

ROCHDALE OBSERVER

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'My children
are coming'

'Now, I will
help others'

Immigration
'farce' exposed

'Many gave up
in despair'

TEARS OF JOY END THE AGONY



A MOTHER told she could have her children home after years of separation could not hold back a mother's tears of joy, as a jubilant Mr Joel Barnett, MP, broke the happy news on Thursday. (85289)

MRS ANWAR DITTA has won her battle with the Home Office and plans to bring her three children to Rochdale from Pakistan "as soon as possible."

Mrs Ditta last saw them in April 1975, she said their rooms were ready for them at her three-bedroomed home in Crawford Street, Rochdale.

"In fact, the rooms have been ready for them for three years," she said. "We moved

into a three-bedroomed house specially for the children.

"We never realised what hell we would have to go through to get them here."

The children, Kamran, aged 10, Irmran, aged eight, and Saima, aged seven, live with their grandmother in Lahore.

Picture:
JIM ROWBOTHAM.

Mrs Ditta and her husband, Mr Shuja Uddin, have a four-year-old daughter, Samera, living with them.

Mrs Ditta said: "Samera is so excited. For months, she has been asking daily: 'When are my brothers and sisters coming?' She always asks me to buy four lots of everything, so her brothers and sisters can have them, too."

Mr Timothy Raison, Home Office Minister, told Mr Joel Barnett, MP, on Thursday, that he was reversing the original decision to bar the children's entry to Britain, because there was now "substantial evidence" to support Mrs Ditta's case.

'Nightmare'

When the MP for Heywood and Royton gave the couple the news, Mrs Ditta told him: "I will never forget what you have done for me."

Immediately afterwards, messages of congratulations began to flood their home from throughout Britain.

Mrs Ditta said: "It has been one long nightmare, but every minute has been worthwhile. 'I only hope this will

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Labour call to MP who dropped case

IN a statement issued yesterday, Rochdale Constituency Labour Party called on Mr Cyril Smith, MP, to apologise to Mrs Anwar Ditta and Mr Shuja Uddin.

Mr Smith was involved in putting Mrs Ditta's case until last year. He then told her he was not prepared to proceed further, and Mr Joel Barnett, MP, took up the fight.

The Labour Party statement, congratulating the couple and paying tribute to Mrs Ditta's courage, said: "Anwar's single-minded devotion against the injustice, disinterest and bureaucracy shown by the Home Office and some politicians, is an example to us all."

"The Labour Party will not desert the oppressed. We are committed to assist British

citizens and our Asian and other friends from overseas, establishing their right to care for their families and maintain their culture.

"We look forward to strengthening the links already forged and call upon Mr Smith to make a public apology to Mrs Ditta and Mr Uddin."

Mrs Ditta later told the Observer that the Labour Party in Rochdale and various parts of Britain had been "tremendously helpful" throughout her campaign.

Mr Smith, answering the Constituency Labour Party attack, said: "It has been evident to me for a long time, that Rochdale Labour Party has been using the Ditta case for party political purposes, and this statement proves it.

"The rest of the statement is unworthy of comment."

Mr Smith said he was delighted Mrs Ditta had won her case.

"As I told the Minister — incidentally, it was during a Labour Government — in the first letter I wrote, 'If this woman is not telling the truth, she is the best actress I have ever seen'."

At the same time, Mr Smith said, he felt that some untruths told in the past contributed to the Home Office making the wrong decision originally.

Mr Smith added: "But the campaign has not been won by the Labour Party or by any member of it."

"It has been won by a TV company which was able to spend a great deal of money obtained from advertisers."