

# PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION

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THE ANTI-PRIVATISATION MAGAZINE FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

No 33 Feb 1988

Workers defend NHS

## SAFER IN OUR HANDS



Steve McTaggart

● A rally of 2000 striking health workers lobby the January meeting of the Lothian Health Board in Edinburgh urging continued resistance to government pressure for privatisation. A lobby of the Greater Glasgow Health Board also rallied more than 2000 health workers. Spontaneous strikes, lasting from 24 hours to five days, erupted when the boards bowed to Scottish Office pressure to put services out to tender. NUPE area officer for East Scotland John Lambie told PSA Scottish unions were planning a 24-hour strike as part of their vigorous campaign to defend the health service from contractors.

Action by NHS workers is gathering momentum around low pay, cuts and privatisation. As we went to press, nurses, midwives, ambulance crews blood transfusion staff and ancillary staff – with the support of doctors and administrators – were planning further action. But the Government has steadfastly refused to increase its spending on health, seeing the crisis as an opportunity to offer radical rightwing “solutions”, as they have done for education and housing.

Campaigns against cuts in staff and care will have to be vocal in support of a tax-funded NHS if we are not to win the battle and lose the war.

The right has been quick to move in with a flood of policy documents and profitable deals.

### MEDICLEAN'S MEGABUCKS

Hawley-owned Mediclean sees “megabucks” on the horizon from the nursing staff crisis. Mediclean's Managing Director offered to provide contract cleaners to take on the role of “nursing aide”, with a “couple of weeks training”. But it is because companies like Mediclean have taken over hospital domestic services that the domestics' role has been reduced to cleaning and nurses forced to take on the extra work formerly done by ancillary staff.

The Centre for Policy Studies' well timed proposals involve hiving off the whole of the NHS to a non-government

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- Contractors failures
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## National Health Service

# THE THINK TANKS ROLL

"trust", competitive tendering for surgery, primary care and other services, and the introduction of a voucher system so patients can buy care from either the NHS "trust" or the private sector.

The Adam Smith Institute proposes the abolition of health authorities, replacing them with Health Management Units (HMUs). All patients would be a member of a HMUs through their GP who would have state funds to buy treatment wherever it was cheapest, the public or private sector.

The Institute of Economic Affairs argues for a completely private insurance based system, with competition between companies ensuring patients' choice.

These ideas should not be dismissed as the rantings of the extreme right. Thatcher, Moore and a procession of Tory MPs and professional health organisations have all echoed these ideas as well as calling for hotel charges for hospital patients, higher prescription charges, an internal "trading" market in the NHS and tax relief for insurance premiums.

Michael Forsyth MP, well known to PSA readers as founder of PULSE, is now at the Scottish Office. He is responsible for the privatisation drive in Scotland, forcing Scottish Health Authorities to go out to competitive tender.

## MOORE'S CURE

The level of support for the NHS has forced Moore to reassure people that the NHS (or its privatised successors) will continue to be "free at the time of use". But he sees no reason why all health care should not be "sold" to NHS patients by private companies as well as a commercialised public sector. The private sector will be promoted, not as an alternative minority service, but within the NHS selling health care as a contractor. This will guarantee the viability of the private sector – currently uncertain – with increasing injections of public money, while the NHS is starved of resources to provide services itself.

This heralds a major transformation in health care, but can be presented as simply a logical extension of past developments.

● Health Authorities were given £500,000 last election year to buy private treatment and reduce waiting lists: a tenfold increase to £5 million is expected this year.

● Private companies already run kidney dialysis units in NHS hospitals. The Bioplan deals (see page ) are deliberately planned as integral to the NHS.

● Income generation is the buzzword in many cash-starved DHAs. Already services such as cancer screening is being sold to private companies, as well as letting space for shops and commer-



Steve McTaggart

Health workers lobbying the Greater Glasgow Health Board, signalling their determination to keep the private contractors who have plundered English hospitals for profit, out of Scotland.

cial outfits. Budgets already rely on the income from such ventures.

## KILL OR CURE

And where is the left in all this? If the action of NHS workers is to achieve the success it deserves – and that we need – supporters are going to have to stand up for the ideas and arguments that defend the very principles of the NHS. The "market" can never provide health to those in most need – only taxation, planning and a democratic health service can do that.

## Merton:

# BET CONTRACT COUP

**"A very bold and brave step" is how Initial Textile Services described the decision of Merton and Sutton DHA to award them a seven-year contract to manage its whole linen service.**

The new contract, due to start on April 1, includes:

- the selection and purchase of hospital linen, patients' clothing and new staff uniforms
- the laundering, quality control, wrapping and daily deliveries to hospitals
- maintenance of the linen stores in the DHA's 7 hospitals and operation of ward linen stores
- collection of soiled linen.

Initially the contractor will have use of existing linen stocks and the DHA laundry. 70 staff made redundant by the contract award have been guaranteed interviews by ITS, though how many will be employed remains to be seen.

This "brave" step means that the DHA has placed a vital element of its service in the hands of a private monopoly: ITS will be in a powerful position to raise prices whenever it wants in the future at the promised annual contract price review.

For the industry it is a crucial breakthrough. The trade association ABLCRS (the Association of British Laundry, Cleaning and Rental Services) has complained to the Government of its members' failure to win NHS contracts to date. Changes in the tendering regulations forcing DHAs to offer the laundry facilities to tendering com-

panies only affected the later tendering exercises.

Initial's parent company, multinational BET, has extensive hospital contracts in Europe, the US, Australia and South East Asia. In the UK it owned **Advance** before taking over **Initial** in 1985 to ensure dominance of private contracts for NHS laundry. The new Merton contract fits in well with its strategy to build a vertical monopoly in textile rental services: the Initial empire includes **Initial Manufacturing Group**, whose 4 constituent companies produce "specialised products for the garment, textile rental, hygiene, cleaning and janitorial industries". Initial can manufacture the garments and linen for its hospital contracts, provide the laundry and transport – and profit on each stage of the process.



## Bioplan

# HCA's TROJAN HORSE?

**Bioplan Holdings plc are to build private day surgery units on NHS Hospital sites in Salford and Oxford: in return, in Salford they will carry out a proportion of operations on NHS patients and in Oxford they will have access to the Unit for private work. Bioplan claim eight other health authorities are interested and has firm plans for Leighton hospital, Crewe and Kingston Hospital, Surrey.**

Bioplan was set up specifically to cash in on the expanding market for day surgery – currently only 30–40 per cent of treatment in the UK compared to 60–70 per cent in the US – which is encouraged by the lengthening waiting lists, and cuts in beds and budgets. Bioplan has its roots in two private health care companies – **Seltaheart** and **Nationwide**, who have a number of private hospitals in the UK, and are now both owned by **Hospital Corporation of America**, a major health care company. HCA has a small shareholding in Bioplan: its common strategy is to enter a new market in the name of another company because of public distrust of American health corporations. Apparently Bioplan also plan a “preferred-provider” link with **Health First**, an insurance package based on fixed price treatment. Bioplan Holdings is a very recently formed “off the shelf” company with no trading record and no apparent assets.

The approach of Peter Townsend, involved in all three companies, was summed up in a speech he made to a conference in 1985: “I don’t apologise for being commercial – the bottom line to me means profit”.

## MOVING IN

Although the two schemes in Salford and Oxford exploit weaknesses in the NHS in different ways, Bioplan’s strategy is similar:

- both units follow market research into the potential “demand” created by growing waiting lists and future financial constraints. They are also centrally sited within their region;
- both units share a site with a NHS hospital, and become integral to NHS planning and finances. Bioplan gains access and close links with NHS and its staff. The NHS gains some immediate revenue, urgently needed facilities which they could not afford otherwise, and potential income from selling NHS services. They can also treat some people on the waiting list;
- in both places a conference of consultants was called to get support for the idea, before it went to the Health Authority. They were offered much-needed research and teaching facilities: both deals involve money for academic staff and teaching facilities.



And of course the consultants will be employed to do private work in the Unit.

In Salford, Bioplan want to build and run a £1m day surgery unit in the grounds of Hope Hospital. It would be capable of carrying out 8–10,000 minor operations a year. The Health Authority are still negotiating the terms of the deal, but it looks as if they will get the land for a peppercorn rent, in exchange for 500 free operations plus a discount rate of cost + 10 per cent for NHS patients which is 40 per cent cheaper than the cost to a health insurance scheme. Bioplan would buy clinical and domestic services such as pharmacy, pathology, laundry and cleaning from Salford.

In Oxford, Bioplan will spend £3000,000 on extending and equipping an existing NHS day surgery unit at the Churchill Hospital. Bioplan will then “contract in” to use the Unit and all its services for private patients. The DHA estimates an income of £100,000 – which, with a deficit of £1.8m and surgical ward closures planned, will be welcome.

## “POACH STAFF”

A NUPE officer told PSA, “It’s crazy. The hospitals in Salford are about to lose their licence to train nurses because of a shortage of qualified staff. 70 nursing posts are being made redundant and wards are being closed every week, and yet the Health Authority can’t wait to build a private hospital which has said it will recruit from the current nursing catchment area. In other words it will poach staff from a service going bankrupt of professionals.”

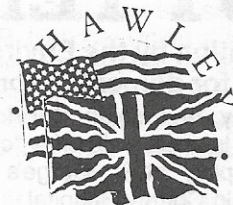
## More News

### SELLING DRYERS, BUYING NURSING HOMES

**BET** has acquired **Worldwide Dryers** (the hand dryer rentals) in a £11m deal with **Leisuretime International**, the hotel and travel group. The sale has originally been blocked by Leisuretime shareholders but a Xmas boardroom coup led to its approval and the resignation of several directors. The Jivral family bought a 29.6 per cent stake in Leisuretime and sold their Country Care Homes chain of 10 residential care and nursing homes to Leisuretime for £4m. They were previously operated by Naaz Holdings, a Jersey based family trust.

### AMI TO EXPLOIT THE NHS CRISIS

Private hospital multinational **American Medical International (AMI)** is considering selling a minority stake in its British operations to finance expansion. It already runs 13 hospitals and 3 psychiatric centres and had £94m turnover in 1986/87. AMI is a subsidiary of its financially troubled US parent company and a sale of shares would require a stock market listing and formation of shares in the same way as the government has sold nationalised industries. No doubt many senior Tory MPs, familiar with AMI facilities, will be phoning their stockbrokers with orders to buy!



### HAWLEY CHANGES NAME

The **Hawley Group** is to change its name to **ADT** following the £391m takeover of the US security system firm ADT late last year. Over 60 per cent of Hawley’s turnover comes from its US operations and it ceased to be a British company when it moved its registration to Bermuda in 1984.

### WAGE CUTS

NUPE has attacked East Birmingham Health Authority for removing a £25 a week bonus for unskilled catering staff by putting their jobs out to tender.

**Hospital Hygiene Services** has been selected to recruit and pay the staff while the Health Authority continues to manage them.

The skilled catering and managerial jobs are to be put out to tender next year which managers hope to win in-house.



# CONTRACTORS Fines & Failures

## CAMBRIDGE OCS "DISASTER"

"It was a very bad contract. It was full of flaws and should never have been entered into".

Thus, after 3 years, the DHA's chief executive has described the £1 million OCS cleaning contract at Addenbrookes Hospital. The hospital workers said it at the start and on the picket line for a year and a half, the CHC consistently monitored and reported the contractors failures, and a consultant resigned from the DHA over it. The contract still has 18 months to run. Cleaning in many areas of the hospitals is still unsatisfactory: the contractor is being pressed to improve standards and to increase wages to attract better staff. A working group including cleaning staff is to be consulted next time before any contract is awarded.

OCS is partly owned by the Dutch owned multinational **Vendex**, whose main interests are in retailing, including the Bradford based **Empire Stores** mail-order business.

## North Lincs:

# EHO RULES OUT TENDERS

**Intervention by the Environmental Health Officer ruled out two tenders for domestic work in North Lincolnshire early last year.**

**Berkley Taylorplan Services Ltd** put in the lowest tenders for "cleaning/housekeeping" at St George's hospital and Lincoln County Hospital, just beating in-house tenders. But after a technical evaluation by Price Waterhouse the Health Authority resolved to award the tenders in-house.

The EHO was only called in after Trent regional General Manager Brian Edwards refused to accept the professional judgement of the Health authority that there would be risk regarding hygiene and cross-infection if the Taylorplan tender was accepted. He told them to present "hard evidence".

Edwards also rejected concern that "the hours of work proposed by Taylorplan would not be sufficient to fulfil the specification". He told the Authority: "This reason alone would not be considered by DHSS to be sufficiently compelling to lead you to discount the Taylorplan tender".

Taylorplan proposed cutting the "productive hours" of work by one third even though the job involved food handling as well as cleaning.

## DIRTY ESTATES

The **Initial** monopoly of estate cleaning in Wandsworth (see PSA 32) is still producing a stream of complaints from tenants associations. At the Borough Panel meeting of TAs on 26th October 1987, the catalogue of complaints included:

- "unmanageable workloads" for cleaning operatives on 3 estates
- inadequate cleaning equipment and inappropriate cleaning materials
- blocked refuse chutes and drains left uncleared
- failure to deal with faulty lighting and replace light bulbs
- floors remaining dirty and unsightly after cleaning
- blocks not cleaned over the weekend
- staircases not cleaned for 3 months
- absent operatives
- unsatisfactory monitoring

Street cleaning also came under attack with complaints of operatives sweeping only one broom width of roads and reports of a pig's head left lying in a grassed area!

The EHO's criticisms included:

- "In the event of a common occurrence of emergency cleaning of excreta, vomit etc it would be unacceptable to expect a housekeeper to also carry out food handling duties." Taylorplan would normally have one staff member on duty who would have to combine sanitary cleaning with food handling.
- Food temperature monitoring would probably not be carried out due to pressure of other work.
- There was no induction training programmed which is important when staff are expected to handle food.
- The provision of two changes a week of protective clothing was inadequate when the Authority laid down at least one change a day.
- Shortfall in staff supervision was "likely to lead to lowering of existing standards".

The EHO found the in-house tender had a comprehensive approach to prevent cross-infection and contamination of food. The region eventually backed down and allowed the tender to go in-house.

## Pritchards WHOLE TRUTH

**An Industrial Tribunal decision against the unfair dismissal by Pritchards Services Ltd of its Humberside area supervisor has exposed some of the cleaning company's shady practices in making "savings" over in-house costs.**

Kathleen Clarke worked for Pritchards for 14 years before resigning when a new manager appointed another supervisor. However she withdrew her resignation and a case against unfair dismissal was launched after a document was discovered revealing management had planned to force her out of the job because she had "too negative an approach".

Under oath Mrs Clarke revealed a number of bad practices by Pritchards, including:

- The Hull Branch manager asked her to draw up a list of minimum cleaning materials for each contract and then halved the list as the basis for the actual provision.
- The manager systematically diluted down cleaning agents but claimed this was done purely out of consideration for the health and safety of the workforce.
- The company failed to do anything when employees wanting to do their job properly bought in their own cleaning materials because the company refused to supply enough.
- Floors and tables were often "cleaned" with water only because no cleaning agents were provided.
- As a supervisor Mrs Clarke was regularly expected to transport staff to and from jobs in a van not equipped with back seats, breaking traffic regulations.
- The company refused to pay for major repairs to her work vehicle.
- Pritchards had a bad reputation for not paying bills or paying late at local shops and garages.

Pritchards Services Ltd is a subsidiary of **Hawley Group** (now ADT). Evidence from the Pritchards branch manager, the Hawley Group regional director and the Pritchards personnel officer, largely refuting Mrs Clarke's claims, failed to impress the tribunal. Its decision commented that management witnesses had "failed to take regard to the fact that they gave their evidence on oath".

Mrs Clarke was represented by Daniel Vulliamy of the Hull Employment Law Project.

Further information on this case is available from HELP, 27 Salisbury Street, Hull HU5 3HA. Tel: 0482 46840.



# RUSH TO FAILURE

Tory Merton has awarded its school cleaning contract to a third company, Pall Mall, which is set to repeat the failures of the previous two contractors, Academy and Pritchards (see PSA 30(2), 30(8), 19(4)).

Pall Mall is part of the **Sunlight Services Group** with a record of failures in Cambridge and Solihull school cleaning and Roehampton's Queen Mary Hospital.

Pritchards' contract to clean Merton schools had expired and the council seized the chance to kick it out when Pall Mall put in a bid about £100,000 pounds lower for the new contract.

Merton's ruling Tories made their choice despite knowing Pall Mall's previous history. Labour councillors highlighted the company's record when it gained a Cambridgeshire County Council contract to clean the schools in the Peterborough and Huntingdon area in 1983. Within seven weeks the standard of cleaning in the 104 schools was reported to have dropped so dramatically that there was talk of some schools being forced to close. The list of complaints included:

- Sinks and handbasins left grimy and toilets unclean and smelling
- Corridors and school entrances not cleaned for up to five days at a time
- Desk tops and work surfaces, particularly those used for cookery lessons, not properly scrubbed.

Pall Mall's poor record was a contributing factor in the county council's decision in 1985 to kick out the contractors and return the work to in-house labour. (See PSA 18)

Merton labour councillor Geoff Martin told PSA the Labour group, teacher unions and NUPE planned close monitoring of Pall Mall's performance in its new contract. Pall Mall was another contractor which had underestimated the cost of the job but the Tories were determined to keep using school children in Merton as guinea pigs for their experiments in privatisation, he said.

## Local Government Bill RIDLEY MOVE ON RACE

Under pressure the Government added amendments to the Bill's clauses on contract compliance to allow councils to require contractors to promote equality of opportunity between races under section 71(b) of the Race Relations Act, and to submit ministerially approved questionnaires to companies relating to workforce matters and racial equality. Twelve Tory backbenchers voted against these.

### PEER POWER

The Bill is currently in the House of Lords and lobbying for amendments continues. There is some hope for changes to the contract compliance clauses, though we understand that most excitement is expected on dog licences!

### TENDERING TIMETABLE

The final timetable for the implementation of tendering is to be announced after the Bill has completed all its stages in Parliament. This leaves even less time than expected for councils to get their act together. The DoE has confirmed that the April and October dates given for various services are dates by which contracts actually have to start.

### LEISURE: IN OR OUT?

Ministers are expected to announce their decision on tendering for leisure facilities in the next few weeks. While *Local Government Chronicle* reported that the plan was to be dropped, others are not so sure and suspect some kind of phasing-in plan may be introduced, as for grounds maintenance, because of the current lack of interest by the private leisure sector.

Sporting organisations and personalities have publicly voiced opposition to the Government tendering plan. The secretary of the Amateur Swimming Association announced at an LGIU press conference that they were launching a petition among member swimmers. "We will then send samples of the petition to all other sporting governing bodies in the hope that they will follow us in a march down Whitehall".

### LEISURE DEAL RUMOURED

Westminster City Council plans to put leisure services management out to tender so observers were surprised when contract documents promised for December were suddenly withdrawn.

Rumours suggest a management buyout is being set up encouraged by the council which has failed to find ready bidders in the private sector.

Leisure workers in Westminster are being left to wonder whether there will be an in-house bid if those responsible for drawing up the specifications now follow their own private interests.

## ISS Disaster in Lincs

ISS Servisystem is proving both a financial and cleaning disaster in Lincolnshire.

In 1986-7, the first year of ISS's contract to clean the county's schools, the Council recorded an overspending of £196,700. This was in addition to £157,000 of redundancy pay for the cleaners sacked when ISS took over.

Now the Education Director has reported a further overspending in the current year of £90,000 due to deficiencies in the original specification. He admitted the Environmental Health Officer had threatened to close down specialist areas such as training kitchens in colleges if action was not taken. And he told the Education Committee that the latest overspending would have to be funded by cutting teachers and educational supplies.

The council originally claimed that it would save £500,000 over the two years of the contract.

Early last year a report by NUPE exposed poor cleaning standards by ISS and problems of high staff turnover caused by wage cuts (see PSA 27).

## Wandsworth opposes leisure tendering

Wandsworth's response to the Government consultation paper on compulsory tendering for sport and leisure services may have come as a shock to the council's ex-leader, junior minister Chope.

The council is opposed to the inclusion of leisure in the Bill because it fears the loss of local authority control over services:

- it is not clear how private contracts could be effectively supervised and monitored.
- the integrated service provided cannot be divided into recreational and educational categories, as the DOE proposes.
- policy on admissions and charges and development work have encouraged use of facilities and the council believes it should retain control over pricing, admission and opening hours
- few private sector organisations have the direct operational experience to take on council facilities
- Safety in leisure premises is "of great concern" and the council's high safety standards and the necessity of regular staff training would have to be included in any tender to be acceptable.
- private contracts would be difficult to control, particularly if council could not control prices and admissions policies — which would be "unwelcome to the private sector"



## Westminster:

# PROFIT FROM LOSS

"The disposal of bodies is very big business" according to the marketing consultants advising *Wisland Investment Group*, the current owners of three ex-Westminster Council cemeteries who managed to sell land and property worth £10 million pounds for just 15p. The Council deal has led to neglect and profiteering.

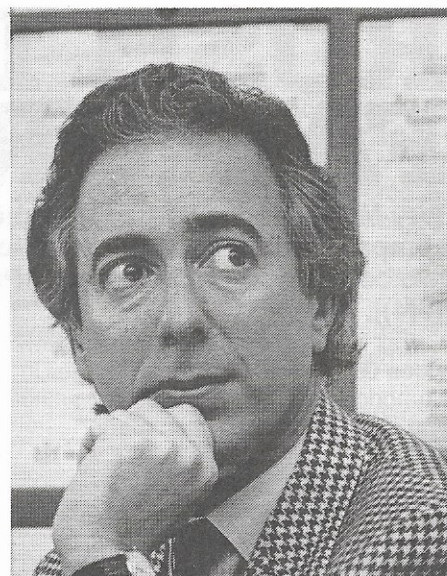
A year ago Westminster decided to sell three cemeteries in Hanwell, East Finchley and Mill Hill to a company, **Growish Ltd**, owned by Clive Lewis of Lewis & Tucker Mayfair Estate Agents. Pressure from councillors for a quick sale, to "save" £400,000 maintenance costs meant that no proper valuation of the value of the cemeteries was carried out and no enforceable covenant safeguarding the maintenance of the cemeteries was included.

As well as the three cemeteries, the deal included four houses, 12 acres of grazing land and several acres of cemetery land not yet used for graves. Within 24 hours of the sale, Lewis had parcelled up different lots and transferred them to a number of different companies. The cemeteries went to **Cemeteries Assets Ltd**, a company that was already in receivership, but had had the foresight to have the cemeteries valued at £1.25m two months before Westminster agreed the sale.

The cemeteries are now owned by Wisland Investment Group, registered in Panama and based in Switzerland. The marketing consultants were brought in by Wisland to estimate the

potential profitability of the existing graveyards: they suggest that with high profile sales team and glossy brochures they can be turned into "burial concepts" worth a £100m. They are now on the market for £2m – "an interesting investment opportunity" according to the Financial Times.

A planning application for 20 three-bed houses has been put in by **Safecrown Properties** for an area of Hanwell cemetery that does not yet have graves: Ealing Council commented that they consider the land to be protected open space. The 12 acres of grazing land owned by **Bestwood Properties**, registered in Cyprus, have been valued at £5m. One of the houses has been sold for £170,000, one valued at £300,000 and the other probably worth a similar sum. The fourth house was "discovered" to have a sitting tenant – an ex-cemeteries worker – Westminster had to pay compensation of £70,000 to Growish. There is also a number of other buildings – as yet unvalued. All of the cemeteries have land that is not yet used for graves: this could all be sold for housing development. The Council have been reported to the District



"Alive or dead, they will sell your resting place": Councillor Peter "Heartless" Hartley. As Chair of the Environment Committee he pushed the sale of the cemeteries; as Chair of Housing he is putting 9,000 council homes on the market.

Auditor.

The new owners were more interested in asset-stripping than in maintaining the graves, and Westminster did not insist on a standard of service being safeguarded. Guarantees in the original sale do not apply to new owners. Relatives have complained to the Ombudsman about the neglect and decay, and the distress caused.

More than 400 relatives crowded into a public meeting. They are demanding that Westminster buy the cemeteries back for the 15p they sold them for.

## DEVELOPERS WITHDRAW

**Regalian** have withdrawn from the barter deal sale of Walerton and Elgin estate in Westminster (see *PSA* 32).

## TENANTS REJECT BID

**Wren Properties**, formerly **Brightaf-lats**, have put in a bid, complete with glossy brochure for the Manchester overspill estate, Colshaw Farm. The first the tenants and Manchester Council knew about it was from a report in the local press. Angry tenants called a public meeting and unanimously rejected any bid for the estate by a private landlord. Manchester has rejected the bid.

Wren properties already own a block of ex-council maisonettes in Stoke-on-Trent, which are let on Shorthold tenancies. Rents are double or treble council rents, deposits are demanded excluding people on housing benefit, and no children over two are allowed. Tenancies have to be renewed every two years.



Tenants and homeless groups protest at the opening of Westminster's Home Sales Centre. 400 homes are being kept empty as part of the policy to sell nearly half the stock. Purchasers don't have to be in housing need or live in the Royal Borough; an offer of a job there is enough.



Notts:

# PROPERTY COMPANY FORCED OUT

**TENANTS** have beaten off a bid by a London-based property company to buy 1400 coal board houses in Nottinghamshire.

British Coal agreed in December to sell the houses for around £9 million to the Lancaster Housing Association – which is not registered with the Housing Corporation and is restricted by its rules to a borrowing limit of £250,000. It has only 20 flats in management.

Lancaster's chair, stockbroker David Hensher, told Mansfield MP Alan Meale that he intended to sell off the houses. And he told the tenants' federation that because many of the tenants were out of work they should be able to do their repairs voluntarily – he would consider allowing each tenants' association a budget for them to take responsibility for repairs.

The tenants had already found a consortium of four genuine housing associations who would act as socially responsible landlords. But British Coal turned down their bid of £7 million for 1830 houses even though it was backed by all the local MPs and local councils.

This meant the tenants won solid support for opposing Lancaster. They

tracked down the company's deserted office and its directors. They also took legal advice which suggested they could take a case against British Coal for failing to pay due regard to the needs of the tenants – i.e. to ensure a reasonable repairs service and proper management (the same legal duty applies to Councils selling off estates).

Lancaster has now asked to be released from the deal because they were "concerned at the tenants' opposition".

The consortium bid will be considered again after the Housing Corporation came up with an additional £1.2 million subsidy.

Lancaster's defeat in Notts comes just a year after Yorkshire tenants forced British Coal to stop selling homes off to the highest bidder at auctions (see *PSA* 27). That was followed by a Shelter report on the "new Rachmanism" caused by coal board sales in Staffs, Yorkshire and Derbyshire (see *PSA* 31).

AS WE SAY GOOD BYE TO THE YEAR  
OF THE HOMELESS AND TOAST IN  
THE YEAR OF THE ENVIRONMENT,  
LET'S AT LEAST  
HOPE THE STREETS  
BECOME A CLEANER  
PLACE TO LIVE...



## MANAGING TO SURVIVE

Sutcliffe's contract for managing Gloucestershire's school meals has been extended to the new county catering service which includes police, fire, education and social services. The centralisation of all the county's catering operations is intended to protect jobs and improve the service, and make it less vulnerable to privatisation.

When the school meals service was re-organised in 1982 under a previous Tory Council, Sutcliffe's were brought in as an alternative to closure. Union pressure ensured a legally binding agreement banning Sutcliffes or their subsidiaries from bidding for any catering tenders in the county. This was argued for on the grounds of stopping Sutcliffes using their inside knowledge for the purposes of winning competitive tenders.

Sutcliffes have one manager in school meals, and a further two or three will be seconded. The rest of the catering staff remain employees of the County.

## PRIVATE PORRIDGE

A Home Office team recently visited an Amsterdam jail where **Gardner Merchant's** Dutch subsidiary **Van Hecke Catering** provides food for 200 prisoners.

The civil servants were said to be impressed with the scope for cutting costs – mainly because caterers' wages are lower than the wages for prison officers who do the cooking in British jails.

Just before the visit there had been a two day hunger strike by prisoners in protest against the food. But Van Hecke produced a letter from one prisoner complimenting the company on their food.

Catering in Dutch prisons is shared between Van Hecke and **Aureast Catering** who both get a fixed amount for staff costs and food plus a management fee of around 15p per meal.

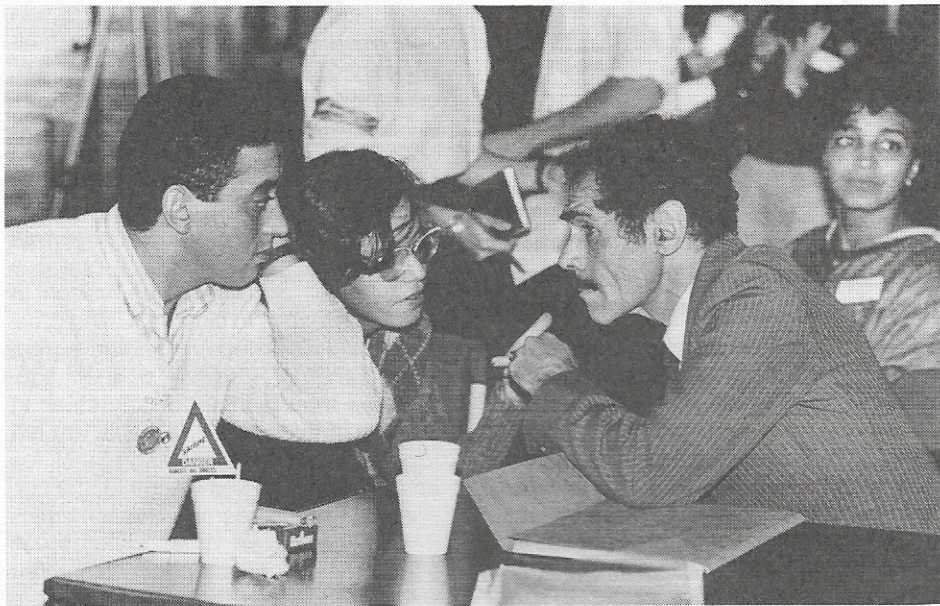
## SUTCLIFFE'S MESS

The Ministry of Defence has set up a Joint Efficiency team to look at privatising military support services in Germany: but they are concerned about the security implications. Similar proposals have been made for support services in the police force.

A number of army catering contracts have gone out to tender since an MOD report was produced for Michael Heseltine in 1984 called "Look lean". Allegations that *Sutcliffes* who won the contract for Sandhurst in September, had underestimated costs and had problems recruiting staff have not discouraged the MOD. They recently announced that they would continue to welcome tenders from Sutcliffes. And they say an army marches on its stomach!



# 'INVISIBLE WORKERS'



"The Invisible Workers" international cleaners conference in London in November brought together cleaning workers from Spain, France, Belgium, Holland, West Germany and the UK. Many were migrant workers who provide most of the cleaning workforce in large European cities. What emerged from the conference was how much experience was shared between cleaners in different countries, who are increasingly employed by the same or connected companies dominating the industry worldwide.

There was widespread experience of employers exploiting the fears and uncertain status of migrant workers, appalling terms, conditions and hazards of employment, and of the problems in getting trade union organisations to take on the needs and concerns of migrant workers – and of victories won through organisation and action. The conference produced an international Cleaning Workers Charter

United States:

## CLEANERS ORGANISING

The entry and growing dominance of European-owned multinationals has transformed the cleaning industry in the United States over the last few years. In response to these developments, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) of North America is working to strengthen its international links. When Hank Alborelli of the SEIU visited Britain recently he talked to Public Service Action.

**Hawley Group** entered the US in 1984 by buying up southern based Oxford Services and within 3 years had become the largest cleaning contractor in the US, through a progression of take-overs, with a total of some 60,000 cleaners. The Pritchards takeover alone added 10,000 to its workforce. It continues to trade under the names of its subsidiaries to maintain a local or US identity. Hawley has been making attempts to take over another US company **ABM**. It has also moved into the electronic monitoring and security field in a similar way, where it now has 12-13,000 employees. (see page 3)

Danish-owned **ISS** is now the second largest cleaning company in the US and the world, having entered the US market by the purchase of a US owned company, Prudential. It has some 15,000 cleaners in the US.

Other multinational cleaning contractors doing business in the US are:

- **Swan Services**, owned by Swedish based **Electrolux**.
- **Pedus**, based in West Germany.
- **Temco** which trades in Western Europe as **Euroclean**.
- **ServiceMaster Industries**, US owned giant, now bidding in the UK for NHS contracts.
- **ARA Holding Company**, US owned.

The SEIU was founded in 1903 by migrant workers and has a long tradition of representing black and migrant workers. It represents some 15 per cent of Hawley cleaners, 60 per cent of ISS cleaners, 45 per cent of Pedus cleaners and 95 per cent of Temco cleaners.

The degree of union organisation among cleaners varies enormously from 99 per cent of cleaners in New York City to nothing elsewhere. Gaining union recognition, whether through workplace ballot or a straight demand, is always difficult. The response from Hawley is invariably a straight refusal to deal with the union. ISS, on the other hand, whose workforces in both Brazil and Denmark are totally unionised, is sensitive to the threat of action and tends to respond more amenably. The union has good links with the ISS unions in other parts of the world.

The SEIU has a strategy of detailed research and planning before moving in to unionise in a particular city. They carry out a "community inventory", with a union researcher working with rank and file members. Information is compiled and contacts made with local media, employers' and community organisations, and churches. Profiles are built up of office buildings, including owners and tenants. They approach local groups and organisations to

see if they can help, and target public buildings as well as making direct contact with cleaners.

When the union organised in Atlanta, Georgia, the first target was the city stadium, an important focus of civic pride and cleaned by Hawley for three or four years through its Oxford Services subsidiary. The union signed the vast majority of the cleaners, almost all black and on part time work with poverty pay. When Hawley refused recognition the union appealed to the city administration, also largely black, including the mayor, Andrew Young, and threatened to picket events at the stadium. The City's response was to fire Hawley and take the work in house, employing the cleaners full time on better pay.

The last 25 years has seen a change in the office cleaning industry from a predominance of directly employed workers to contract cleaners now doing some 80 per cent of the work. Now the SEIU is arguing that the building owner is co-employer of cleaners with the cleaning company and in its selection of bids for the cleaning contract indirectly sets the conditions of the workers.

This argument was tested in the case of some 150 cleaners employed by the Mellon Bank in three office buildings in Pittsburgh. The cleaners were the only unionised workers for the bank with good pay and conditions, far better than the bank tellers. The bank decided to contract out the cleaning with the promise of no changes in the agreement with the union. The winning tender was from a non-union contractor who employed cleaners on minimum wages, with no health insurance or pension and no holidays. SEIU sued the bank on the grounds that it was the joint employer: after 2 years the bank settled out of court and workers won back their former wages and conditions.



## British Rail

# FINE FARE FOR MANAGEMENT

The existing management looks likely to win control of most of the 342 Travellers Fare buffets and kiosks now British Rail has agreed to go ahead with full privatisation of its profitable catering division.

Travellers Fare managers won control of 68 of the first 96 buffets put out to tender last year. Private operators won only 21 of the outlets with a further seven withdrawn from the sale.

BR has already handed over on-train catering to private sector groups, including **Trusthouse Forte** and **Laird Catering**, who use land-based kitchens to provide cook-chill food.

The remaining buffets and kiosks are expected to be offered as single units with the existing management scooping up most of them.

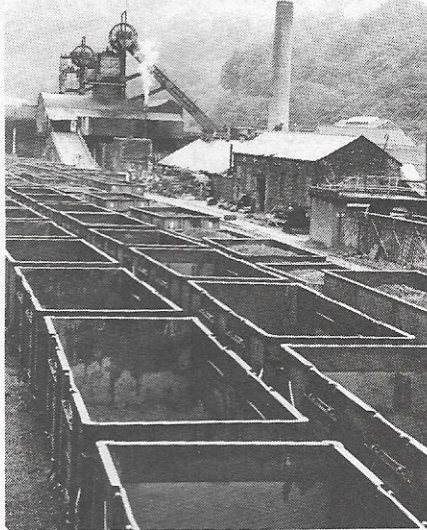
The National Union of Railwaymen represents the 3,500 staff working in Travellers Fare. The union is concerned full-scale privatisation of the catering subsidiary will see a repeat of the experience with the sale of BR hotels with a constantly "shuffling" ownership which cannot be kept track of.

Travellers Fare last year made profits of £5.5 million on sales of £67.7 million. Travellers Fare also trades under the names of Casey Jones, Upper Crust, Healthy Treats, Quicksnack, Coffee Shop, Hot Favourites and Pizza Works.

### BREL SALE PLANNED

**British Rail Engineering Ltd**, BR's main suppliers of rolling stock, is to be sold this year and the National Union of Railwaymen believes another 4,000 jobs are to be axed.

The only potential buyer known so far is BREL managing director Peter Holdstock, who says he will lead a management buyout. Private companies have shown no interest despite the government recently "seeding" BREL's Derby plant with an order for 204



sprinters.

BREL has four plants – two in Derby, with one in Crewe and York – employing 10,700 workers. Six years ago it employed 34,000 producing most of BR's rolling stock and equipment.

The company is to be sold as a single business with only its Horwich foundry to be sold separately.

The NUR recently revealed a confidential BREL plan to cut 4,000 jobs which was refuted by the management as an old plan that they were no longer considering now the company was to be privatised. The union points out the management preparing to buy the company was the same that produced the plan for more job cuts.

The BREL sell-off is part of BR's running down of its rolling stock at the same time as the private sector is showing greater interest in investing in rental

wagons.

Although rail freight is now only ten per cent of the total freight market, the proportion carried in private wagons has grown strongly. A large part of the BR fleet is committed to moving coal from pithead stocks to power stations and an estimated 80 per cent of non-coal cargo is now carried in private wagons.

Britain's largest private wagon rental company (with 3,400 wagons) is **Procor**, recently sold for £29 million to **Groupe CAIB**, a subsidiary of the Australian transport group **Brambles**.

**Tiphook**, the fast-growing container and road trailer rental group, set up a rail subsidiary last year. It has 450 wagons.

Other companies include **Tiger Rail** (790 wagons); **Standard Railway Wagons**, including **Raillease** (710 wagons); **MAT Transauto** (430) and **VTG** (310). A number of major companies, particularly oil companies, also run large private rail wagon fleets on their own account.

### UNIONS PLAN FIGHT

Railway and mining unions are to join forces for the fight against the privatisation of the coal and electricity supply industries.

A joint meeting of the executives of the NUR, National Union of Miners, the train drivers union ASLEF and the pits supervisors union NACODS is planned for February. The meeting will discuss a strategy to combat the effects of privatisation.

Part of the impetus for the meeting is rumours that privatisation of electricity supply could include attempts to include local coal pits and rail lines as part of a package of power privatisation.

## Buses:

# ENDLESS EMBARRASSMENT

Bids by investment company **Endless Holdings** to become the largest owner of former **National Bus Company** subsidiaries has further undermined Tory myths about competition and free markets.

Endless Holdings has a £10 million bid in for **Midland Red North** in Staffordshire, the **North Western Road Car Company** in Merseyside and **London Country South West** in Surrey. It already has a subsidiary in Salisbury and owns the Bournemouth coach firm **Shamrock and Rambler**.

The company has a complex web of related companies and subsidiaries including substantial US holdings covering clean-

ing, contract labour and engineering. Its main financier is the **United Kingdom Temperance and Provident Institution**, which provided almost £7 million for Endless' American purchases. Endless is based in Salisbury and owned by Ray McEnhill.

Late last year **Allied Bus Services** was stopped from bidding for **Midland Red North**, the **East Midland Bus Company** and the **Lincolnshire Road Car Company**

after it was alleged that its chairman Allan Clements was connected with Endless Holdings. The movement towards monopoly proved too much for some Tories with MP Gerald Howarth complaining the sale of **Midland Red North** to **Allied Bus** would create "a private busing monopoly from the Welsh borders to the Wash".

When tendering reopened Endless put in three direct bids for NBC subsidiaries.

Earlier Tory councillors in Surrey had joined a lobby against the sell-off of eight garages and head office owned by the NBC subsidiary **London Country South West**.



## More News

### PRIVATE RAILWAY PLANNED

The construction and mining firm, **Costain Group**, has presented the government with 3 major project proposals including a £3 billion private railway linking the Channel Tunnel to Reading, London, and East Anglia. Another scheme consists of privatising the M25 orbital motorway and building a double-deck motorway on stilts 60 feet above the existing road. The cost would be recouped from tolls. A third scheme involves a motorway and car parks under the Thames. No prizes for more crazy ideas. But Costain and their financial advisers have other motives – they want to ensure that the private sector has a major role in financing, building, and operating all future major transport and infrastructure schemes.

### SCOTS BUS SALE

The **Scottish Transport Group** is being considered for privatisation by the Government.

The transport group has 3500 buses, 7500 drivers, 28 ferries and 780 crew and support staff. It is one of three public corporations directly accountable to the Scottish Office (the other two are Scotland's two electricity boards).

### KEEPING AN EYE ON BT

British Telecom is using contractors to do urgent engineering work despite opposition from the National Communications Union.

Despite union representations, BT has rundown engineering staffing levels in the past three years. When the backlog of work reached crisis point around the middle of last year BT responded by bringing in outside contractors.

In each case of the use of contractors the NCU wants the district management to reveal the number of contract staff employed, the work they do and provide adequate supervision. The key NCU drive however, is to get management to commit itself to a date for the withdrawal of contract staff.

### CAUGHT

Two directors caught under a new computerised watchdog system checking applicants for shares in privatised companies were both fined £36,000. The two admitted 24 charges of making multiple applications for shares in British Gas, Rolls Royce, British Telecom and TSB.

### AI JOBS CHOPPED

Northern Ireland's Agriculture Department is to privatise its Cattle Artificial Insemination Service with the loss of up to 100 jobs. Eighty-five inseminators are to be made compulsorily redundant despite the department's claim that staff would be able to get jobs when it appointed a new supplier.

## National Freight

# ANTI-UNION DRIVE

The National Freight Corporation, jewel in the crown of the government's worker-shareholder privatised companies, is making a concerted effort to de-recognise the white collar union the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA).

The NFC has succeeded in derecognising white collar staff at its **Waste Management** (refuse contracts in Wirral, Taunton Deane), **Pickfords Travel**, **British Road Services**, **Fashionflow**, and **Scottish Road Services** subsidiaries.

De-recognition at Pickfords Travel has included clerical and administrative staff as well as middle and senior managers. TSSA picketed the recent NFC annual shareholders' meeting. Whilst trying to recruit members the TSSA has written to all unions asking them to boycott Pickfords business travel services.

The company's tactic is to go over the heads of the trade union directly balloting employees to elect non-union representatives.

However, NFC's plan backfired at its Bedford headquarters. TSSA got agreement that the ballot should be carried out by ACAS and that any employees not voting should be counted as support



for the TSSA. In the event less than half the staff voted and 42.5 per cent of those who did voted to retain union representation. Another 40 per cent voted for a mix of union and non-union representation. TSSA are to have further negotiations with NFC to resolve the de-recognition dispute. The TGWU organise NFC drivers and other workers.

## Electricity and Coal:

# PRIVATE ENERGY

While the government manoeuvres towards the sale of the electricity and coal industries, private companies are making inroads on the margins of the publicly-owned energy sector.

Former National Coal Board boss Michael Eaton, who resigned when Ian MacGregor blocked his path to the board chairmanship after the miners' strike, now runs two private coal mines in South Wales for **Tumble Anthracite Ltd**. The company was formed with investment from the Miller Group of companies which is involved in civil engineering and building but also has a Yorkshire-based mining division.

Coal Minister Michael Spicer has promised to review government regulations which strictly control the number of miners employed underground at any given time.

Eaton has substantial family business interests as well as running the two mines, the Dynant Fach colliery and the Ystrad pit, both near Ammanford. Both mines produce anthracite coal which is in high demand, particularly from users like hospitals and local authorities which need high quality burning coal for large buildings and schools.



Miners in the two pits belong to the National Union of Mineworkers and get about £30 a week more than Coal Board miners but work around the clock with a different system of mining.

Another private mine owner, Angelo Casfikis, plans to buy three disused power stations, refurbish them at a cost of £85 million and sell the power produced directly to area electricity boards. The boards are to be offered a stake in the company **Independent Power and Energy** set up for the scheme.

The three stations are near Newport, in South Wales, Connah's Quay, in North Wales and Barrow in Cumbria.



## BP takeover bid

# BATTLE FOR BRITTOIL

**BP has made a £2.5bn takeover bid for Britoil, which owns the vast North Sea oil reserves and other interests of the old British National Oil Corporation.**

Britoil is opposed to the bid. The US oil company **Atlantic Richfield (ARCO)** has built up a 24 per cent share stake and late last year reached agreement on an expansion plan for Britoil in return for a 49.9 per cent stake. However, BP rapidly built up 29.9 per cent of Britoil's shares before launching its takeover bid. In an apparent turnaround ARCO has agreed to sell its stake to BP, giving the latter a 54 per cent controlling interest.

Britoil was privatised in 1982. Following the sale of the remaining shares three years later the government retained a "golden share" which is designed to stop control of the company changing hands to unwelcome companies. Despite a Treasury warning that the government would exercise its powers under the "golden share", the City's Takeover Panel approved BP's bid just prior to Xmas.

Chancellor Nigel Lawson has since refused to give an undertaking that the government will exercise its powers. BP is clearly challenging the government's use of the "golden share" which could turn out to be tin-plated. If BP proceeded with the takeover, the government could, at least in theory, control Britoil's management but the directors

would be responsible, by company law, to BP's shareholders.



## KUWAIT BUYS UP

Since the BP share sale fiasco last October the **Kuwait Investment Office** has built up a 19 per cent share stake in BP. The KIO has pledged not to seek control of BP claiming it bought the shares as a long term investment. However, if BP succeeds in its Britoil takeover and the KIO increases its stake in BP and seeks partial control, then Britain's North Sea oil assets could end up being controlled from the Middle East.

The KIO purchases helped to keep BP's partly paid share price hovering above the Bank of England 70p per share "safety net" (see **PSA** No 32). The Bank had to spend £27m buying back shares from 11,000 shareholders by the time the "offer" closed on 6 January 1988.

## BCal chairperson makes £3m share profit

# BA: LONE FLYER

**British Airways won the takeover battle for the British Caledonian Group with a £250m cash bid ending BCal's attempted partial share deal with the Scandinavian airline SAS. The deal makes a mockery of the Tories' claims of encouraging "competition" leaving BA as Britain's sole long haul carrier.**

BA had originally offered £257m before the collapse of share prices. The takeover was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission which approved the deal with certain conditions on routes. BA renewed its bid with a £119m offer but had to more than double it to gain control of BCal. Although the Air Transport Users Committee and other groups argued that the

BCal-SAS partnership was in the interests of passengers the government found the deal hard to swallow because SAS is 50 per cent state owned by Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

At least 2,000 jobs will be lost. Although BCal chairperson Sir Adam Thomson lost his job he made £3m profit from share dealings on his last day in office. On the same day as BA's final £12.15 per share offer Thomson exercised options on 160,000 BCal shares at £1.00. He already owned a further 90,925 shares. Three other BCal directors exercised their option to 165,000 shares on the same day. They received a total of £6.5m for the sale of their shares.

## More News

### NEWCASTLE: School meals mass meeting

Over 140 union reps from school kitchens in Newcastle attended a mass meeting during the Xmas school holidays. The meeting heard about the implications of the **Local Government Bill** on school meals and jobs and received progress reports from union reps on the join union/management service based working parties.

Education Convenor Tommy Gallagher told **PSA** that since the mass meeting he and the deputy convenor had visited 34 schools for further meetings. One rep had tape recorded the mass meeting and others had reported back in detail.

Management have agreed to a union mass meeting being held at the Civic Centre every school holiday. The next one is planned for 22 February. The convenors found it difficult to time meetings at schools when all the school meals staff were present and not disrupt meals. Similar mass meetings are planned for school cleaners.

### DLO FIGHTS BACK

The Highways DLO in Tory-run Lincolnshire is fighting back against the Council's rabid privatisation ideology. One of the biggest DLOs in the East Midlands, the DLO has succeeded in keeping over 500 jobs by modernising its equipment and introducing a bonus scheme with value to workers as well as management. Its stated objectives include providing a stable framework for the employment of manpower and assets, and sustaining the quality of work.

### PRISON DEALS

Construction companies and property developers are preparing for a government decision to allow private companies to build and operate prisons. **Tarmac** and the **Midland Bank** have formed a consortium to finance and build prisons and provide ancillary services eg catering. The construction firms **Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons Ltd** and **John Mowlem & Co plc** have formed a joint venture to build and operate prisons. One of Britain's largest property developers, **Rosehaugh**, has started discussions with the security firm **Chubb** about a similar scheme.



## PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION

### Information

#### **CLEANING THE LONDON UNDERGROUND:** An Investigation into London Regional Transport Cleaning Services

Based on interviews with 100 cleaners and 50 station managers, the pamphlet describes the deterioration of the cleaning on the underground, the low wages, cuts in staff and frequencies and the effects on passenger and staff safety.

The research took place two months before the Kings Cross Fire but that event illustrated the importance of such "invisible" services: the same sort of thing has happened with hospital cleaners and their contribution to patient care. Five years ago, Kings Cross had 11 night-time cleaners and 3 rail workers with some cleaning duties. At the time of the fire, only three night-time cleaners and two-and-a-half daytime cleaners were working at Kings Cross.

Although 80% of stations (203) are cleaned by **London Underground Cleaning Services (LULCS)**, and only 75 stations by private contractors, unions predict that LULCS will have disappeared altogether in a year or two.

The contractors are the familiar multinationals: **Pritchards** and **General Builders Maintenance Ltd**, both part of **ADT Ltd** (Hawley Group), **Initial Services** and **ISC Exclusive** both part of **BET** and **Academy Cleaning Services**, a subsidiary of **Securiguard Group**.

Available from CILT, Tress House, 3 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NT. £2.50 + 38p p&p - cheques payable to CILT Research Unit.

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 26th March 1988  
12 noon - 4pm  
Hampden Community Centre  
Ossulton St, London NW1

Food, drink, discussion, creche

Details of affiliation,  
nominations for management and  
meeting from SCAT. Tel: 01-253 3627.

#### **PATIENTS OR PROFITS: A**

report on competitive tendering in London's Hospitals

Watchdog group London Health Emergency has produced a detailed survey of the impact of privatisation and competitive tendering on the capital's hospitals. This 48-page A5 pamphlet examines in detail the political pressures behind privatisation and the ways the government has made it easier for private companies to win contracts. The second section gives a district breakdown of private and "in-house" contracts where tendering has occurred, with examples of particular contract failures. There are also profiles of four of the companies holding most private contracts in the NHS.

Copies are available at £3.50 each (£2.50 a copy for orders of 10 or more) from London Health Emergency, 335 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. Tel: 01-833 3020.

#### **HEALTHY MEALS OR PRIVATE DEALS: A video from NUPE**

NUPE is to release a 15-minute video based on their report last year comparing school meals in Birmingham and Hereford and Worcester (see **PSA** 29).

It focuses on a pilot project in a Birmingham school which is helping to preserve jobs and improve job satisfaction by providing extended services during the day. The improved service includes breakfasts, latch-key teas and lunches for pensioners. A points system is used to encourage children to choose healthy meals.

By contrast Hereford and Worcester privatised their school meals in 1984 and contractors **Compass** and **Maintable** are criticised for high prices and low quality.

NUPE hopes to have copies available at £10 each from the end of February from NUPE Education, 20 Grand Depot Road, Woolwich, London SE18 6SF (tel: 01-852 2842).

#### **ARE YOU BEING SERVED?: A comparison of services, spending and employment in Lambeth and Wandsworth.**

The neighbouring South London boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth are a battleground for competing visions for public services and local government. This report usefully chronicles the effects of privatisation in Wandsworth on its workers and users of council services as well as Lambeth's struggles to maintain its services and direct labour force despite ratecapping and other government attacks.

Copies are available from the Popular Planning Project, Clapham and Battersea Adult Education (Henery Thornton Branch), Elms Road, Clapham, London SW4. (Part of a seven-leaflet set available for £1.50 each.)

#### **WATER CONFERENCE**

The Water Industry Unions Committee is organising a conference for trade unionists and a wide range of community groups to rally opposition to the government's plans to privatise the water industry in England and Wales.

The conference is to be held in London at the Royal Commonwealth Society on April 27. More information is available from Alan Jackson, Secretary, Water Anti-Privatisation Campaign, NALGO, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1 9AJ. Tel: 01-388 2366.

#### **LIBRARY CAMPAIGN**

The proposal by Richard Luce, Arts Minister, that libraries should have to charge and could be privatised, as well as cuts and increasing interference in what they may and may not stock are the issues at the heart of the Libraries Campaign. They held a Conference at the end of January and are raising funds for campaigning over the next two years. More details from The Library Campaign, c/o The Central Library, Surrey Street, Sheffield S11 2X2.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION

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