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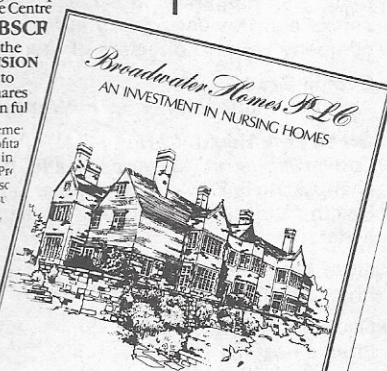
THE ANTI-PRIVATISATION MAGAZINE FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

No 21 Mar/April 1986

BES FUNDS PRIVATE CARE

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The Business Expansion Scheme (BES), originally intended to provide capital for new technology companies when it was set up in 1983, is now being used to finance private health and social services. A PSA investigation has found at least 20 companies seeking £40m BES funding in 1985/86. BES was developed to help provide funds to companies which found it hard to raise capital on normal commercial terms – it is now exploited by the rich as a highly lucrative tax relief gravy train. Over £100m has gone in tax relief in the last two years alone. Destined to end in 1987, the government announced in the Budget on March 18 that the BES will run on indefinitely.

Subsidising the rich

Companies seeking BES funding have to comply with certain rules, for example, they must not be a subsidiary of, or be controlled by, another company and must be based in the UK for three years from the issue of BES shares. Companies must not be listed on the Stock Exchange and those involved in farming, financial services and property development are excluded.

To qualify for tax relief investors

must purchase at least £500 of shares but not more than £40,000 in any one tax year. The shares must be held for five years and can be purchased directly in a company or through various approved funds which have been set up to exploit BES funding. The Inland Revenue gives tax relief at an individual's highest marginal rate thus benefiting the wealthier paying 60 per cent tax rates.

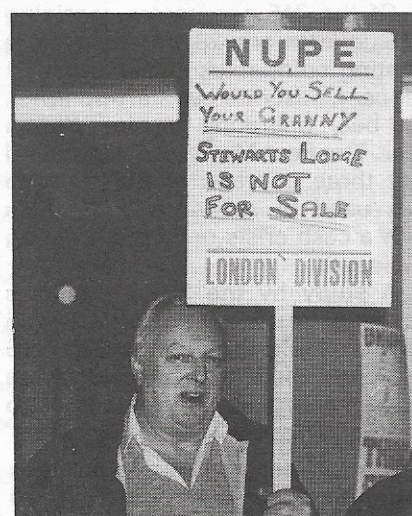
A £10,000 BES INVESTMENT MEANS:

% Tax Rate	Tax Rebate	Actual cost of £10,000 investment
60	£6,000	£4,000
50	£5,000	£5,000
30	£3,000	£7,000

Investing a maximum of £40,000 at the 60 per cent tax rate will result in a tax rebate of £24,000. Some BES companies fail and investors can lose their money. However, tax relief is not normally withdrawn in cases where a company goes into liquidation or receivership. So the rich, protected by the government, take few risks under the BES.

A detailed survey of 120 BES companies by consultants Peat Marwick revealed that 94 per cent of the BES cash is invested because of the tax handouts. Three quarters of investors are upper rate taxpayers. The scheme is so attractive to higher rate taxpayers that 57 per cent made additional investments the following year. The survey also revealed that nearly two thirds of BES finance went to low risk businesses.

Cont. on page 2



HOME SAVED
see page 4

BES LUCRATIVE TAX PERKS FOR RICH

£20m privatisation subsidy

In 1983/84 £105m was invested in 715 companies at a cost to the government of £55m in tax foregone. In the following year £136m was raised by 688 companies through the scheme. Over half the companies funded under BES in 1983/84 received under £50,000, with 372 companies taking up £6.6m. However, PSA found that companies in the private health and social services sector were seeking BES funding on a much larger scale – 80 per cent of the firms sought £500,000 or more.

If the 20 firms so far identified raised the full £40m then the government would be subsidising privatisation by about £20m in tax relief, mainly to wealthier investors.

Tax relief gravy train

The Inland Revenue Statistics 1985, published in December, includes an analysis of BES funding in 1983/84 which shows that:

- 48 per cent of all approved fund investors are in the £30,000–£75,000 annual income range.
- 43 per cent of all direct investors are also in the above income range.
- 41 per cent, or 8,230 investors, received 60 per cent tax relief on their investments as the following table shows.
- Companies based in the south east took 37.2 per cent of BES funds. Areas of high unemployment in the West Midlands, the north, north west, Yorkshire and Northern Ireland jointly received only 22 per cent of BES investment in 1983/84. Virtually all the private health and social services companies revealed in PSA's investigation were based in the south of England.
- Of the 715 companies receiving BES investment 28 per cent were existing companies and another 21 per cent, described as start-up firms, had been operating for more than a year. The Peat Marwick Study found that three quarters of BES finance was used to refinance companies with a cash crisis or to buy existing businesses.
- A study by the Small Business Research Trust examined more than 100 companies funded through BES and concluded that the bulk of the money appeared to be going into established companies.

The government announced a few changes to the BES in the 1986 Budget but predictably these will do nothing to de-rail the gravy train for the rich. The recent trend to use BES to fund private health and social services is likely to accelerate.

RECENT EXAMPLES OF B.E.S. FUNDING OF PRIVATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

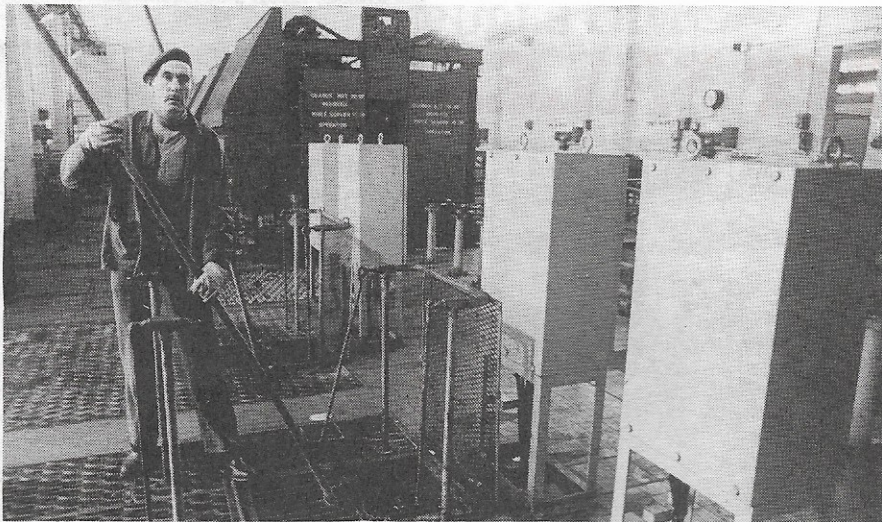
Company	Finance sought through BES
Care Homes (UK) plc To set up a chain of nursing and residential homes including Dormy House, Sunningdale, Berkshire. Management by Lifecare Homes.	£10.00m
Branch Retirement Homes To acquire 5 homes. Sir Horace Cutler, ex-leader of GLC Tories and property developer, is company chairperson.	£0.83m
Private Medical Centres plc To set up private medical centres to rehabilitate people recovering from strokes, road accidents etc. Owns Linden Hall, Berkshire – 34 bed centre. Negotiating to buy NHS rehabilitation centres. Sir Gerald Vaughan, former Tory Health Minister is company chairperson. Daily charges at the centres to be £100–£120.	£5.00m
Blenheim Clinics Private psychiatric nursing.	£0.25m
Caldaire Independent Hospital Private hospital.	£1.40m
Bright Walton Homes To acquire a chain of nursing homes in south of England. management of homes by Health Care Services (owns Garden Hospital, Hendon, and manages Ridgeway hospital, Swindon; and its Medic International subsidiary provides agency nurses in Britain and overseas). All directors of company are also directors of Health Care Services.	£5.00m
Sunhill Group Acquired 2 nursing homes in Worthing and Shoreham.	£0.50m
Green Park Health Care Convert house at Haywards Heath into nursing home and purchase another home. Company chairperson is Sir Campbell Fraser, a director of BP and BAT Industries. Vice-chair of a District Health Authority in Kent, Dr M. Lancaster Smith, is the company's medical adviser and consultant.	£1.95m
Little Aston Hospitals Private hospitals.	£2.34m
Gisburne Park Private hospital	£1.40m
Takecare plc To purchase 49 bed medical centre from BP Nursing Homes and build a 90 bed medical centre at Chorley near Manchester.	£2.20m
Guardian Care Operates nursing homes in Lincoln and Norfolk – plans to build 4 new homes. Estimates a 410 bed operation will produce £1.13 profits in 1988.	£2.00m
Pax Hill Operates its 'Community for Care' residential centre for the elderly at Bentley, Hampshire. Plans a 27 bed nursing wing and a chain of similar centres.	£0.53m
The Roding Hospital (London) Ltd New 70 surgical bed hospital in NE London.	£2.34m
Candlehurst Ltd New 23 bed nursing home in Keithley, West Yorkshire.	£0.03m
Kingsmead Retirement Homes Ltd Based in Hampshire, builds and manages retirement homes.	£0.67m
Branksome Court Home Ltd Convert a 21 bed hotel in Poole, Dorset into a rest home.	£0.30m
Wessex Retirement Homes Ltd Residential homes for elderly.	£0.50m
Village Green Ltd Residential homes for elderly	£0.76m
Total: 20 companies	£40.00m

BES abuses

The scheme is open to exploitation

- Directors are often given unfair advantages over other investors. In one recent example four directors were entitled to buy 1m ordinary shares at 5p while investors had to pay 195p per share.

- Private Medical Centres plc bought Linden Hall from 3 of the executive directors of the company for £465,000 giving them £95,000 profit having owned it for only a year. There are other examples of property transactions between directors and the company.



WATER SELL-OFF - opposition mounts

New voices have been added to the ranks of opponents to the privatisation of water authorities. Grave concern over the public health implications of a profit-oriented water industry and the social implications of water metering has been expressed by Conservative MPs as well as the environment lobby.

Now the Water Industry Unions Committee is considering a legal challenge to the right of government to sell the authorities – since they never bought the industry in the first place, but reorganised the undertakings set up and financed by local authorities.

Questions have also been raised

as to the saleability of some water authorities. Thames Water, with its huge catchment area, massive assets and profitable operations, has been undergoing preparation for privatisation under its chair, Roy Watts. But other authorities like North West Water, in an area of declining population and with sewers needing massive investment, is believed unlikely to attract buyers.

The joint trade unions campaign is planning a conference to bring together the wide range of interests expressing opposition to the sale. Details from: Alan Jackson, Water Campaign Group, NALGO, 1 Mableton Place, London WC1.

BT sale: MPs call for review

Major criticisms of the conduct of the British Telecom share sale were highlighted in a report from influential House of Commons Public Accounts Committee at the end of 1985.

The committee included among its concerns:

- The restructuring of BT's accounts prior to privatisation, apparently to "put it on a basis comparable with most private sector firms". This gave the appearance of increased profits, while the state of the business had not actually changed.
- The arrangements for sale including:
 - * The decision to conduct the sale through a single share offer.
 - * The rates of commission paid to merchant banks for underwriting the sale. The extent of the risks to these banks did not justify the high rates paid.
 - The fixing of the sale price, including:
 - * The failure of the Department of Trade and Industry to foresee that institutional shareholders which failed to secure the quantity of shares they had applied for would start buying im-

mediately afterwards, forcing prices up.

* The use of all the special selling methods devised: in particular the use of overseas sales which carried high costs – and the shares sold in the US returned quickly to the UK market.

* If the price had been set just 4p higher, the extra receipts of £120 million would have paid for most of the selling costs. As it was the costs totalled £152 million, with an additional £111 million estimated as eventual costs of incentives to small shareholders. This £263 million total amounts to 6.8% of the total proceeds of the sale.

The committee argues that "the taxpayer could have benefitted further from the sale" – and urges a thorough review of the arrangement for and results of the BT sale so that "serious lessons can be learned".

Now the Treasury has issued a response to the Committee's criticisms, which admits to no errors in the past, but aims to reassure MPs on the conduct of future sales, by promising "... a careful assessment" of the appropriate method of sale, level of commission, etc for each case.

More News

MOTORWAY MADNESS

The first private motorway maintenance contracts have been given to three firms following the abolition of the Met Counties at the end of March. **Tarmac** has a £3m contract in South Yorkshire, **Cementation** a £4m West Yorkshire contract, and a £3m Greater Manchester contract has gone to **Nuttall**. Three firms of consulting engineers have been appointed to manage the contracts. Drive carefully.

HAWLEY BUYS MORE BRENGREEN SHARES

Hawley Group (including Mediclean, Provincial, Taskmasters) has recently increased its stake in Brengreen Holdings (Exclusive Cleaning, Exclusive Health Care etc.) to 13.1 per cent. In the last two years Hawley has held between 8 and 14.9 per cent of Brengreen's shares. There has been frequent speculation that Hawley will launch a takeover bid. Fearing such a move Brengreen's chairperson David Evans persuaded Prof Rowland Smith to join the board of directors. Smith had previously played a key role in the bitter takeover battle of House of Fraser by the unsuccessful Lonrho group.

MEDICLEAN RULES

Mediclean (Hawley Group) have imposed the following rules for workers on its cleaning contract at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, London:

"Female staff must not wear trousers"

"Frequent baths must be taken"

"Hair must be clean, tidy and of a natural colour. Scarves etc. must not be worn except in cases of religious consideration and then scarves to match the company uniform only may be worn"

"Anyone leaving their area of work more than five minutes before the end of their shift will have the appropriate amount deducted from their pay"

"All information etc. which you may see or hear during the course of your duties is confidential. You may not disclose to any other person any details or information relating to patients, hospital procedures or Company matters. Any breach of this rule will be treated most seriously."

Another Mediclean leaflet reveals a desperate attempt to recruit staff at St Mary's. It emphasizes that "all staff" get "paid holidays" and a "sickness benefit scheme". There is even a "bonus! Bring a friend and find out how to earn an extra FIVER!"

SOCIAL SERVICES

UNIONS FIGHT SALES**Croydon: Still fighting**

Croydon in south London has been engaged on a programme of closing its residential homes for the elderly at a record rate. Now, after 10 closures in 8 years, it is meeting fierce resistance from a joint campaign by trade unionists and local residents in its attempts to close the 11th – Norbury Hall – and sell it off to a private buyer.

The council first made clear its intention to sell off Norbury Hall in the summer of 1984. The joint unions' campaign against home closures has been working since then, making Croydon's policies a public issue with leafleting, lobbying and other activities. Widespread public support has been won for the fight, which has clearly been crucial in the council abandoning its plans to sell off the home for use as a luxury hotel or offices.

A separate campaign by residents in the area of the home joined with the union campaign to add to the pressure on the council. As admissions to Norbury Hall have been stopped and some residents moved out, wide publicity has been gained for the distress of the home's residents. One has taken a case to the Ombudsman challenging the council's decision.

The council has certainly been shaken by the campaign – particularly as the home is in a marginal Tory ward and local elections take place in June. It seems likely that they will abandon their second plan to sell it off for use as a private home. There are doubts as to

whether Norbury Hall will be saved as a public old people's home – but it does now look as though it will remain in public ownership. The DHA has expressed serious interest in buying it for use as a home for the mentally handicapped and discussions are apparently under way.

Hammersmith

Trade unionists in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham are engaged in a vigorous campaign to stop the ruling Tory-Liberal coalition selling off a residential home – complete with its 29 residents aged between 72 and 99. Their fight has received backing both from Labour members of the council and from the local community.

Despite intense local campaigning and lobbying, with an effective publicity campaign including national press coverage, Liberal councillors showed their true political colours and supported the Tories in the crucial council meeting on 12th March. However, legal action by GMBATU, which organises most of the home's staff and the Labour group on the council successfully secured an injunction to delay the sale, and on 10th March the right to judicial review of the sale decision was granted.

Now David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party, has intervened to save face for the Alliance during the Fulham by-election and 'persuaded' the liberal councillors to vote against the sale of Stewarts Lodge.

Stop press: Council drops sale plan

Exclusive workers strike

A mass walk-out by all 140 women cleaners at the Drivers & Vehicle Licensing Centre in Swansea has forced Exclusive to compromise on the cuts in pay and conditions they wanted.

They won the competitive tender for the cleaning contract at DVLC on the basis of cuts in pay from £1.80 to £1.50 per hour, reduced working hours from 3 to 2½ hours per night, no holiday money and at least 37 redundancies. DVLC management had accepted the tender even though they knew it meant trouble, and had refused to reopen talks on the contract price. Exclusive has had the contract for 15 years, and until the repeal of the Fair Wages legislation and the introduction of competitive tendering, they had paid Civil Service pay and conditions.

A secret ballot organised by their union (the Civil Service Union) showed overwhelming support for a strike, and when an improved offer from Exclusive was rejected, all 140 women walked out. They have now voted unanimously to go back on the basis of £1.70 per hour and 2 weeks' holiday pay. They will still have to do 3 hours' work in 2½ hours.

**NEW TACTICS FROM NEW ZEALAND TRADE UNIONISTS**

A recent visitor from New Zealand's Public Service Alliance (the TU covering all public service workers) passed on some good ideas. As an alternative or a run-up to all out stoppages, they organise what they call "Bans". Each day one section or department chooses one activity or piece of equipment or an area of the building to boycott. For instance one day all the domestics will refuse to handle cutlery, the next day the Laundry would not handle Doctors' coats.

This throws management into chaos, because they do not know from one day to the next what job will not be done. This means they cannot organise to cover it or bring in volunteers.

It works because each group of workers can choose a "Ban" that they know they can do, and that won't affect the patients too much.

Apparently it works well!

CONTRACTORS Fines & Failures

Crothall's SACKED

Maidstone DHA has decided to sack Crothalls from its domestic contract at Maidstone Hospital. The 3 year contract which began in January 1985 brought £100,000 in 'savings' on the previous cost of the service. By the summer the contract was going badly wrong and financial penalties were imposed. But failures to meet the tender specifications, including wards and occupational therapy areas inadequately cleaned, continued. The DHA is obliged by new DHSS 'guidance' to consult the RHA over terminating the contract — this process is currently under way.

MORE CROTHALL FINES

Crothall's have been fined 10 per cent of their contract fees for 8 weeks at Warneford Hospital, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. Crothall's started the contract in July 1985 after undercutting the previous cleaning costs by 37 per cent (£84,275). A high staff turnover caused by the heavy workload has led to a series of complaints about the standard of cleaning in the mid-wifery section and outpatients.



MORE CROTHALL FINES AT WORTHING

Crothall's have been fined for the fourth month at Worthing Hospital (see PSA No 20). Another 15 per cent — £4,349 — of the monthly cleaning bill was withheld by the Worthing Health Authority for poor performance in January. A full monitoring system was not part of the contract at Worthing and has led to continuing disputes between Crothall's and the DHA. The Health Authority reported only a marginal improvement by the contractor despite fines of £15,947 between October and December 1985.

NHS INSPECTORS CRITICISE OCS AT ADDENBROOKE'S

A detailed inspection of health facilities in the Cambridge Health Authority by the NHS Health Advisory Service and Social Services Inspectorate made the following comments on cleaning at Addenbrooke's Hospital: Geriatric wards were "not clean, mainly due to poor and inadequate standards of domestic services". The 6 inspectors found that there was "not a high standard of cleanliness" with dirty crockery, dirty cleaning cloths, a dirty bucket and mop, and flood water which had lain for five hours after being reported were all condemned in the report. "Standards of cleanliness at Addenbrooke's Hospital must be improved and maintained at all times" and if standards were to be reduced in non-patient areas then "a minimum acceptable standard must be agreed with the relevant staff".

BLUE ARROW WITHDRAWS

The Blue Arrow Group has decided not to seek further NHS cleaning contracts (see PSA No 20) at least for the time being. It will complete existing contracts at Ealing and Macclesfield but has written to health authorities notifying them of the decision to "consolidate" existing contracts. Blue Arrow's move follows Reckitt Cleaning Services' decision to confine its activities to the Norwich area.

SUNLIGHT LOSES LINEN

Staff at East Surrey Hospital in Redhill have been asked to count all dirty linen before it is sent to the private Sunlight laundry in future. Since the hospital opened 3 years ago, nearly one third of its linen, worth over £30,000 has disappeared.

LAUNDRY INVESTIGATION

Express Launderers of Blackpool are under investigation by South Cumbria District Health Authority after a report from the District Linen Services Manager listed a series of complaints. Allegations include damp linen, loss of patients' clothing and late and irregular deliveries.

Tories plan schools shake-up EDUCATION MARKET

New plans are emerging to reduce local control over state schools, to develop closer links between schools and private business interests — and to revive yet again ideas for direct grant schools and school vouchers. Ideas known to be under discussion at senior Party and ministerial level include:

- Development of schooling more closely related to the needs of industry, including the establishment of a Department of Education and Training. (To include the MSC), and the hiving off of vocational education to technical schools, funded directly by industry.



- Extending free market ideas into schooling by introducing school vouchers for parents to choose and buy their children's schooling in the private or state sector. This idea proposed several years ago and decisively rejected as impractical, is being heavily pushed again by the Institute of Economic Affairs, one of the right-wing think tanks.

- Extending the use of selectivity within the state system by reviving direct grant schools, including direct grant primary schools.

- Following the initiative of 'Industry Year' to encourage closer links between schools and local firms, business interests may now be asked to endow schools.

- Asserting greater central control over teachers' employment, pay and conditions, and the implementation of national educational guidelines, and gearing more central grants to specific purposes — dramatically reducing the role of local, elected education authorities.

Estates Robbery

UHRU FLAGSHIP SINKS AFTER LAUNCH

PSA has obtained exclusive details of UHRU's first privatisation plans which will be scuppered a few weeks after they have been proudly announced by Sir George Young.

Sir George announced on 20th February that the Abbey Park estate, Halifax was to receive £689,000 'extra' HIP money, £742,000 Urban Programme cash and £910,000 MSC funds on condition that some 250 houses were sold off to private developers.

Nil Bid

That same day Calderdale Housing Committee considered bids from 3 developers which have been kept secret ever since. PSA can reveal that the original bids were: from Barratts, Wimpeys and Bellways, who offered to take the estate and pay **nothing**. They expected the Council to pay outstanding debt charges, plus their share of Urban Programme money.

Some councillors called the bids "outrageously unrealistic" but the Committee agreed that they should all be asked for further offers. Now we understand that the new bids are no real improvement and that the whole deal is likely to be called off.

This move will be highly embarrassing to the Department of the Environment.

A further embarrassment to the government will be its untruthful claim that "Calderdale Council have involved tenants closely in the development of this valuable package".

Yvonne Smith from the Abbey Park Residents Action Group knows differently:

"We have been completely kept in the dark. All the Council have done is to hold one public meeting to tell us what we're going to get, and a hasty leaflet after they refused to allow us to attend the Housing Committee meeting.

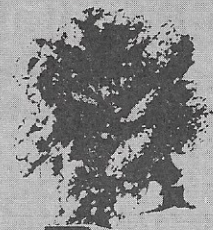
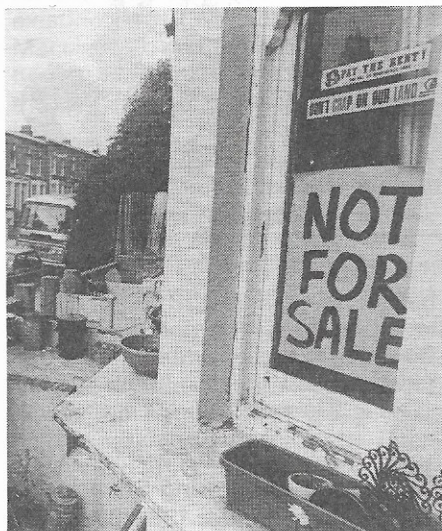
Westminster

TENANTS' VICTORY

Tenants in Westminster have won further victories in their fight to prevent privatisation and improve local housing. The Walerton & Elgin Action Group reports that "a quarter of the estate is now saved", council renovation is about to start on 12 houses and their campaign will now concentrate on proposals for the rest of the area. Recent tenants action has included mass lobbies of Housing and Council meetings, making a video, pushing out new posters and newsletters and compiling a "People's Plan for Walerton".

Before Christmas Westminster Council was set to sell the whole estate to **Bellways**, saying this was the only option. Now the People's Plan has forced them to admit many options exist and to debate them for two hours at the last Housing Committee.

However the Council has agreed to seek further 'barter deals' and also 'the disposal for private profit of vacant (scattered) properties'. Council officers now admit the plan to sell the estate to **Bellways** was flawed in 5 major ways including over-optimistic proposals to increase the density.



Barratt

LABOUR SELLS FAULTY TOWERS

Barratts is to buy 740 system-built flats known as Killingworth Towers from North Tyneside Council. Having received offers from 5 developers ranging from total refurbishment to total demolition, the Council decided to favour demolition and to sell to Barratts without deciding on a price. This strange decision was backed by the even stranger claim that "only one developer, eg Barratts (Urban Renewal) Ltd had provided evidence of sufficient expertise in dealing with a project of this scale". If Barratts is the best...

PORTSMOUTH GO TOO FAR

Portsmouth Council's plans to sell the Portsdown estate to Barratts for free has been halted by the government. They have told the Council to look again at the bids from **Regalian** (who offered £2m) and **Laings** (who offered £1½m plus other payments) or to show that the Barratts offer really does give the Council the best deal.

STOCKBRIDGE FAILURES TO BE KEPT SECRET

The financially troubled Stockbridge Village Trust wants a further £7.5m public funding for its private estate. A worried Department of Environment has responded by appointing private accountants Ernst & Whinney to 'undertake financial appraisal' of the Trust's finances. The government 'do not intend to publish the appraisal'.

TOWER HAMLETS SALES

Barratts are to buy the Waterlow estate in Tower Hamlets in a deal where no money exchanges hands. As "payment" Barratts will hand back 129 improved flats. Tenants have evidence that the sale is unnecessary and the council was lying in its claims that the flats would cost £70-80,000 to improve.

The Teviot Street Tenants and Residents Association, Tower Hamlets, is up in arms over new plans to privatise the estate. Tenants are being kept in the dark in the dark whilst Environment Minister Sir George Young is talking about a trust following the Thamesmead example.

ESTATE SALES A list of councils which have bid for additional HIP allocations and discussed improvements with Urban Housing Renewal Unit has just been published;

PSA has the full names of the estates involved. Call: 0602-412563.

Birmingham, Bolton, Bradford, Calderdale, Crannock, Derby, Ealing, Gateshead, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fullham, Hartlepool, Hyndburn, Kingston-upon-Hull, Langbaugh, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich, Pendle, Rochdale, Salford, Solihull, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Walsall, Waltham Forest.

Prudhoe Hospital Strike N.E. SETS EXAMPLE

A week-long strike at the 900 bed Prudhoe mental hospital in Northumberland has forced management to drop an in-house tender containing savage wage and job cuts.

Wage cuts of up to 30 per cent were proposed with all domestics losing a minimum of £10.68 weekly. The number of full-time jobs was to be cut from 101 to 42 with most workers being offered only 14-20 hours weekly.

NUPE spent a month trying to persuade the hospital management to improve the proposals but without success. The management inter-

viewed all the staff individually, putting pressure on them to accept the deal. NUPE organised a mass meeting at which the domestic staff agreed to an immediate walk-out. Meetings quickly followed with the kitchen and laundry staff who also agreed to strike immediately. Two meetings were held with nurses – over 300 attended and gave their full support. Management put pressure

on the Voluntary Services Officer who refused to organise volunteers to run services. There was also wide public support for the strike.

After a week the hospital management agreed to shelve its proposals and to start full negotiations with the unions over the next few weeks.

The timing of the strike was crucial not only for the domestics at Prudhoe but also because resistance against other in-house tenders in Northumberland hospitals has been weak.

The Geography of NHS Privatisation

source: John Mohan.

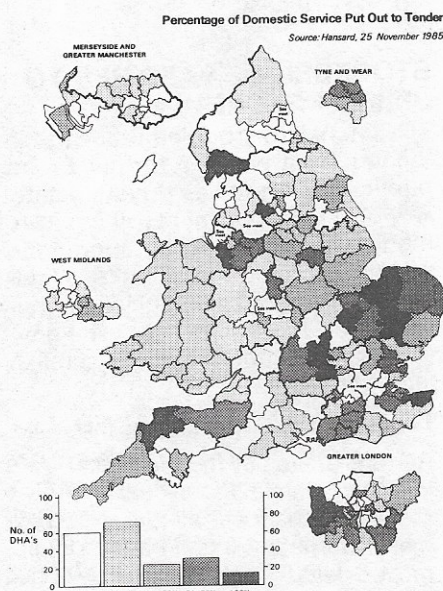
Two trends can be seen from these maps. Firstly the contrast between domestic services where tendering is much more widespread than laundry and catering. This is because laundry and catering require expensive capital costs and overheads to set up, and therefore need large volumes of work to be profitable. This contrasts with domestic

services where profits are made by cutting pay and conditions.

There are also clear geographical differences within the services. Rural DHAs with several small hospitals mean smaller volumes of work and higher transport costs, which cut the profits to be made. This can be seen especially with laundry and catering services. The

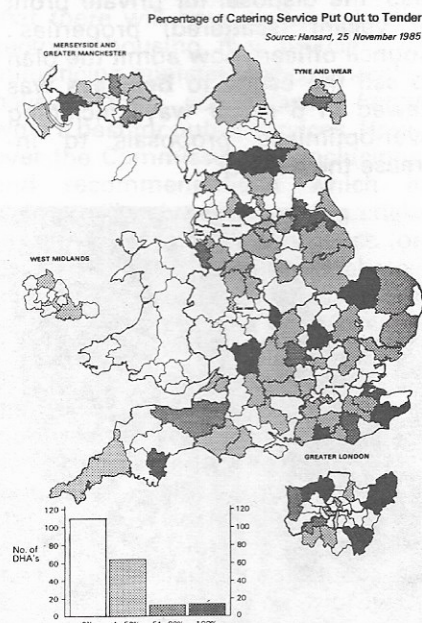
heaviest privatisers are in the Thames Regions and East Anglia. However if you break it down within London, the outer London Authorities, often in Tory areas, were much quicker to go for competitive tendering than the Inner London DHAs where the public sector is a major employer.

(These figures do not separate private from in-house tenders)



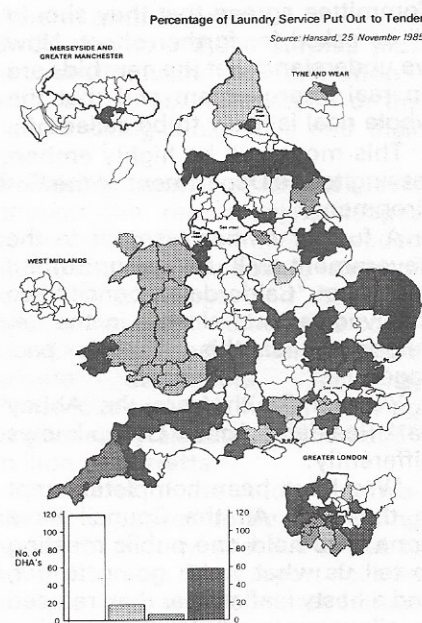
Percentage of Domestic Service put out to tender 1984/85

Domestic services: tendering is much more widespread. Only 60 DHAs hadn't put any services out. Again tendering was heaviest in E Anglia and the Thames RHAs. In most of the RHAs in the North and Midlands, small proportions of the service had gone out with the exception of Mersey RHA.



Percentage of Catering Service put out to tender 1984/85

Catering: very few DHAs have put everything out, and 110 hadn't done so at all. Over 60 had put out less than half of their catering. The thin population rural DHAs are generally those where no catering has been put out, especially in Wales, the West Midlands, the South West Wessex and Northern RHAs. Tendering is more widespread in E Anglia and the Thames RHAs.



Percentage of Laundry Service put out to tender 1984/85

Laundry: here it's all or nothing. 119 DHAs hadn't put out to tender at all: 59 DHAs had put out all their laundry. Most of the tendering has happened in a belt from Devon to East Anglia, especially in the NE and NW Thames and E Anglia RHAs regions.

HOME COUNTIES PULLS OUT FACTS HURT

One week before their domestic contract at the Birmingham and West Midland Womens Hospital was due to start, Home Counties Cleaning Group Services Ltd withdrew from the contract. In a letter to a prospective employee the Managing Director wrote:

"...This decision has not been taken lightly and was arrived at after very careful consideration and is based solely (sic) on the fact that the Company does not wish to be subjected to any further adverse publicity to that which has already resulted from the awardance of this contract..."

The withdrawal of this company and the subsequent re-award of the contract to the in-house team marks a major victory for NUPE. From the moment the contract was awarded to Home Counties (whose bid involved an absurd 58% savings on current costs with a 42% cut in cleaning hours), the union launched its counter-offensive, digging out the past scandals associated with the company (see PSA 5), its disastrous financial position, and its loss of the only NHS contract it had held, at High Royds Hospital, Leeds. Leaflets were sent to all the members of Central Birmingham DHA and widely publicised.

COWBOYS

NUPE also pointed out the failures of the DHA selection process: the company had previously been thrown off the RHA Approved List after the publication of a company profile by the West Midlands TUC Health Service Co-ordinating Committee early in 1985. The DHA had not only failed to insist on full company information and believed without checking the company's own version of its health service experience, but is also ignored its own



Standing Financial Instructions in accepting the tender. NUPE had launched a grievance against the DHA when Home Counties decided to pull out. The Home Counties example shows that trade unionists' efforts to discredit the cowboys can pay off.

In the same authority NUPE is challenging the award of a catering contract at Queen Elizabeth's Hospital to Spinneys (the only private firm seriously contending for NHS catering contracts over the last year). The union claims that the authority accepted a tender that didn't meet the contract specifications, is in breach of the Standing Financial Instructions (again), and failed to consider the advice of its District Catering Advisor. Spinneys have just won a contract for a whole health district – Harrow – where they were the only private bidder. 40 jobs will go.

ADDENBROOKES CONTINUES

Addenbrookes strikers padlocked themselves inside the DHA headquarters on 14th March for several hours to draw attention to their continuing protest against OCS and low hospital cleaning standards. Police and NHS officials had to break in with hacksaws and boltcutters. The 15 strikers are staying on the picket line in spite of the COHSE and NUPE executives voting to withdraw official support. They have had no strike pay since the end of February, and financial help is urgently needed.

Contributions and messages of support to Sylvia Burton, Chair of the Strike Committee, 31 Thorley Road, Cambridge CP5 8NF.

Cambridge Evening News



Overseas

US PUTS PRIVATISATION CONDITIONS ON FOREIGN AID

Reagan Administration officials, speaking at an international conference on privatisation held recently in Washington, declared that the extent to which developing countries have privatised their services and state-owned industries will affect how much US aid they will get. Under the cover of criticising corrupt government agencies, this "liberalisation" effectively means that American and other western companies can get access to more of the markets of the developing countries, since locally based businesses often don't have the resources or the products to compete. Secretary of State George Shultz told the conference that privatisation "is so important and so central to the solution of a lot of the problems we see around the world". The Reagan Administration has also launched a privatisation drive in Federal and State government. Thatcher's former adviser, right-wing guru and adviser to the National Bus Company, Alfred Sherman, also attended the conference.

MEXICO SALE

The Mexican Government has put another 80 state-owned companies up for sale following the sale or liquidation of 236 public companies in 1985. Last year's sale received a poor response so the new sell-off includes more "attractive" companies like Mexicana, a national airline, and the Sicartsa steel complex (likely to be sold to Japanese interests). With £97 billion debts and £4 billion in lost earnings because of the cut in oil prices (half of the government's revenue comes from oil) the new privatisation measures are a desperate attempt to try to cut state spending by up to £750m.

FRANCE: THE RIGHT'S PRIVATISATION PLANS

Plans for widespread privatisation and deregulation by France's right-wing RPR party were put into question, when the right failed to gain a large majority in the National Assembly elections on March 16th. The RPR and the centralist UDF alliance plan to privatise banking and insurance (including the 3 big banks, state owned since the second world war), the 6 large industrial groups nationalised by the Socialist Party Government since 1982, and sell-off Air France and two of the three state television stations.

There are three basic headings:

- Place names.
- Companies.
- Services.

There is some cross-referencing but the index has been kept as brief as possible.

AIRPORTS

- union action against airport sales (13)10
- review of sales (17)3
- progress on BAA sale (17)8
- new Bill published (20)3

AYLESBURY (13)3; (16)5
AUSTRALIA (16)9

BARKING (11)10; (12)10; (13)1;
(17)6

BARNET (11)11
BASINGSTOKE (12)2; (14)6
BELGIUM (16)10;
BIRMINGHAM (16)3,8; (18)2

BL

- plans to sell (20)1

BLACKPOOL (13)3;

BRITISH AIRWAYS
background to sale (12)8
set for 1986 sale (17)8

BRITISH AEROSPACE
remaining shares sold (15)10

BRITISH GAS

- sale details (15)3
- city to make killing (17)11
- more details & t.u. action (19)3
- first private supply starts (20)5
- campaign details (20)9

BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS
likely sale (12)8

BRITISH TELECOM

- it's not for you (11)1
- who bought & gained? (12)8
- rip-off (13)5
- sold, for a third of value; fraud investigation (15)10
- what's happened, what's planned (19)11

BRITTOIL

- last 49% to go (15)5
- 49% sold only 1 in 8 to small investor (17)8
- city gains (18)5

BUILDING CONTRACTORS

BARRATTS (12)11; (14)8;
(15)5; (18)7
BELLWAY (20)10
McALPINE (11)9
McCARTHY & STONE (15)8
TARMAC (13)11
WHYATTS (15)6

BURNLEY (16)5

CAMBRIDGE (11)10; (13)2,3;
(17)5; (18)9; (20)9

CAMBS (18)2

CAMDEN (15)6

CAMPAIGNS

- lessons from Addenbrooke's strike (13)2,3
- NUPE launch cockroach campaign (13)3
- Wirral strike stops cuts (14)10
- outline 7 point strategy to fight privatisation (15)4
- unionising private contractors (16)9
- building international links (16)12
- lessons from Oxford action to beat privatisation (17)4
- round-up of Health campaigns (18)8
- NALGO launch survey of contractors (19)3

CANADA (15)7

CHELSEA (14)6

CHESTERFIELD (17)5; (18)8

CIVIL SERVICE

- computer threat (11)11
- new threats (12)8
- Crown Suppliers under threat plus British Council (13)10

plans to privatise Export Credit Guarantees Dept (17)7
new threats (18)10

CLEANERS & CARETAKERS (see also Health)

- fightback at Heathrow Airport (12)1
- private chain in Wandsworth (12)3
- Progressive get Merton contract (12)11
- resignation details from Kent cleaner (13)7
- 30 cleaners sacked (14)3
- ISS lose Norfolk contract for poor standards yet get another (15)7
- special issue on Pritchards (16)
- Wandsworth cleaning & care-taking contracts in trouble (17)2
- 5 school cleaning firms fined in Kent (18)2
- Cambs schools back to direct labour after private fiasco (18)2
- a page of disasters (19)4
- Dublin strike (19)12
- Risley cleaners win victory with Exclusive (20)3
- finest in Maidstone, Croydon, Worthing & Wandsworth (20)4
- Blue Arrow details (20)11

COMPANIES & CONSULTANTS

- Academy Cleaning (13)6; (17)11; (19)4
- Administration & Advisory Services (12)1
- Alfred Marks (11)4; (18)7
- Allied Steel & Wire (18)4
- American Hospital Supply (15)10
- American Medical International (15)9; (17)5; (18)6,7; (20)7
- Ames Crosta Babcock (20)3
- Andmarc (13)7; (18)2
- ARA (13)6; (14)6; (15)11; (18)6
- Associated British Ports (17)8
- Automagic (20)5
- Automatic Catering (16)4
- Berkeley Taylorplan (13)2
- Bechtel Corporation (19)10
- BET (14)6
- Blue Arrow (20)11
- Boundary Cleaning Services (11)4
- BP (11)8
- Brambles Industries (17)11
- Brengreen (11)4; (14)7; (17)11; (20)11
- British Airports International (17)3
- Brooke St Bureau (20)11
- Browning Ferris Industries (14)6; (15)7
- BUPA Medical Centres Ltd (19)11
- Cable and Wireless (18)5
- CAIB (17)11
- Care Homes (17)11
- Carrollton Press (18)10
- Cazenove & Co (17)10
- Challenge (16)8
- Cleaners Ltd (12)9
- Cleanall (11)4
- Cleanaway (17)11
- Cleandustrial (14)3
- Colman Milne (14)7
- Computel (12)11

- Consolidated Safeguards (17)11
- Co-operative Cleaners (11)11
- Cooper & Lybrand (11)11; (13)10; (17)7; (18)1; (20)4
- Contract Cleaning (19)12
- County Ltd (18)10
- Crothalls (12)10; (13)1,3; (16)4,5; (17)6; (18)2
- Crystals (15)11
- Degremont (14)4
- Deloitte, Haskins & Sells (11)11
- Duple (14)7
- Exclusive (11)2,3; (12)3,9; (13)7; (14)5; (20)3,5
- Executive Cleaning Services (17)2; (19)4; (20)4
- Eurocare Medical Services (20)7
- Executive Cleaning Services (20)7
- Evan Evans (14)7
- Food Concepts (16)4
- Four seasons Roofing (14)7; (17)11
- Gardner Merchant (11)10
- General Contract Cleaners (16)8
- GKN (18)4,5
- Goldborough (14)6
- Grandmet (14)7; (17)11
- Gravesend Window Cleaning (11)4
- Green, Belfield-Smith & Co (20)5
- Hamard Catering (15)8
- Harbinson Group (13)11
- Hay-MSL (13)7
- Hawley (11)4,5; (12)8; (14)7; (18)7
- HCA (12)4; (15)9,10
- Hestair (14)7
- Hoskyns Group (11)8
- Hospital Hygiene (13)7; (15)7
- Humana (15)9
- Huntsbury Foods (16)8
- ICC Cleaning (15)12; (18)8
- IMS/Kayward (20)11
- Initial (11)3; (12)11; (14)5; (15)6,7,12; (17)2; (18)2; (19)4
- Initial Services Cleaners Ltd (12)3; (20)5
- Initial Services (13)2
- Inmos (17)11
- International Aeradio (17)3
- ISS Servisystem (15)7
- James Robb & Son (19)5
- Kimberly Services (16)4
- Kleinwort Benson (17)11
- Len Wright Travel (15)11
- Lifecare Int (17)11
- London Crystal (11)4
- LRT (19)9
- Maintenance Co (14)7
- Martin Marietta Corp (11)8
- Maximum Security Services (16)8
- Mediclean (11)4,10; (13)4,7; (14)7; (15)9
- Medi-Home Health Services (16)4
- Mercury (11)8
- Midsepa (14)7
- Mitchell Cotts (13)8; (15)2
- National Freight Corp (18)7; (20)5
- National Medical Enterprises (13)6
- NM Rothchild (17)11
- Nationwide B. Soc (13)9
- OCS (11)3; (12)3,10; (13)2,3; (17)5; (18)9; (20)9

- Oxford Cleaning Services (11)4; (14)7
- Pall Mall (18)2
- Power Clean (16)8
- Price Waterhouse (17)11
- Pritchards (12)4,5; (13)6; (15)2; 16 special issue; (17)12; (19)9
- Progressive Cleaning Services (11)4; (12)11
- Provincial Cleaning Services (11)4; (18)2; (19)4
- Psychiatric Management Services Ltd (18)6
- RCO Cleaners (20)5
- Reckitts (12)10; (13)11; (14)5
- Reliance Cleaners (12)1; (20)11
- Rolls Royce (15)5
- Royal Jersey Laundry (11)11; (15)7
- Scicon Ltd (11)8
- Securiguard (13)6; (17)11
- Securitas (11)9
- Sentinel Security Ltd (19)11
- Sheffield Forgemasters (18)4
- Siblyclean (20)11
- Slaughter & May (17)11
- Spinneys (11)10
- Statewide Services (17)11
- Strettons (11)3; (12)3
- Sunlight (11)11; (18)6
- Susan Holdings (11)4
- Sutcliffe (11)2,3; (12)3; (15)2; (18)11; (19)5
- Systemsolve (Computer Services) Ltd (12)11
- Taskmasters (11)3; (17)2; (18)2,7
- Taylor-wise (14)7
- Temprite (16)8
- Texaco (18)7
- Three Counties Cleaning (11)4
- Torquay Travel (13)11
- Touche Ross & Co (17)11; (18)1
- Trevor Bass (20)11
- Trojan Contractors (15)6
- Tyne Ship Repair (17)11
- United Dominions Trust (11)12
- United Health Serv (11)4
- United Medical Enterprises (13)6
- Wastecare (11)12; (12)2; (18)6
- Waste Management (12)3; (14)5; (20)9
- Westcott (11)11
- Wimpey Mining (18)7

COMPUTERS

- privatisation of local gov computers growth area (11)8
- privatisation of all gov computer operation (11)11
- chief executive warns of dangers of privatisation (12)11

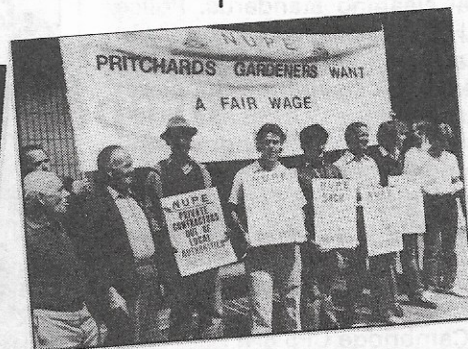
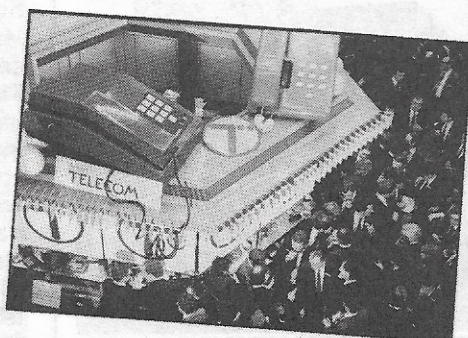
CONSERVATIVES AND RIGHT-WING ORGANISATIONS

- Monday Club policies (11)5
- Tebbit & Fowler look to future (11)5
- Forsyth calls for prisons for profits (11)9
- Adam Smith Inst. say privatise benefits & pensions (11)9
- Heritage Foundation advise S.Africa to follow Thatcher (19)10

COVENTRY (12)12

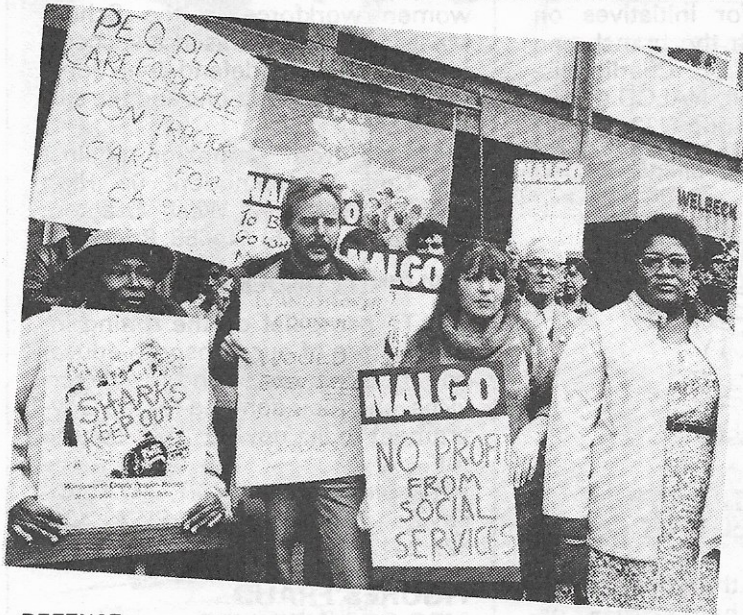
CROYDON (16)6; (18)2; (20)4

DARLINGTON (19)2



The number in brackets refers to the issue number, eg (15). The second number is the page number.

The index for issues No 1-10 was contained in issues 11 and 12.



DEFENCE

range of threats (11)11
ROF workers take action (12)8
security excuse to sack cleaners (14)3
asset stripping of shipyards (14)8
shipyard repair co-op collapses (14)8
Dockyard action (17)7
ship repairs going to privatised firm (17)11
dockyards & consultants (18)10
dockyard action (19)5

DEVONPORT (17)7; (18)10; (19)5
DONCASTER (20)5
DUDLEY (11)3; (12)3; (13)3
DURHAM (12)9
EALING (11)2
EAST ANGLIA (20)3
EXETER (17)3

FINES & FAILURES

Exclusive in trouble in Ealing (11)2
Exclusive, Taskmaster, OCS, Initial & Streltons in trouble in Dudley (11)3
Pritchards high staff turnover and guilty of unfair dismissal (11)2
Commercial Catering school meals disaster (11)2
Sutcliffe OAP meals flop (11)2
Initial chaotic laundry service for NW Surrey DHA (11)3
Reliance exploit Asian cleaners (12)1
Wastecare use dangerous dust-carts (12)2
ISC fail on estate caretaking (12)3
more Sutcliffe's meals problems (12)3
OCS & Executive sacked from Dudley meals (12)3
Waste Management fined after 30,000 complaints (12)3
Pritchards union buster feature (12)4,5
OCS failures in Cambridge (12)10
patients sign petition against Crothalls (13)3
Mediclean's dirty hospitals (13)4
Pritchards fined (13)6
Taskmaster fined £1,500 p.w. (13)7
Torquay Bus Co carried 3 passengers in 3 weeks! (13)11
Reckitt poor standards (14)5
Children employed by Exclusive (14)5
Waste Management criticised in Council report (14)5
Tenants say private caretaking is shambles (14)5
ARA fallures in US (14)6

BFI fallures in US (14)6
Sutcliffe's OAP meals contract terminated (15)2
Mitchell Cotts having troubles (15)2
Tory Trafford go back to direct labour cleaners (15)6
builders sacked by Camden (15)6
Merton find building contractors overcharging (15)6
pictures of Initial's caretaking neglect (15)6,7
Orpington kick out Hospital Hygiene Services (15)7
firm withdraws from laundry contract (15)7
ISS kicked out for failure then awarded new contract (15)7
BFI faces setbacks in Canada (15)7
special issue on Pritchards (16)18
high weeds on Merton streets (17)2
Wandsworth cleaners in trouble (17)2
private caretaking gives worse service (17)2
Barking in filthy condition (17)6
private contractors thrown out of Cambs schools (18)2
Initial lose Birmingham contract back to direct labour (18)2
Crothalls fined in Croydon (18)2
ARA profit from Live Aid (18)6
Wastecare hits Insurance problem (18)6
Parents slam Sutcliffe's junk food (18)11
M25 cracking up (18)12
Wandsworth cleaning chaotic (19)4
Private caretaking may end (19)4
Merton mayhem in schools (19)4
decorators disaster (19)4
fines for Pritchards in Worthing (20)4
more fines in Croydon (20)4
Maldstone ultimatum for Pritchards (20)4
more cleaning fines in Wandsworth (20)4
private school for mentally handicapped children investigated (20)4
dirty Thanet schools (20)5
Initial sacked by Kennet (20)5
Meals under weight (20)5
15,136 default points on estate cleaning (20)5
disturbances & damages at hospital (20)5

chaotic refuse collection in Wirral, council lose £200,000 (20)9

FORESTS/PLANTS

overall threats (11)12
£100m sale, Hawley buys (12)8
t.u. campaign (13)10

FRANCE (16)10

GENERAL

gov plans for sales (13)5
the price of local gov privatisation (17)2
the tender trap (17)6,7
feature—gov plans yet more sales (19)1
value for money, taking action (19)8

GLASGOW (12)11; (17)9

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM (13)6; (15)2,9; (16)5; (17)9

HARINGEY (11)11; (14)10; (17)10

HARROW (15)7; (17)5

HEALTH (see also LAUNDRY)

Initial chaotic laundry contract (11)3
Barking strike (11)10
Hammersmith and Mediclean (11)10
Addenbrookes (11)10
catering contracts (11)10
strike action in Barnet & Haringey (11)10
laundry contracts (11)10
Barking strike & Addenbrooke strike continue plus other action (12)10
Barking produce workers plan (13)1
firm with no experience wins NHS contract (13)2
Addenbrooke's 20 weeks on (13)2,3
unions stop NHS tendering (13)3
health service unions form joint Newcastle committee (13)3
staff occupy rehabilitation centre & win victory (13)3
St Helier Hospital—infectious time bomb (13)4
private hospital chain expands (13)6
Powys HA critical of private contractors (13)7
gov force Norwich DHA to drop in-house tender (13)11
Hawley & hospitals (14)7
news shorts: food bill cuts; fraud by consultants; beds cut; Tower Hamlets enquiry: rent-a-doctor plan; higher prescription charges (14)11
drugs research by public sector sold (15)5
RCN to monitor private contractors (15)5
HHS kicked out of Orpington (15)7
sheltered housing builder moves into private nursing homes (15)8
report shows NHS consultants not monitored (15)8
firm goes into liquidation having won NHS catering contract (15)8
US comps to take over NHS management (15)9
Mediclean problems (15)9
special issue for Pritchards (16)1
lessons from Oxford union action (17)4,5
national action committee formed (17)5
Addenbrooke's possible gains (17)5
Scarsdale strike (17)5
American firm buys GP practice (17)5
latest at Barking (17)6
Fowler to veto health authority appointees (17)6
Wandsworth refuse to sell flats to local hospital (17)9
hospital sites into Butlins/shopping centres (18)1
Crothalls bad standards in Maldstone & Croydon (18)2

AMI Empire growing fast (18)6,7
round-up of campaigns (18)8,9
health occupation to stop closure & sale (19)5
American private hospitals dump patients on public hospitals (19)10
almost half of elderly in nursing homes now in private sector (19)10
more records of fines (20)4
disturbances & damage at hospital (20)5
savings madness on Medway tenders (20)5
BUPA attack AMI (20)8
Private Patients Plan in trouble (20)8
US firm sets up 5 health centres (20)8
US health firm to spend £7m on promotion (20)8
Contract Cleaning & Maintenance Association complain not winning enough contracts (20)8
Addenbrooke's strike continues (20)9

HILLINGDON (17)1

HOLLAND (16)10

HONG KONG (16)11

HOUSING (& land)

private finance for council home heating (11)12
private estate cleaning firms (12)3
reports of housing sales 6 areas (12)11
Rochester plans to close DLO (13)9
Nationwide B. Soc, rich pickings with public land (13)9
Redditch plan to sell £40m assets to one purchaser (13)11
12 out of 13 tenants say no to private caretakers (14)5
more problems at Cantril farm (14)8
Killingworth for sale to Barratts (14)8
council planners set up private firm (14)11
£12 billion loss on council house sales (15)5
Barratts spitting blood (15)5
Merton investigation reveals overcharging by builders (15)6
firm sacked for delays (15)6
private sheltered market expansion (15)8
mortgage arrears rising (17)9
plans to speed up estate sales (17)9
London land bonanza (17)9
sales in Hammersmith & Glasgow (17)9
Wandsworth refuse to sell homes to local hospital (17)9
new crisis at Cantril farm (17)10
new plan for Thamesmead Trust (17)10
new towns sold off (17)10
private decorators disaster (19)5
Cantril farm, feature expose (19)6,7
Salford tenants fight sales (19)7
new private company to profit from homeless (19)11
all council tenants & housing workers under threat with new Bill (20)1,2
15,136 default points on Wandsworth estate cleaning (20)5
Cosy consultants, UHRU links revealed (20)10,11
Building Socs want rent increase (20)10
Bellway beaten (20)10

INDEX

for issues 1-10 in issues (11) & (12)

KENNET (20)5

KENT (13)7; (18)2,11

PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION

Information

VIDEO: "KEEP IT PUBLIC" a 10-minute campaigning video produced by GUARD as part of the joint unions' campaign against the privatisation of British Gas, available from GMBATU, Thorne House, Ruxley Ridge, Claygate, Esher, Surrey.

CAUGHT IN THE TENDER TRAP

is a study of the tendering process for a domestic contract at Yardley Green in East Birmingham Health District, (which Crothalls eventually won). Useful, though depressing, in showing the key role of pro-privatisation management and the impossible decisions faced by trade unions once the process is in motion. Curiously this DHA is reported to have a majority of "Labour movement sympathisers", which leaves the reader with the question – how could they let it happen?

Price 65p from West Midlands Health Service Monitoring Unit, 7 Frederick St, Birmingham B1 3HE.

FIGHTING FOR PUBLIC SERVICES: an excellent pack produced by Haringey NALGO for its stewards with publicity, information and action materials, providing a whole range of ideas for initiatives on privatisation which the branch can take. Information from Charlie Hislop, Publicity officer, NALGO Office, 2A Brabant Rd, London N22.



PRIVATE PRACTICE: THE ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF THE NHS:

A useful report on the ways in which private practice harms NHS patients. It includes a compilation of the relevant government policies and reports and documents, the use (and abuse) of facilities and equipment. It reveals that 85 per cent of NHS consultants are involved in private practice and the way that their contracts enable this.

From NHS Unlimited, c/o Frank Dobson MP, House of Commons, London SW1.

WOMEN WORKERS FIGHT THE CUTS:

The story of the Hillingdon School Meals Campaign

The pamphlet describes how the all-women workforce in the School Meals Service organised a successful campaign to defend their jobs, their pay and conditions and the service itself.

Available from Campaign against the Cuts in Hillingdon, 9a High Street, Yiewsley, West Drayton, Middlesex. (0895) 444658. Price 50p.

BUILDING CONDEMNED

UCATT pamphlet on the rotting infrastructure of our transport, education, housing, water and health services, and their demand for the Government to act now to "root out the rot".

Available from UCATT, 177 Abbeville Road, London SW4. (01) 622 2442.

FIGURES FRAUD LIES DAMNED LIES

Ever been stuck to explain why the Government's claims of more money, more beds and more nurses are lies? London Health Emergency's latest factsheet "Figures Fraud" exposes the "twisted, selected and laundered" statistics being pushed out by the DHSS. Every GP's surgery should give them out free.

Single copies – 20p, 25 copies – £1.50, 50 copies – £2.50 from LHE, 335 Grays Inn Road, London WC1 (01-833 3020).

BREAKING DOWN:

A look at how the Government privatisation plans will affect London's public transport

Timely pamphlet from CAPITAL – London's passenger transport campaign – on how the problems encountered by London travellers can only get worse if privatisation continues.

Available from CAPITAL, Headland House, 308 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP. Price £1.

Photographs by Philip Wolmuth unless credited otherwise.

CAN YOU HELP

Public Service Action urgently needs:

1. Copies of council, NHS and other public bodies reports on the tendering of services, cost comparisons, and trade union submissions.
2. Information on contractors wages, conditions, benefits and employment practices.
3. Details of contractors wages, conditions, benefits and employment practices.
4. Regular news about campaigns against privatisation, cuts and contractors. Share your ideas, tactics and lessons learnt with other campaigns.
5. Details of trade union and/or local authority, NHS, civil service and nationalised industries initiatives to improve and expand public services.
6. Information about new plans or schemes to privatise services e.g. contracting out, use of volunteers, expansion of private services etc.

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