

TWAN *Annual Report 87*



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தமிழர் நலன்புரி சங்கம் நியூடேறம்

வணக்கம்,

வளர்க, தமிழ்கூறும் நல்லுலகம் வசந்தத்திற்கு கட்டியம் கூறி வருகின்ற சித்திரையே வைகறையில் உன் வரவால் பிறக்கின்ற "விபவ" என்ற புதுவருடக் குழந்தைக்கு தேம்ல் நதி தீரத்தின் மருகில் நியூடேறம் மானிலத்தில் மையம் கொண்டு வாழ்கின்ற தமிழர் நாம், தமிழர் நலன்புரி சங்கம் என்ற பெயரில் குழுநிலைப்பட்டு விழா எடுக்கின்றோம்.

தமிழ் புதுவருடப் பிறப்பின கலை கலாச்சார பண்பாட்டு பாரம்பரியங்கள் மிளிர் தமிழர் நாம் ஒன்று கூடி உணவருந்தி கழித்திருக்கின்ற இவ்வேளையிலே ஊழ்கடலுக்கு அட்டால் இன்னல் படுகின்ற நம்மவரை மீட்க இறுதிவரை ஜவன செய்வோம் என இன்று நாம் சங்கல்பம் செய்து கொள்வோம்.

ஒரு இனத்தின் தனித்துவம் மொழியின் பெயரினாலோ, மதத்தின் பெயரினாலோ அழிக்கப்படுவதை நாம் ஒருபோதும் அனுமதியோம். அடக்கு முறைகள் தமிழ்நாட்டின் மீது பிற மொழியாகட்டும், ஈழநாட்டின் மீது சிங்களமாகட்டும் அதை நாம் எதிர்ப்போம். அதே வேளையில் இன்று புதுவருட விழாகாணும் இப்புருந்த வீட்டில் நம் அன்றாட பிரச்சனை/தேவைகளை ஈடு செய்யவேன அமைப்பு ரீதியாக சுகஉறுப்பினர்கள் ஆற்றிவரும் சேவை அளப்பரியது.

அமைப்பளவில் சிறிதாயினும் ஊழமாக வேருன்றி அழுத்தமான கட்டமைப்புடன் ஒருமித்த கொள்கை செயற்பாட்டுடன் வெற்றிப்பாதையில் தன்னை வளர்த்தவரும் பாங்கும் போற்றத் தகுந்தவையே. "சமூக வாழ்க்கையே நாகரீக மேம்பாடு" என்ற கோட்பாட்டிற்கமைய சமூகத்தள் பிரச்சனைகளுடன் தனித்து வாழ்பவர்களை அவர்களின் தேவைகளின் அடிப்படையில் குழுநிலைப்படுத்தி அவர்களிடாகவே நிறைவேற்றப்படும் செயற்திட்டங்களுள்

அகதிகள் புணர்வாழ்வு திட்டம்
இருப்பிட வசதியற்றோர் செயற்திட்டம்
பெண்கள் சமூக நலநலவிருத்தித் திட்டம்
சிறுவர் பராமரிப்புத் திட்டம்

பொன்றவைகள் குறிப்பிடத்தக்கவை.

புதுவருட விழாக்காணும் கலைக்கூடலும், இவ்வமைப்பின் ஓதரவாள நண்பர்கள், அபிமானிகளுடலும் எமது புதுவருட வாழ்த்தனை பகிர்ந்துகொள்வதில் நாம் பெருமை அடைகின்றோம்.

நன்றி! வணக்கம்! வாழ்க தமிழ்!

அன்புடன்

சுமந்தி

ஜனார்த்தசர்மா
ஸதாபக உறுப்பினர்
தமிழர் நலன்புரி சங்கம்

நியூஜேறம் தமிழ்ச் சமூக இயக்கங்களின் பேரவை,
இலண்டன்

வணக்கம், வாழ்க !

பிரபவ ஆண்டு முடிந்து, விபவ ஆண்டு பிறக்கின்ற வேளையில்,
பழையன கழிந்து, புதியன புகுதல் என்னும் உணர்வுகள் மேலோங்க,
புத்தாண்டுப் பிறப்பினைச் சிறந்ததொரு கலை நிகழ்ச்சியினைப் படைத்து வரவேற்கும்
செயலானது, "சித்திரையில் ஒரு முத்திரை" பதிப்பதற்கு நிகராகும்.

ஒரு குறுசிய கால வரலாறு என்றாலும், தனது திண்மையான சமூகப் பணிகளின்
சீர்மையால் சிறந்ததொரு தமிழ் இயக்கமாகத் திகழ்சிறந்து நியூஜேறம் தமிழர்
நலனபிவிருத்தி இயக்கம்.

இந்த நாட்டில் தமிழ்ச் சமூகத்தின் உடனடி பிரச்சினைகளிலும், சிக்கல்களிலும் கவனம்
செலுத்தி, அவற்றிலிருந்து சமூகத்தை விடுவித்து, நல் வழிகளைத் தேடித் தருவதில்
நியூஜேறம் தமிழர் நலனபிவிருத்தி இயக்கம் காட்டிவருகின்ற மனமொன்றிய ஈடுபாடுகளுக்கு
ஈடு இணை சி்டையாது !

எண்ணுகின்ற எண்ணங்களும்,
செய்கின்ற செயல்களும், எல்லாமும்,
தமிழகக்காகவும்,
தமிழ்ச் கலைகளுக்காகவும்,
தமிழ்ச் சமூகத்தின் நன்மை மேன்மைக்காகவும்,
அமைந்திருக்கின்ற நேர்த்திகளால்,
நியூஜேறம் தமிழர் நலனபிவிருத்தி இயக்கத்தின் குடிப்புயிர்க்கத் தலைவர்களும்,
செயலவை உறுப்பினர்களும், உறுப்பினர்களும் ஆற்றிவருகின்ற,
வேங்கை நிகர் வீரப்பணிகள்,
ஆங்கில மண்ணில், ஆழமான அடித்தளம் அமைத்து வளரும் என்பதில் ஐயமில்லை.

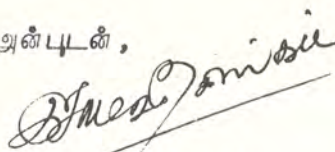
புத்தாண்டு கலை இரவு நிகழ்ச்சிகளில்,
கலைவண்ணம் குழைக்கின்ற ஒவ்வொரு கலைஞருக்கும் நமது மனமார்ந்த வாழ்த்துக்கள்
உரித்தாகுக !

வாணி நண்கலை இயக்கத்து மாணவிகளுக்கு நமது பாராட்டுகள் .

மொழியையும் கலையையும் கண்களாகப் போற்றும்,
நியூஜேறம் தமிழர் நலனபிவிருத்தி இயக்கத்தின் சமூகத் தொண்டுகளும்,
மொழி, கலை மற்றும் கல்விப் பணிகளும் மென்மேலும் சிறந்து விளங்க
மனமார வாழ்த்துகின்றேன் .

வெல்க ! வளர்க ! வணக்கம் !

அன்புடன்,



இராம வீரசிங்கம்
தலைவர்,
நியூஜேறம் தமிழ்ச் சமூக இயக்கங்களின் பேரவை,
இலண்டன் .

Chackanal West,
Pandateruppu,
Sri Lanka.

10th January 1987.

The Secretary,
Tamil Welfare Association of Newham,
33, Gladstone Avenue,
London E12 6NR.

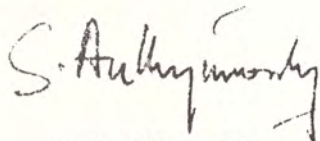
Dear Thigal,

I understand from my son Ariaran, that the Tamil Welfare Association of Newham of which you are the Secretary has been responsible for the funeral arrangements of the three victims of which two happened to be my beloved sons.

Ariaran informs me that all arrangements in connection with the funeral had been done in consultation with him and it had been more than satisfactory.

I wish to sincerely thank you and all the members of the Tamil Welfare Association for the personal help rendered.

Yours sincerely,



S. ARTHIMOORTHY.



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1A 9AT

22nd April 1987

Dear Mr Thigal,

Thank you for your letter of 30th March to Mr. Hogg following your meeting with him on the 23rd.

As Mr. Hogg promised at the meeting, we have now written to the Commissioner to draw his attention to your complaints of police harassment of Tamils in East Ham.

Mr. Hogg did not, however, undertake to give any instructions to the chief superintendent at East Ham, as your letter suggests, nor is it in his power to do so. This is a matter for the Commissioner to consider in the light of our letter to him.

Mr. Hogg has asked me to say that it was a pleasure for him to meet you both and that he hopes that any tension that may have existed between the Tamil community and the police will soon disappear.

Yours sincerely

A. D. CORY

Private Secretary

V. Thigal



HM IMMIGRATION OFFICE

Gatwick Airport—London Gatwick West Sussex RH6 0NP

Telephone Gatwick 28822 ext 2015

Mr V Thigal,
33 Gladstone Avenue,
LONDON E12 6NR

Your reference

Our reference

Date 26. December 1986

Dear Mr Thigal,

I am writing to express sincere thanks on behalf of the Immigration Service at Gatwick Airport for your efforts on Christmas Eve in organising accommodation for the 25 Tamils who arrived from Djakarta that day. I understand that you spent some four hours at the airport while engaged in this task, and that your help eased considerably the problems which we faced in handling the associated casework. Your cooperation in this matter was greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

R Sherwin
H M Inspector

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10th January, 1988.

TAMIL WELFARE ASSOCIATION OF NEWHAM, 33 STATION ROAD
MANOR PARK, LONDON E12

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairperson.
2. Last Year's Report will be produced by the Co-ordinator.
3. Housing Co-operative.
4. Women's Unit.
5. Finance.
6. Questions/Any other matters.
7. Election of Office bearers.
8. Speeches.

1. The meeting was convened by Mr Jana. He invited nomination for the Chairperson and Mr Vasu Rasiah was elected Chairperson and his name was proposed by Mr Asokan and seconded by Mr Thigal.

2. Last year's Report was presented by Jana. His report is mainly consisted of the following:-

a) On 23rd November 1986 the TWAN was registered as an Association with the Newham Council. The Newham Tamil Co-ordinating Committee was also formed on the same day at Trinity Centre, East Avenue, London E12.

b) The arson attack which took place on Burgess Road killed three innocent Sri Lankan Tamils. This happened in November and the TWAN had a number of meetings with the Newham Council, Solicitors, Race Units and other organisations in order to bring a Co-ordinated effort to solve the problems. The Council promised us to help financially in conducting the funerals of the dead. The solicitors dealt with the legal side of the matter particularly in getting the bodies of the burnt down house as the police hesitated to release the bodies for forensic tests. The bodies were eventually released after the Home Secretary intervened in the matter.

The Police tried to portray this incident as an infighting among the groups in Sri Lankan Tamil Community and tried to give problems to other

demanding to prove their loyalty to stay in this Country.

The Police held a meeting on the day of the attack with the council, Tamil Community Organisations in Newham and the Press. At this meeting, the Police tried to claim that this attack was merely due to gang fight between two Tamil Groups. The Council and other organisations disagreed to this stand taken by the Police and said that this could have been the work of the organisation which was behind four previous attacks on the same road.

Police then charged some Tamil boys for murder and the Police harassment turned from bad to worse. Tamils were harassed on the roads, at the stations and even in their homes. A lot of Tamils were taken to the Police Stations and some of them were detained until their identity was proved.

The harassment was so severe that the NTCC meeting was called and we made following demands at the meeting.

- a) The bodies of the deceased should be released to conduct the funeral.
- b) Parents of the deceased should be helped to come to Britain.
- c) The Council should fund a Research Project to investigate the situation.
- d) The owners of the burnt down house to be

All who were present at the meeting contributed some money towards the travelling expenses for the parents to come to United Kingdom. After the meeting, the Council approved our demands. They opened an account through the Race Equality Unit to deposit the money raised for this purpose.

28 days after the attack, the bodies were finally released. TWAN organised a public funeral and Councillor Mr Ron Augley participated in the funeral on behalf of the Council and delivered a speech. We would like to thank him for the active role he played in this matter.

Burgess Road Project started in January 1987. This project was financed and supervised by N.M.P. and was partly based at St. Pauls Church, Burgess Road. Our member Jana along with Arjun produced the final report at the end of March and the report is attached with these minutes. The Burgess Report detailed the harassment suffered by Tamils at the hands of the Police and also racial attacks on the Asian Community.

The Report only covered the period of three months only and within that period, we were able to note that there were 57 cases of illegal passport checks and 14 cards of arrests without warrants. The project was able to find 4 cases in which when the Tamils went to report of robberies were harassed in turn by the Police instead of being helped. We found that the racial harassment of Tamils was particularly bad around Altmone Avenue, Browning Road, Church Road, East Avenue and Katherine Road.

During the middle phase of the Burgess Road Projects when the disturbing figures about the passport checks came to light, a meeting was held in Town Hall Committee Room with the leader of the Council, Mr Fred Jones, P.C.S.U., Race Equality Unit, N.I.S.A.S., N.M.P. and Tamil Welfare Association. At this meeting, a delegation of T.W.A.N. (thigal & Jana) P.C.S.U. (Scott) and M.P. Ron Leighton was formed to meet the Home Secretary Mr Douglas Hurd to complain about the Police atrocities in Newham. The Home Office met the delegation after a few days and they were not very co-operative in this matter and it was assured to us that a circular would be issued to the Police setting guide lines in checking the passports. The minutes of the meeting has been attached with this Report.

The Burgess Road Project was created only for three months and its existence ceased after three months. Even though it did a creative job to Asian Community, it couldn't give its service to Newham because of lack of funds.

IMMIGRATION

On 24.12.86, we received an information that 25 Tamil Refugees had arrived at Gatwick Airport were being detained and threatened with deportation. Our Secretary Mr Thigal contacted the Chief Immigration Officer and requested him to release all the refugees and assured the officer that he would provide them with food and lodging and would be looked after by the Organisation. The Officer was helpful and allowed all of them under the Sponsorship of Mr Thigal.

Two members of TWAN went to the Airport and collected all of them and brought them back to Newham and they were kept in the houses of the TWAN members. We should take this opportunity to thank Mrs Jeya Vivekanandan for the efforts she took to house all of them and provide with food and other needs. On the 1st of January 1987, phoned our Organisation and asked us whether we would be able to take another 15 more refugees who had arrived at the Airport. We agreed to take them in. We then arranged a meeting with the Newham Council and requested their help in solving the refugees immediate problems such as lodging and major of it was to put a stop order in deportations. We are very grateful to Mr Fred Jones and his Council members for the valuable help they gave us in this matter.

At the end of February, 58 people arrived at the Airport from Sri Lanka and sought refugee status. The immigration officers were not satisfied with their claims and the refugees were threatened with deportation. United effort by B.R.C., U.K.I.A.S., and all Tamil Organisations including TWAN with the help of Labour M.P.'s especially Mr Jeremy Corbyn resulted in putting a stop order for the deportation. After three days, the Home Secretary again ordered them to be deported and this case had to be taken to Court. Solicitors Randell, David Burgess and Sritharan appealed against the Home Secretary's decision to the High Court and the High Court was picketed by TWAN for three days and NMP also gave its support by participating in the mass picketing. The High Court decision came in our favour and we would like to thank all who came in their large number to participate in the picketing. The Home Office appealed against this decision the House of Lords where, the decision went against the refugees and now arrangements are being made to take the case to the European Courts. We did a lot of political work in conjunction with the J.C.W.I., U.K.I.A.S. and B.R.C. Mr Asokan from TWAN took particular interest in dealing with some of these 58 refugees cases and we are thankful for his efforts.

DETENTIONS

After the case of these 58 refugees, the Home Office tightened its screws on the incoming refugees by detaining them in the detention centres without giving them fair interviews. We were able to put stop orders on their deportations through Mr Jeremy Corbyn, Mr Tony Banks and Mr Ron Leighton. We thank all of these MPs for the valuable help they rendered during our crucial time.

Nearly 63 Tamil refugees including 13 girls were detained on the Earl Williams Ferry. We tried to bail out as many as we could. It was very hard for us to find sponsors to bail them out because of the conditions put by the Home Office to be a sponsor were severe. The sponsor according to the Home Office should be a house owner with minimum of £1,000-00 either in his bank or Building Society for a period of minimum of three months. We had to find two sponsors like this to bail out one person.

Despite all these conditions, we are proud to say that we were able to bail out 22 detainees. We are thankful to the sponsors.

In Latchmere House in Richmond almost 8 refugees are held and 7 others held at Harmondsworth detention Centre. We are still looking for sponsors to bail out. If anybody feels that they are in position to help, please come forward and contact us and your help will be appreciated.

In the meantime, we aim to extend our network and political support outside Newham. This work has begun already. We have held many pickets, Marches, Press Conferences. We would like to thank N.M.P. and NISAS for the help they have given in the field. All press releases have been attached to the back of this Report.

LEGAL ADVICE AND SOCIAL HELP

Many refugees who were released and came to Newham have been helped in many ways by TWAN. We took responsibility of looking after their Welfare from the beginning. This included sorting their benefits out. This entailed constant visit to the social Security Offices. This work was very difficult for us because of the officials at 760 Barking Road and Woodgrange Park on Romford Road were very incooperative. We informed Mr Ron Leighton M.P. of the situation and his letters to the respective Managers in getting them their National Insurance Numbers and finding them appropriate jobs to look after themselves. We provided free legal advice to the refugees as well.

COMMUNITY LINK REPORT

In 1987, Community links supported International year of the SHELTER FOR HOMELESS (IYSH). They invited all legal community groups to participate. TWAN affiliated to this project especially as this project was related to the problems of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees. Two projects were proposed by TWAN. One for East of Sri Lanka which recommended to build 600 dwellings to be built in Kurukalmadam for Tamils. The second project was proposed for North of Sri Lanka. It was stressed that these projects would be only administered by local non political tamil groups and not through the Sri Lankan Government Authorities as we felt that they are racist.

These projects are at Standstill because of the political developments in Sri Lanka especially in Northern and Eastern provinces, where the Indian Government stopped all the outside help to improve the areas. We made it clear at the IYSH meeting that we did not wish to administer through the Indian hands either.

Fund raising was carried out for these projects in May and we had a cultural event organised on 22nd March 1987 at St. Bartholomews Church. We would like to thank everyone who helped and participated and made this a success.

TWAN participated in the elections for NMP and NISAS management Committee. Many of our members attended the AGM for both NMP & NISAS. Two members from TWAN Mr Thigal and Mrs Jeya Vivekanandan were elected to NMP Management Committee and Mr Sivagnanarana nathan was elected to NISAS Management Committee of Stardust Asian Youth Club when the election was held.

We organised a successful and enjoyable trip to Margate in the summer of 1987 and 53 people participated in this trip.

Following the intervention of the Indian Army in Sri Lanka, a lot of innocent tamil civilians were killed and thousands were made homeless. At the peak of these atrocities TWAN organised protest pickets outside the Indian Embassy and following this event CAMPAIGN AGAINST REPRESSION IN EELAM (CARE) was formed which included affiliated groups such as Pakistan Workers Association and MP. We aim to do more political work together in future.

3. HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE

Many tamil refugees who came to Newham faced immense problems of housing. TWAN met Council officers regarding these problems and with the help of Mr Ismail Simfee and Mr Shenan

Mirya, we created Newham Tamil Community Co-op. This year the Tamil Community Co-op received 5 houses through Newham Community Housing (NCH). These houses were unfurnished. This year we are expecting more houses and Mr Vasu the Chairperson will take this project forward, which will reduce the burden of housing for refugees.

THE WOMEN UNIT

This was established last August. This group deals with problems faced by many tamil women. Our Central Committee member Mrs Jeya Vivekanandan put a lot of effort to solve the women's problems. She organised many seminars and training sessions for women to find skilled jobs. She put special efforts in summer projects in teaching our tamil children their mother tongue and their culture. She organised a Play Group for children from 3rd August to 31st August. This was successful and we are planning to expand this more this year. It is also dealing with problems faced by children in their primary and secondary school. We have been trying to set up a nursery and a Children's Club.

5. FINANCE

In 1987, TWAN was not in receipt of any funding. We have established an office and even though, we faced financial hardships, we were able to provide good service to the community because of invaluable financial help rendered by the TWAN members particularly by Mr Thigal, Mr Asokan and Mr Jana. This year we hope to get our financial assistance through grants and contributions from our members and take the organisation further to serve our community.

6. QUESTIONS

During the question time, it was asked how often the meetings were held and it was replied that meetings were held last Tuesday of every month at 8.00 p.m. at its Office, which is at 33 Station Road Manor Park, London E12.

When the matter of education was raised by one member of the answer given was that English Classes were conducted for refugees. . . We contacted World University Services for legal advice regarding the studies for refugees. We help the refugees in their higher studies by getting them admission at Eastham Community College and North East London Polytechnics where we are proud to say that after speaking to the authorities, we are able to let the refugees to study full time with Council grant, which was impossible before TWAN intervened.

One of these present criticised the organisation for not contributing more time towards the work of the refugees. This criticism was taken seriously and it was said even though the organisation had more members only five or six members attend the Committee Meetings and more effort should be put on other members to join in to put a United effort in solving the problems the refugees face.

A proposal was made to the TWAN to establish a 24 hour emergency Service for Immigration help and Police harrasment.

To the suggestion of one member, who asked whether TWAN had any plans to train refugees in employment, it was said that our Housing Co-op Chairperson Mr Vasu is already in the process of establishing a Builders Co-op where they would be framed, in the building industry. It was said that he had some more plans to provide them with other employment schemes.



AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

NEWHAM TAMIL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
LONDON TAMIL SANGAM
LONDON SRI MURUGAN TEMPLE
NEWHAM TAMIL COMMUNITY HOUSING CO-OP
NEWHAM TAMIL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT
NEWHAM IMMIGRATION AND SOCIAL ADVICE SERVICE
STAR DUST YOUTH CLUB
COMMUNITY LINKS
ASIAN FORUM
NEWHAM VOLONTARY AGENCY COUNCIL
CARE
TAMIL ACTION COMMITTEE
TAMIL WELFARE ASSOCIATION OF WANDSWORTH
TAMIL WELFARE ASSOCIATION OF EALING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIRPERSON - Mr. S.S. Thiru
VICE CHAIRPERSON - Mr. R. Amirthalingam
JOINT SECRETARIES - Mr. E.R. Jeevahan
- Mr. P. Chandradas
TREASURER - Mr. J. Asokan
ASST. TREASURER - Mr S. Nadarajah
CO-ORDINATOR - Mr. V. Janathanan

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Mrs. Jeya Vevekanada
2. Mr.V. Loganathan
3. Mr B. Pushpaharan
4. Miss. J. Niranjala
5. Mr. V. Thigal
6. Mr. K. Sivakumar
7. Mr. Sivanganam
8. Mr. K. Kiritharan
9. Mr. R. Uthayakumar
10. Mr. R. Vasudevan

SPOKESMEN Mr. Sivasubramaniam
Mr. Balasegaram

SPOKESWOMAN Mrs. S. Mulyaganam

TAMILS: SRI LANKANS CHALLENGE BOROUGH

By LAURENCE BRESH

A FURIOUS community leader has invited councillors to fly 5,000 miles to assess internal strife in Sri Lanka for themselves.

Mr. Olwen Navaratne has sent official invitations to council leader Fred Jones and chief executive John Samuel for up to four officials to visit Sri Lanka.

'Fact-finding' team invited to country

Mr. Navaratne, head of the Stratford-based World Federation of Sri Lankan Associations, has thrown down the gauntlet in an attempt to get the Council to reverse their decision to

grant Tamils refugee status. Mr. Navaratne said the Sri Lankan Government are willing to foot the bill. He added: "We are convinced that if the councillors see the political situation for themselves they will withdraw their intention to grant Tamils refugee status."

The World Federation represent the Sinhalese, the majority community in Sri Lanka, who say the Tamils are trying to claim land they have no right to.

Mr. Navaratne claims that any grants the Tamils will receive because of their refugee status will be used to fund guerrilla forces in Sri Lanka.

But groups like Amnesty International say it is the state forces who carry out widespread torture and killing of Tamils.

Council leader Fred Jones said he would decline the offer. He added: "The World Federation had their chance to put their point across at the full council meeting."

"There would be no point in my taking up the Sinhalese offer because we are helping the Tamils on humanitarian grounds, and it would be senseless to drag world politics into an internal matter for the borough."

Police are driving Tamils out — race watchdog

POLICE intimidation is to blame for a Tamil exodus from Newham, it was claimed this week.

The allegation is included in a major report published by Newham Monitoring Project (NMP).

The report catalogues a series of alleged cases of harassment by police, mainly accusing officers of over-zealous immigration and passport checks. It goes on to claim that in the period covered — the first three months of this year — there were at least 60 cases of police and racial harassment. And NMP says the true figures are probably higher, because many people are scared of being interviewed for fear of reprisals.

The report also pinpoints specific areas of East Ham where many of the borough's 2,000 Sri Lankan Tamils are concentrated and where it is claimed harassment is particularly bad. These are High Street North, Barking Road and a major stretch of Burges Road.

NMP recommended that Newham Council — who partly fund the project — should make provision for families experiencing racial harassment.

NMP spokesman added: "The council's racial harassment policy does not as yet incorporate the needs of owner occupiers and the private rented sector."

"Harassment in the private sector clearly reflects the policy for the council to speed up the production of such a policy."

NMP, based in Katherine Road, Forest Gate started investigating the nature of police activity following an arson attack in Burges Road, East Ham, in which three Tamil students died. Police Superintendent John Ball replied: "The Burges Road case was a very detailed murder investigation. We carried it out no differently to any other inquiry."

"Potential witnesses have to be questioned to help us. The allegations are..."

We'll kill ourselves rather than return

GRAHAM DUFFILL on a family fleeing the war

ONE of the Tamils involved in the strip protest at Heathrow Airport threatened yesterday: 'I will kill myself and my family before I return to Sri Lanka.'

Mr Paransothy Sachithanham, a 42-year-old businessman, told of his fears for himself, his wife, four daughters and 12-year-old son.

He said that if they were expelled they would be handed over to the Sri Lankans 'who will torture us. They think we are Tamil militants who are fighting their troops, and eventually we will be killed.'

Mr Sachithanham said his family decided to leave their home after attacks on civilians by troops.

He said: 'The troops are all Sinhalese, and they're dedi-

cated to the eradication of the Tamil population in Sri Lanka.

'There were three government camps near my home built to fight the Tamil militants. But when they failed to find the militants, they would take out their frustrations on local people, shooting innocent Tamils and raping their daughters.'

He said he hid for hours with his wife, daughters and son in a trench while Government planes strafed the banana fields and soldiers shot bullets through the walls of their house.

The soldiers eventually left, he said, because they could find no girls to rape. Mr Sachithanham made up his mind it was time to leave Sri Lanka.



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History of TWAN

At the height of Sri Lankan army's atrocities against the Tamils, thousands of them fled Sri Lanka for their safety and took refuge in other countries. A significant number came to the U.K. and sought refugee status. Local Tamil organisations offered their help to the refugees who arrived at the airports in hundreds. The influx of these people reached its peak in May 1985. A lot of them were kept in detention by the Home office as they did not have any relatives or friends in the U.K. to look after them.

There were nearly fifty five of them who were kept in detention for a long time without being helped by any of the 'so called' organisations, which claimed themselves to be sympathetic towards refugees. When members of these organisations visited the detention centres, the refugees explained their plight and a lot of help was promised. But, sadly no help was forthcoming. The refugees soon realised that the whole exercise was futile and instead tried to contact individuals, who would help them out of the detention centres.

Mr. Thigal came to know of their plight and with the help from fifteen of his friends and relatives managed to release forty five of the refugees from the detention centres. Mr. Thigal, his relatives and friends provided the refugees with shelter and food until they found some form of employment. A few months later, these refugees got together and made applications with the Newham Council to provide them with accommodation. The housing department considered their applications and invited two of the refugees from this group for a meeting to consider their needs. Mr. Jana and Mr. Siva attended the meeting and after sympathetic consideration of their needs advised them to form a collective body with office bearer and a proper address in order to deal with their application quickly.

After this meeting with the council officials, these refugees called a meeting which was attended by thirty two refugees, when Jana, Siva, and Nathan were elected office bearers. They met the officials of the London Sri Murugan Temple and sought permission to use their address for the Association's letter heads. After this was granted, the name was finalised and letters were sent to the council requesting accommodation and this was provided in Newham, Woolwich and Westland House.

The council also advised us to contact their Race Equality Unit. We met Mr. Ron Augley, the chairman and Mr. Mahalingam, the principal officer of the Race Equality Sub Committee, who listened carefully to our needs and also offered their help. We sought help in the areas of immigration, Housing, Education and leisure facilities. They advised to form a voluntary organisation and register with the council.

On 24th March, 86, at £. 5.P.M., a meeting was called at 36, Wandsworth Avenue, Manor Park E12, which was attended by Mr. Ron Auguly and The Tamil Welfare Association of Newham was formed. Mr. Augley, promised all his help. Following this, we met at regular intervals and a constitution was drafted. We met the different Statutory Bodies of the council, particularly the Social Services Department and requested a Tamil officer to be appointed to deal with refugee problems. We had a meeting with the NMP and discussed the problems of racial harrasment in Newham and Woolwich. We also held a number of meetings with REU in July, 86 and discussed the problems faced by the refugees in Newham.

In the mean time, the Sri Lankan High Commission in London tried to unleash false propoganda against us and requested a meeting with the full council of Newham. They claimed that the refugees were not genuine and expressed dissatisfaction at the council for offering help to the refugees. This meeting was held on 11th October, 86 and TWAN picketed this meeting and local organisations such as NMP also participated in this. But, the policies proposed by REU were still carried forward without any objections.

TWAN is an organisation, which is totally different from other organisations formed by Sri Lankan Tamils. It was formed solely by the refugees, who were led down by other organisations at the most critical hour. We understand the refugee problems better than others, as we ourselves have experienced the harrasment by the Home Office and other British institutions. We have, however been helped by some members of the Tamil community and we remain freateful to them.

We have overcome some major obstacles but still there are several problems to solve. On this New Year's eve, we look forward to the future with hope and we remain convinced that we would achieve our objectives by our sheer determination and the support from the Tamil Community.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 1988	
FIXED ASSETS	
Office Equipment	300
Less Depreciation	30

CURRENT ASSETS	
Debtors	256
Cash at Bank	286

Add Surplus (Deficit) for the year	458
	1,270

PRESENTED BY:-	
SUBSCRIPTION	970
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Provision for Telephone	300
	1,270.00

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD 1.4.87 TO 31.3.88	
INCOME	
Grant	2,125
Grant - B.R.C.	250
Donation	2,000
Rent - Income	1,750
Sundries	257

	6382
LESS EXPENDITURE	
Salaries	1,460
Administrative Expenses	534
Rent & Lighting	1,575
Telephone	682
Repairs & Maintenance	562
Stationery	420
Printing & Publicity	423
Travelling	854
Depreciation on Typewriter	30.

	6840
Provision for Telephone	300

	458

To-gether we have managed to change Newham Council Policies to ensure the Tamil Community from Sri Lanka are able to make use of Council facilities in Newham, the most important of which is Education. This will ensure that when the situation improves in Sri Lanka those who wish to return will be able to compete for jobs and return to a normal life without much difficulty.

Most, if not all, of these improvement would not have been possible without the hard work of the leading members of the Newham Tamil Welfare Association. They have tirelessly persued objectives and projects to help Tamils, who have fled the repressive Government of Sri Lanka.

In welcoming the New Year, we need to remember the three Tamils who died in the fire 18 months ago and sincerely hope this tragedy will never be repeated. All of Newham were once in their sympathy for the families of the deceased and the victims of the fire.

In ending, I would like to remind you of the many changes the Government has introduced this year. This will make it the most difficult period in recent times for the vast majority of us. But I am confident we can overcome many of these difficulties if we continue to work for each other, give support to worthy causes and stand to-gether.

May I take this opportunity to wish N.T.W.A. and you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

RON AUGLEY.
(COUNCILLOR)

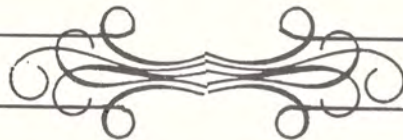


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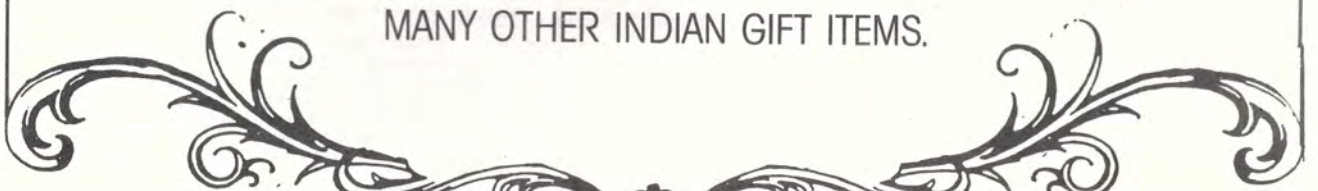
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Mr E R JEEVAHAN - ADMINISTRATOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REPORT BY - MR V JANARTHANAN

LAYOUT - MR ANJUM FREED

PHOTOGRAPHS - B.T. GROUP

COVER EXPLANATION

- (1) Cultural Night – Student of Meenakshi Dance School
- (2) Summer Trip – Some of our members
- (3) Council Meeting – About Tamil Refugee Emotion

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Day of action against immigration laws

Marchers converged on detention centres across the country on Saturday in protest at Britain's immigration laws which they say are "criminalising innocent people".

The main march organised by the Refugee Forum, an umbrella organisation comprising groups against deportation and the detention of political asylum-seekers from the Third World, began at Southall's Havelock Centre and made its way to Harmondsworth, where there is a major detention centre.

"Refugees are political not criminal. It is inhuman to lock up people whose only crime is trying to flee from terror. The Home Office has no right to imprison and terrorise people who have done no-one any harm. They have suffered — enough already," said one of



(Right to left): Udeya, Keith Vaz MP and Sheila with members of the Tamil Welfare Association

the organisers.

"We planned this day of action to call attention to the treatment of immigration prisoners as just one sickening aspect of Britain's barbaric laws. Their aim is to keep black people out of Britain."

At a press conference last week, Ronnie Moodley, chair of the Forum, singled out for attack, conditions up

three times a week.

Speaking through an interpreter, he said: "I came to Britain after hiding in a Sri Lankan

tions at Letchmere House prison in Surrey that he preferred to return to his homeland despite fear of persecu-

on the Earl William ferry in Harwick, which holds 80 detainees. "All the detainees are black and the numbers are increasing weekly", he said.

"They have fled their homelands and come to Britain and its age-old tradition of asylum in times of trouble. Instead they are held without trial for as long as two years, like criminals," he added.

Two former detainees from the Earl William were presented to the conference. Udeya, 21, had been shuttled around four detention centres since his arrival in Britain 10 months ago. His last stop was the Earl William. Recently released on a bail of £4,000, he has to report to police

forest for several days. I had no money or clothing. At Harmondsworth where I was first taken, I could not ring my relatives to get bail. The food was bad, often inedible and at night, I was given just one blanket. I come from a hot country and I was very, very cold."

He added: "I think they are trying to force us back to Sri Lanka by treating us so badly. If I had known this before, I would have preferred to go back and face death rather than suffer this treatment."

Last week one Tamil who did not appeal against his deportation order was sent back to Sri Lanka. His lawyers said he was so distressed by remand condi-

tion.

Two detainees were also taken off the Harwich ferry last week for medical treatment after one man suffered a nervous breakdown and another allegedly attempted suicide.

On 3 September, three more Tamil detainees won a reprieve for their cases against deportation to be heard at a judicial review. The High Court Judge, Mr Justice Hodgson accepted the men's plea that they may be persecuted if they returned to Sri Lanka.

In the previous week three other Tamils won similar reprieves against deportation. All will be returned to detention to await court decisions.

Hard Left 'giving aid to refugees'

HAL AUSTIN on the war of words in London

A WAR of words erupted yesterday over hard-Left support for stateless Tamils.

Sinhalese leaders accused some Labour councils in London of using the conflict in Sri Lanka to strengthen their image as champions of the underdog.

Mr Douglas Wickramaratne, president of the World Federation of Sri Lankan Organisations claimed Newham council in East London has provided the Tamils with jobs and houses. "The real problem is that these Tamils are so well

even involved in drug running, he said.

Tamils living in the Burges Road area of Newham — reported to have the highest concentration of Tamils in the country — were reluctant to talk through fear of reprisals.

But community worker Vauchees Jannarathnam, 23, hit out at what he called 'anti-Tamil propaganda'. He said: "The claim that we are involved in drug smuggling is typical."

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for a

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New Year's Day

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