjust the advance given to them, with their wages.³⁸

Towards the end of the year, Bimal Sinha and Chitta Majumder of CPI, went to Dhubulia camp, for organising CPI refugees, to protest strongly during the closing of the camp in December 1950 and urged the refugees, to agitate over food problem.³⁹ Before December 1950, some developments took place in the Dhubulia camp. Dhubulia refugee council of action, was formed. Manaranjan Neogi was the secretary of this organisation. He sent about 100 copies of Bengali printed leaflets, for circulation amongst the refugees of Chadmari, Gausala, and Goyeshpur camps in Nadia district. It states about a refugee conference, to be held at, Dhubulia camp, on 22nd July 1950, to discuss the following objects.

- To devise ways and means for rehabilitation of refugees.
- To make arrangements for permanent occupation of government camps by refugees.
- To discuss measures to be taken for East Bengal Hindus who were still in East Pakistan.

Regarding the settlement of the refugees, no peaceful understanding between the refugees and the government could be reached. According to the IB reports, SP of Nadia, reported that on July, some days past, 'corruption' prevailed amongst the refugees of the old camp. It erupted when the order of shifting able bodied persons was served on 300 families. Immediately the refugees resolved to take action against it. They started holding secret meetings, processions, etc. There was no campaign till the evening of 15th July. When the refugees violated the said order, the camp authorities stopped the ration of other families. The refugees waited for the withdrawal of such order. Otherwise they would organise a hunger strike. They waited for the guidance of the leaders, who were expected to visit the camp.⁴⁰

Deben Pal, a refugee, had been assaulted by the camp authorities. He was directed to go to Gobindapur, with his family for rehabilitation. As a result there was a great agitation amongst the refugees, of the camp no 5 of Dhubulia. Thus the situation remained volatile over the settlement of refugees of Dhubulia.⁴¹ On 21st September 1950, Anil Roy, Lila Roy of Forward Block, visited the Dhubulia camp, to hold a meeting as a mark of protest against the death of a refugee named Anukul Brahma. The meeting could not be convened due to promulgation of an order, Under Section 144, Criminal procedure code. The statements of some refugees, regarding the death of Anukul Brahma, and high handedness and misbehaviour of the camp commandant, were recorded by the leaders. Mrs. Roy left the camp, leaving instructions with one S. Chandra Chakraborty and other leaders of Betthua Dahari, before an assembly of 500 refugees. The refugees were urged to be united, and stand against action of the commandant. It was resolved that there should be strike in every hat and bazar, taken as a protest against the action of the camp authorities. Dr. Meghnad Saha, expected to visit the camp in this connection. A hartal was observed on 1st October 1950, in connection with the said incident. It was to condole the death of Anukul Brahma. When the resolutions were adapted, suggesting raising of subscription for eviction, and demanding impartial enquiry, by Radha Binod Pal and punishment of the camp commandant.

In the meantime *Dhubulia Bastuhara Kendriya Samiti*, was formed at Dhubulia transit camp on 19th September 1950 with S. Chandra Chakraborty, of group 7, as chairman. The chairman of the body was also the organising secretary of *All India Udbastu Karma Parisad*(Forward Block Marxist). Sattapriya Banerjee (FBM) was the president. Ambica Chakraborty was the secretary. At a meeting of the *samiti*, held on 29th September 1950, it was decided that a memorial would be erected, at Dhubulia in the memory of Anukul Brahma. The honourable Premier of West Bengal would lay the foundation.⁴²

Some fishermen and other low class people living in Dhubulia camp, who came from Barishal district, returned to Pakistan in large number every day. They said that they had lost many of their children and

³⁸ WBSA, Report of political situation, week ending dated 28th May 1950, IB Department.

³⁹ WBSA, Report of political activities of the refugees, week ending dated 10th December 1950, IB Department.

⁴⁰WBSA, Report of the political activities of the refugees, and corruption in the refugee camp, for weekending 30th July 1950, IB File.

⁴¹ WBSA, Report of the political activities of the refugees, and corruption in the refugee camp, for weekending 3rd September 1950, IB File.

⁴²WBSA, Report of the political activities and corruption of refugees, weekending 29th October 1950, IB File.

older members of their families. Moreover they received information from their relatives in Pakistan that condition of their homeland had improved.

The *Central Bastuhara Committee* realised heavy subscription from the refugees of the Dhubulia camp during the last Durga Puja. A section of refugees resented this highhandedness of the leaders.⁴³

Dhubulia camp of Nadia, repeatedly came under the purview of refugee struggles. We have already seen, protest against settlement of refugees, from Dhubulia camp. The refugees had resorted to hunger strike in July 1950. There was an apprehension of trouble at the camp due to suspension of doles of some refugees, who had refused to leave the camp for rehabilitation elsewhere. They wanted to be informed of their destination and also demanded sufficient fund to meet their expenses for food, etc. for at least 6 months. The refugees were acting under the guidance of Satyasan Majumder, son of Subash Chandra of group 7, the treasurer of *Central Bastuhara Committee*. A volunteer corps, styled *Central Bastuhara Jubak Sangha*, consisting of 30 refugees, was placed under the main body. During the time of farewell meeting of Charles Bossore, Satyasan Majumder delivered a speech and urged the refugees to loot the government store in case of stoppage of dole. On 10th December 1950, he along with some of *sangha* volunteers, and refugees, approached the superintendents of group numbers 8,9, 16 and threatened them of assault in case of failure to supply the dole. After this incident, commandant sent radio message to all concerned on 12th December 1950. Due to the timely intervention of the police, Satyasan Majumder, was compelled to execute a written understanding, not to indulge in such agitation. Local authorities refrained from taking any drastic action against the tempestuous refugees. Ultimately the situation was brought under control.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Thus we may conclude that political parties, began to play important roles, in the Chandmari and Dhubulia camps. Moreover the refugees of these camps during the period after 1950, changed the earlier phase of struggle. Different unions of the parties grew up. The refugees also took more violent methods of struggle. These two camps showed Abhijit Dasgupta's view in many respects was very correct. In the later phase of struggle, the refugees became involved in politicisation and unionism. In the camps, Chandmari and Dhubulia, we can find, the refugees adapting resistance, picketing in front of government office, attacking the police, and gheraoing the officials.

⁴³ WBSA, Report of the political activities and corruption of refugees, weekending 26th November 1950, IB File.

⁴⁴ WBSA, IB File.