

PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION

Action
Organising
Information
Contractors
New threats

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AN ANTI-PRIVATISATION NEWSLETTER FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

No 6 Feb 1984

Contractors
'value for money'!

More FINES & FAILURES

Heavy fines and disastrous failures — that is the increasing record of private contractors up and down the country. Complaints are mounting against poor quality, waste and inefficiency of contractors who have won school, hospital support service, refuse and other public service contracts. Most of these are not initial teething problems — some contractors have had over a year to get things right but still can't manage it. Nor have the complaints been levelled at only one or two contractors but all those firms which make wild claims about their work and efficiency. School governors, parent-teacher associations, tenants' organisations and other user groups are joining with the trade union movement in exposing the failures of the private market and demanding improved public services run by direct labour.

● Between May and October last year Taskmasters were heavily fined for failures on all four parts of its street cleaning and refuse contract with Merton. Street sweeping fines were £19,920, refuse £1,341, car park sweeping £1,547, and waste paper recovery £805 — a total of £23,613. Taskmasters claimed they could do the work with 99 workers plus 4 'spare'. They now employ 121 plus 20 'spare', a 37% increase. They have also been forced to change their working schedules twice. The firms original proposal to concentrate on mechanical sweepers has been a total failure and they have had to cancel orders for equipment and sweep all the shopping centres manually. A council report in December 1983 stated that 'the service is still not yet completely satisfactory' after more than a year.

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LET'S CHANGE
1984
FOR TENANTS

1984 could go down as the year that Hackney's tenants finally took control of their own housing services — and ended the system which for too long has deprived them of their right to decent homes.

IN SHOREDITCH, TENANTS AND BUILDING WORKERS HAVE TAKEN OVER ST. JOHN'S AREA BASE. THEY BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER THEY CAN IMPROVE THINGS.

THEY NEED YOUR SUPPORT! For further details ring The Federation of Hackney Tenants Associations on 739 2147

...above all, join your local TA in FIGHTING FOR A BETTER HACKNEY!

WORKERS & TENANTS TAKEOVER

Tenants and building workers in Hackney, London have joined together to seize control of the council's housing service. In an early morning coup on 16th January they moved into the St John's Area Base, a joint housing office and building depot set up to provide management and maintenance services to 2000 council homes. The initiative came from local tenants angry at the failure of the repairs service and found ready support from the building unions concerned at the increasing quantity of work being put out to contract, despite Hackney's public commitment to direct labour. Tenants and building workers are now running the base and requests for repairs have been pouring in. The council's refusal to continue supplies to the depot led to a further takeover of the stores of building materials. The council tried to undermine the action by writing to all local tenants telling them not to use the base, but a public meeting called for Sunday 29th January was attended by over 200 tenants. They gave enthusiastic support to the occupation and said that in the last fortnight they'd had repairs done that they had waited years for. The tenants have now set up a committee to run the area base and give support to the occupation.

More information from Fed. of Hackney TAs, 380 Old St, London EC1.

CONTRACTORS Fines & Failures

FROM PAGE 1

● Peter and Prudence Morgan put a large bundle of laundry in a white sheet on their doorstep in Oxfordshire. It was marked 'laundry' and had a laundry book beside it. It was some 40 feet from the bin. Along came Pritchard's refuse collectors (they took over the South Oxfordshire contract early in 1983) and slung the laundry into the dustcart. The Morgans rushed after the truck and caught up with it as it emptied its contents at the tip — only to see all their laundry shredded to pieces. They sent a bill for £108.75 to Pritchards. Six months went by and still no compensation. Pritchards only agreed to pay after the Sunday Express took up the story and confronted their head office in London.

● Clear evidence that private laundries cannot meet the requirements demanded by the NHS has come from a recent quality test undertaken by Cheltenham Health District. Its laundry is done by **Sunlight Services Group**. The test showed:

Pillow cases: Out of 101 samples only 16 met the quality control standard, ie 84.15% reject level as against the recommended 5% (in the contract). Sheets: Out of 100 samples only 27 articles met the standard, ie 73% reject level as against the recommended 5%.

The instrument used in the tests was regularly tested and is approved by the DHSS, the British Textile Rental Association and the Association of British Launderers and Cleaners. The Health Authorities Supplies Officer admitted that laundry from Sunlight had been found to be inadequately cleaned on previous occasions. It had been returned for re-cleaning to prevent the risk of infection.

● A survey by parents at the 400 pupil Morley Memorial Primary School in Cambridge revealed that about 40% of cleaning tasks are not being completed. **Initial Cleaning Services** took over last year when the county privatised school cleaning. The Morley school governors have told the county council of their "complete dissatisfaction" with Initial. They have complained of the lack of on-site supervision, inadequate training and poor standards. The governors accuse Initial of breaking its contract with the county and demand a return to direct labour. The chairperson of the governors supported privatisation at the time but has changed his opinion having seen it in practice.

● Property developer Michael Hughes and his company Marque Securities bought three tower blocks, the notori-

ous 'piggeries' from the then Liberal controlled Liverpool City Council four years ago. The firm intended to convert the 210 maisonettes into single person 'luxury' flats for sale. Last year the council gave the firm a three month deadline to start work on the flats. The scheme, the first and most heavily publicised sale of a council estate, has now collapsed and the council have repossessed the flats.



● The Dudley Teachers Association (NUT) recently carried out a survey on the standard of school cleaning by private contractors in 106 of the 146 schools in the authority. 64% of schools reported worse or far worse standards by contractors compared to the experience of direct labour. Dissatisfaction was spread across all three contractors — **Taskmaster**, **Office Cleaning Services (OCS)** and **Initial Cleaning Services (ICS)**. Asked whether all areas of the school were being well cleaned by the contractors 75% of schools reported NO. The survey also asked for comments. Here are a few examples: "Floors, table tops and sinks are dirty. Toilets particularly smelly." (First school).

"There is a general scarcity of cleaning materials. As far as we ascertain the same mop is used for toilet floors and through the school." (Primary)
"Often rooms are not touched because (a) not enough time, (b) not enough cleaners, (c) not enough equipment." (Secondary)

● Filthy conditions in a school forced the headmaster to close parts of Bushey Middle School in Merton. **Provincial Cleaning Services** (part of the Hawley Group — see PSA no. 4) had taken over cleaning a month earlier after Academy Cleaning Services were sacked. Provincial had promised to sort out the problems during the half term holiday. However, the headmaster Norman Start said "The standard of cleaning in this school is definitely below what I would regard as an acceptable level". Classroom bins had not been emptied, broken glass was found on the stairs, and desks were covered in dust.

● Contractors have been thrown out of the Orleans Park School by Tory controlled Richmond council in south London. The work has reverted to direct labour after the experiment.

● "This Council views with concern the standard of service and the large number of complaints provoked by **Exclusive Cleaning Services Ltd** since the start of the contract for street cleaning in Ealing". This resolution was approved by Tory controlled Ealing Council on 29th November 1983. One of the Tories, Councillor J. D. Green, described Exclusive as "grossly incompetent and inefficient". Exclusive were fined £18,000 in the first month of the contract. In the first 4 weeks of the contract they only managed to carry out 69% of the work they were contracted to do. The following two weeks their performance was still only 75% of the contract. "The performance on the twice weekly, weekly and fortnightly street cleansing schedules are significantly below the average figures quoted above" stated a council report. Another report on the 24th January, 1984, by the Council's Chief Engineer states "There has been some improvement in the contractor's performance on fortnightly sweeping in residential areas; however, the contractor's achievements in residential streets continues to cause concern".

● Over 60 complaints a week are made against **Pritchard's** refuse collection in South Oxfordshire — far higher than when it was done by direct labour. Only ten of the council's original workforce are still working for Pritchards — 20 out of the original 58 council workers were offered jobs.

● A Warwick District Council experiment in privatising sports facilities at Abbey Fields, Kenilworth, run by a firm called **Supercare** has failed dismally. Numerous complaints concerned the absence of attendants (the contractor only turned up when they thought they could make sufficient income to make it worthwhile) and vandalism to bowling greens and tennis courts. The council is to revert to direct labour.

● **Exclusive's** refuse contract in Tandridge is in trouble. The Director of Technical Services, Peter Hoskins reported to a recent council meeting that there had been a deterioration in the service over the past three months and Exclusive were told to "re-instate levels of service". There was evidence that "they don't completely empty bins, they don't replace lids, they don't close gates, they tip rubbish in people's gardens".

● A private contractor employed by Lincolnshire County Council's Property Management Committee was paid £1,600 to re-roof a farmhouse in a conservation area. The council's direct labour organisation had to completely re-do the work.

ROYAL ORDNANCE workers fight sell-off

On 16th January work stopped at the 11 Royal Ordnance Factories in protest at the Government's privatisation plans. After last autumn's half-hearted quickly defeated attempted to prevent the factories' industrial union organising for this fight, the day of action saw pickets, marches and rallies at all the factories and a lobby of Parliament by some 600 workers. It was timed for the second reading of the Ordnance Factories and Military Services Bill which changes the ROFs from trading fund to company act status and give Defence Secretary Heseltine power to decide on the manner and timing of privatisation. A total of 19,000 jobs including MOD Research and Development are to be transferred out of the civil service, forming half the total planned cut in civil service manpower by 1988. In this Bill for the first time the Government has rid itself of its obligation to make redundancy payments to workers forced out of the civil service, and places pension rights and future terms and conditions of employment at risk.

Privatisation will almost certainly mean the break up of the new company, possible closure of some factories and a loss to the public revenue after the initial one-off profit from sale (expected to be less than the ROFs profits just for 1983.) There is widespread concern over the loss of public control over arms production and even the Tories are unenthusiastic about the Bill — the Government side ran out of speakers in the second reading debate. The unions are hoping that they will at least win some changes at the committee stage to improve the transfer provisions for their members.

Phillip Wolmuth



I DON'T LIKE IT ANYMORE
THAN YOU DO, SON, BUT BETTER
THE DEVIL YOU KNOW



NATIONAL
Girobank

The government recently confirmed that it is considering plans to privatise the National Girobank which is part of the Post Office. This will be difficult to achieve without privatising parts or all of the 1500 main and 21,000 sub-post offices around the country. The government has also set up a Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry into the Post Office's letter service. The inquiry team includes Prof. Stephen Littlechild, author of a government report on BT pricing policy after it is sold off and a known rightwinger. Others include a director of Rio Tinto-Zinc and the general manager of Standard Life Assurance. This inquiry could well lead to further cuts and proposals to hive-off parts of the service. It represents another shift in government policy — privatisation of the Post Office was never mentioned in either the 1979 or 1983 Tory election manifestos.

AND POST OFFICE SALE THREATENED

The Post office has just lost its contract with British Telecom to deliver telephone directories in England. The work has gone to four firms, Ben Johnson Ltd, Paragon Marketing, G.B. Directories Services and Distribution Media Sales. They are likely to use cheap casual labour as they do with distributing advertising literature through letterboxes. The Post Office did win contracts for distribution in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These areas are 87% rural and of little interest to the profit seeking private agencies.

The contracts have already been signed but the Union of Communication Workers has meetings with the Post Office and they are to have joint meetings with BT to try to win the work back when the contracts expire.

More News

ASSET STRIPPED

Remember the National Enterprise Board? Now renamed the British Technology Group (BTG) it has been stripped of most of its assets. Sales of subsidiaries, associated companies and share stakes in other firms, a total of 51 companies, totalled £121m with another £100m of assets still to be sold. The City has exploited these sales. In one case alone BTG sold its 26% stake in Systems Designers International to financiers Ivory and Sime's Independent Investment Trust and the Mars Pension Fund for £1.2m in 1981. Twenty months later the value of these shares had increased threefold after the company was floated on the Stock Exchange. They are now worth over 8 times what the financiers paid for them.

LABOUR CONTRACTS

Labour controlled Strathclyde Regional Council have given a one year 'management advisory service' contract to Grandmet Catering Services for the council's staff catering. The Glasgow headquarters and Renfrew sub-region office catering are already privatised. Other offices are supplied by direct labour. The council examined various options including handing all the work over to contractors which would have meant 55 redundancies. NUPE argued that the council never fully explored the benefits of converting all the catering to direct labour. This is borne out by respective figures for food costs as a percentage of income, gross profit and uptake of meals which show that the catering at Hamilton (direct labour) compares better than Headquarters (contractor).

BETTER BY DIRECT LABOUR

South West Thames Regional Health Authority recently carried out a feasibility study on contracting out the maintenance of its vehicle fleet. Its 1070 vehicles are currently maintained largely in-house at 21 vehicle workshops by 72 staff. The results of the evaluation of four workshops shows an overwhelming advantage in favour of the in-house service with contracting-out likely to result in a lowering of the condition and availability of the vehicle fleet and increasing overall total costs for vehicle maintenance. A summary of the report and conclusions can be obtained from Mike Taylor, Area Officer, NUPE, Britannia House, 960 High Road, London N.12. tel. 01-446 0061.

Medway

We're people not pound notes

Domestic staff at All Saints' Hospital in Chatham were on strike for 5 weeks at the end of last year in a fight to save their jobs and the service they provide. Medway Health Authority was the first to put all domestic services in hospitals and clinics out to tender, after 18 years of management by *Crothalls* (who made an estimated annual £100,000 profit), though domestic staff are directly employed by the NHS. DHSS pressure during tendering caused the DHA to drop its original insistence on *Whitley* terms and conditions, and in the end *Exclusive*, not *Crothalls*, won the new contract.

The strike at All Saints' was part of a vigorous and well supported campaign against privatisation in Medway. PSA talked to Gaye Joyce, NUPE shop steward.

PSA: *When and why did the action start?*

GJ: It started on November 9th, the day after the DHA meeting which was supposed to decide on the tenders, but it deferred the decision until December. There was a lot of anger among the staff and some of them started taking unofficial action, walking off the wards. We called a mass meeting and all the staff voted to come out on strike. We were fighting for the in-house tender to be accepted — as the best of a bad deal. Even the in-house tender involved a cut of 500 hours, but if we got them to accept it we could fight about the cuts afterwards.

PSA: *Can you tell us about the action?*

GJ: All 67 of the Domestics were involved. None of them apart from me had ever taken industrial action before, not even during the pay dispute, but they were really militant. They didn't even want to provide emergency cover — though in the end we did provide 2½ hours a day to children's, geriatric and maternity wards. We kept a picket line going for the whole 5 weeks and were joined at times by other local workers including NALGO, the NUM and Grain Power Station workers. We hired a minibus to visit other workplaces in Kent to get publicity and support for our action. We also visited other workers taking action at Hayes Cottage Hospital and at Leamington Spa.

PSA: *Did you get support from other staff at the hospital?*

GJ: Yes. We were backed by everyone including the ward sisters and ward clerks who encouraged us to stay out, and on the DHA all the doctors defended the loyalty and high standards of domestic staff and argued for an in-house service.

PSA: *When did you go back to work and why?*

GJ: On 13th December the DHA decided to accept the tender from *Exclusive*. *Exclusive* got the contract for 4 out of 6 hospitals and all the clinics. The other two hospitals are staying in-house. One of those, Medway hospital has a history of militant trade union action and we think that was important. We know that

the *Exclusive* tender wasn't the cheapest although we were never shown the others, but they offered savings of over half a million pounds over the in-house tender — and offered to bus workers in from outside across picket lines if there was ever an industrial dispute.

We went back to work on 19th December because we had inside information that we'd face the sack if we didn't. A lot of the women had redundancy money to come and would lose it if they were sacked. There was a lot of bad feeling — no-one wanted to go back. The members voted to go back until the redundancy notices were served and then to go back out on strike.

PSA: *Do you think that will happen?*

GJ: I don't know. Management seems to be trying to get round it by issuing the notices individually at different times according to length of service, instead of everyone getting 90 day notices which we've argued for.

PSA: *What's the deal for staff with *Exclusive*?*

GJ: After the redundancy notices are

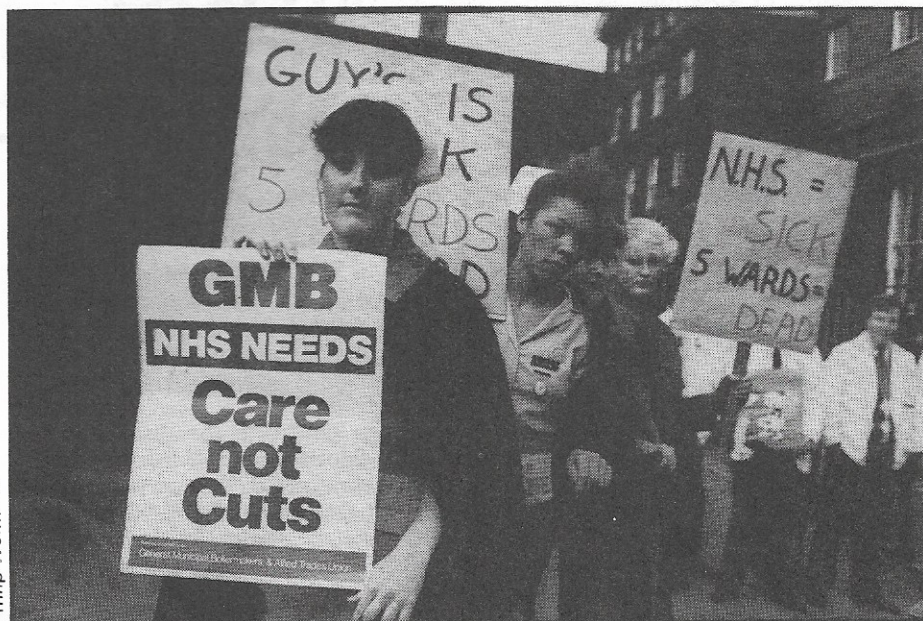
served staff can apply to *Exclusive* for a job. It will really hit full-time staff because they will lose all the well-paid weekend work. *Exclusive* will employ different staff for weekends so they can pay them less. Conditions will be worse in lots of ways: only 4 weeks full sick pay instead of 6 months, shorter annual leave, use of the occupational health service only if *Exclusive* will pay for it, and we don't know if they'll even recognise the union. And we know that women working for *Exclusive* at Brompton Barracks have to provide their own cleaning materials.

PSA: *What about the effects on the service?*

GJ: All the talk in the DHA has been about costs not about standards or about us as people. One of the members here said in a meeting with management 'We're people not pound notes'. We're not just cleaners — we're part of the system of patient care. We care about the patients and our standard of work. *Exclusive* are cutting hours by 53% — the job can't be done. It's almost impossible now with jobs frozen and no cover for sick leave.

PSA: *How do you feel now about the action?*

GJ: It was worth doing. We really shocked management. It showed that you can organise militant action by workers who've never taken action before. We should have done it earlier — then we might have frightened the contractors off or the DHA might have kept us in-house like Medway Hospital. That's the lesson for other workers.



Philip Wolmuth

Guy's Hospital Nurses Action Group 'Day of Mourning' for closed wards, 6.1.84.

NUPE
says
No to private contractors

Taunton HARD TIMES AT WASTE MANAGEMENT

Last April, Taunton Deane Borough Council privatised its refuse collection service. It handed a lucrative five year contract to Waste Management Ltd (see *PSA* 3) at a fixed price of £280,000 for the first two years. On the day they took over, Waste Management directors told the council workforce that the company's pay and conditions were the same as the council's. They also encouraged workers to buy Waste Management shares so that they could 'have a say' in the company. The reality turned out to be rather different.

● Of the forty-three men employed by the council, the company only took on twenty-two.

● They work a longer working week, finishing two hours later every day.

● The council's 'task and finish' system has been scrapped.

● The routes are longer — the men have to do the equivalent of two and a half days' work in one day. On average they walk twenty miles per day.

● Loaders are losing £10 per week in reduced wages.

● Loader/drivers are losing £26 per week in reduced wages.

● Some workers have been downgraded by the company.

● The company refuses to honour a union-negotiated pay increase agreed by the council before privatisation. In effect, current wages are a reduction on January 1981 rates and there is little prospect of a rise until next April — if then.

● Instead of four-wheel vehicles, the company has six-wheel; this means loading two loads of twenty-two tons of refuse per day.

● The workers are now suffering from health problems due to stress and there is a general high level of fatigue. There are currently three legal cases being brought against the company for damages allegedly caused by company practices. For example, loader/drivers are instructed to leave the vehicle engine running while they load. Constant jumping in and out of the cab causes strained muscles. Other complaints include varicose veins and back strain.

● The company does not provide medical checks.

● For six weeks the workers had to use a temporary portakabin as their base.

● They now have to share premises with mechanics from the National Freight Corporation.

● The premises have:— no toilets, no drying room, no canteen, only two wash basins (without soap, only swarfega) which have to be used by over thirty men, no car park or bicycle shed.

● The workers have to take meal breaks in their cabs.

● Vehicles are often unroadworthy and the workers have to wait for them to be repaired. The council used to carry out vehicle repairs in the afternoon after the

rounds so that they would be ready for use next morning.

The company has been unable to maintain a decent service to the public. The company was in trouble as soon as they started; four extra men and two extra vehicles had to be taken on. (Three of the men left shortly afterwards due to the appalling conditions.) Even so, the works manager and the foreman have to go out on the rounds to clear the backlog. Some streets go without collections for over a week at a time. Recently the company changed collection days and rounds without informing the public. The company's answering machine recorded five hundred feet of taped complaints.



The council appear to be happy with the company; a special contract supervisor was employed to monitor the service. Despite complaints from the public (they are referred to the company whose number is often engaged, making it impossible to register complaints), the council does not record them. No penalty clauses in the contract have been invoked.

Eighteen of the men are in NUPE but the company refuses to recognise the union. Waste Management say that as they are a transport company (as are most of their associated companies) the men should be in the T&GWU who they have a national agreement with. Locally the T&GWU and NUPE have a joint agreement for NUPE to represent the men.

NUPE Assistant Divisional Officer Peter Armitage recently tried to represent a member on a disciplinary charge (he spoke to the press about appalling conditions) but was told to leave the premises. The disciplinary hearing was abandoned. Peter Armitage told *PSA* 'The management told me that I was making their lives very difficult and that it was bloody unfair! NUPE hasn't let up for nearly a year now and we don't intend to until justice has been done and our members have decent

wages and proper working conditions. This company is a classic example of Victorian standards.'

Company director David Croft who is based in Warrington and has little or no knowledge of conditions at Taunton recently said on local radio that the men don't need facilities, that the company was not going to provide them and that NUPE were utterly lying about the conditions of service.

Meanwhile those workers who bought shares in Waste Management so that they can have a say in the company have yet to be invited onto the Board of Directors.

NUPE are considering their next moves against the company.

Cheap Meat

In June 1983 a new company, Taunton Meat Inspection Services Ltd was registered. One of its directors is David Hartley, a partner in a Taunton firm of accountants. Both he and his employee with the firm, William Softley, have for many years acted for the major meat traders in Somerset. Hartley and Softley are also Tory councillors on Taunton Council.

Labour councillor Ken Pearson believes that the company has been set up to take over the council's meat inspection service when it is privatised. He has asked leader of the Tory council John Meikle for a full explanation of Hartley and Softley's involvement in the company and why Hartley failed to 'declare an interest' in privatisation discussions at eight council committees between June and December last year.

In a public reply, Cllr Hartley stated that he set up the company 'on instructions from a number of individuals aware of his firm's involvement with the trade'. It appears however, that despite there being no formal decision to privatise the service as yet, the council's meat inspector has stated that he and all the meat inspectors 'would be prepared to co-operate with the company' if the service was privatised.

Councillor Meikle, in support of his colleague, has said that 'as a professional accountant, Councillor Hartley had been properly engaged in representing the meat trade whom he represented'. He also added that if privatisation of any service took place, the council were prepared to work with employees to set up their own company and that 'presumably the meat inspectors were prudently making moves in this direction should the eventuality occur'.

Ken Pearson is dissatisfied with the answers he has received and told *PSA* that 'he is pursuing this matter until he gets to the bottom of it'. Some NALGO members are also concerned over this affair and are taking legal advice pending further action.

CABLE FLOP

The sale of a further 100m shares in Cable and Wireless, reducing the government's stake to 23%, was a sensational flop late last year. The firm is a partner with BP in the Mercury private telephone system. The government sold its first batch of shares in the company in 1981 at 168p — they soared to over 400p last year. Just before the new sale last December the firm announced half-yearly pre-tax profits of £80m on a turnover of £213m.



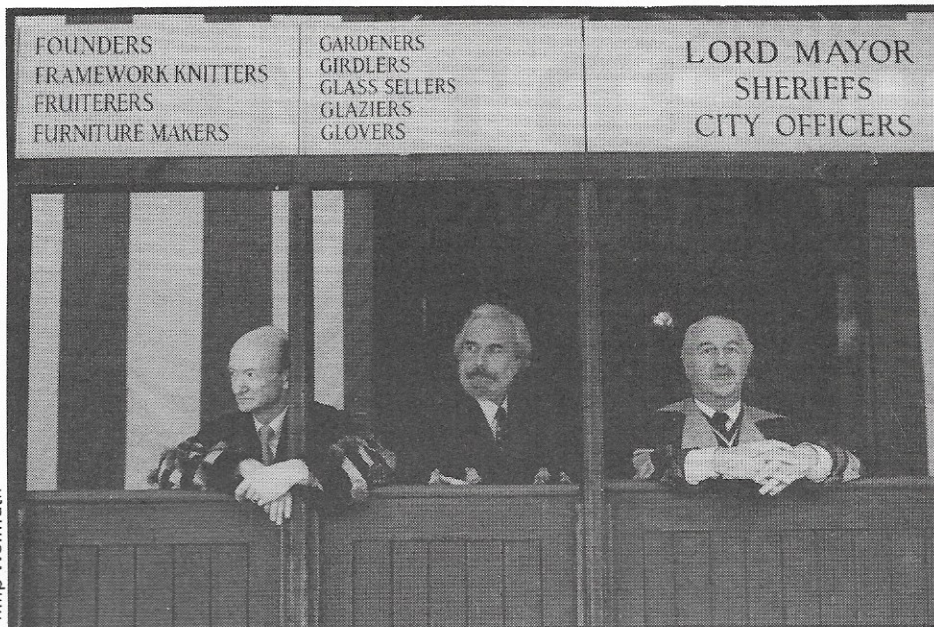
The government and its advisors, merchant bankers Kleinwort Benson (they are also in charge of the British Telecom sale) set a minimum price of 275p per share. A few days before the sale the shares were at 293p. All set for another bonanza. But on the day only 70% of the shares were taken up leaving the underwriters to find £82.5m. The shares fell to 270p at the end of the day. Several major financial institutions, with cheques already signed, pulled out at the last minute.

So what went wrong? City pundits claim that the uncertainties over the future of Hong Kong where Cable and Wireless own 35% of the colony's telephone system, frightened off investors. Other reasons put forward were that many institutions already had shares in the company; the tender method of sale has also been criticised (there had been a row between Cable and the government over the method of sale). Many financiers want to return to the fixed price offer of share sale used in the famous sale of Amersham International where shares cost 142p but were selling for 188p at the end of the first day. Any idea that financiers deliberately plotted to ensure the Cable sale was a flop, following hard on the disastrous Britoil sale, would, of course, be completely unfounded. It will be interesting to see which method of sale is used in the massive privatisation of British Telecom.

PRIVATE HEALTH COSTS SOAR

Private health insurance groups have imposed big price increases of up to 10% in many cases. A very basic scheme for a family in London will now cost between £575 and £1070 a year. BUPA is now expanding into the care of the elderly with a new home in Milton Keynes — charges will be a mere £175 a week!

Philip Wolmuth



ALL THE WAY TO THE...

In PSA 3 we reported on merchant bankers SG Warburg's potential conflict of interest both as government advisor on privatisation and as investment manager dealing in companies likely to benefit from privatisation. Company secretary Ian Marshall told us that Warburg's were 'careful to avoid conflicts of interest', being governed by 'strict rules'.

The Observer on 18th December reported that on no fewer than four occasions in 1983 Warburg's actions exposed dangerous potential conflicts of interest between a bank's corporate advisory division and its investment advisory department and that the City had dubbed this as 'the Warburg factor'!

Mercury Securities plc, Warburg's parent company have bought a 29.9% share in the City's number two stock-jobbers Akroyd and Smithers. The deal enables Warburg to take advantage of current restructuring in the City partly designed to smooth the implementation of the government's privatisation programme. Warburg's link with Akroyd increases its power to place new share issues more widely, particularly abroad, so as to avoid further government embarrassment such as occurred with the flotation failures of Britoil and Cable and Wireless.

- Akroyd and Smithers made pre-tax profits of £16 million last year.

- Warburg's have been replaced by merchant bankers Lazard Brothers as advisors to British Airways for the coming sell-off. Lazards are also currently restructuring the Royal Ordnance Factories in preparation for privatisation.
- Meanwhile the government has appointed leading corporate image consultants, Wolff Olins, to improve the public image of the Royal Ordnance Factories to help smooth the sell-off.

- Merchant bankers Morgan Grenfell who advised the government on the sale of Amersham International, have been appointed to advise on whether the Crown Agents can be successfully privatised. Their report is due this month.

- The sale of British Telecom is expected to raise £4 billion for the government; the City's rake-off is about 2% in fees. So stockbrokers Hoare Govett and merchant bankers Kleinwort Benson who are handling the sale, will share some £80 million in fees.

- If all the government's proposed sales go ahead this term, the City stands to make over £150 million.

- British Airways workers who don't lose their jobs altogether if BA is sold are to lose their index-linked pensions. Most workers in nationalised industries have inflation-proof pensions but this is a heavy burden for the private sector to bear. No private company provides such beneficial schemes for its workers. So the government is encouraging BA workers to accept a less favourable scheme which won't cut into a potential buyer's profits too much and will make BA a more attractive proposition in the market place.

CONSULTANTS SEIZE TRADE UNION FUNDS

Price Waterhouse, the multinational consultants and accountants, can turn their hand to anything. Not only do they do the accounts for many multinational firms, carry out so called value-for-money audits in public services, but they are also adept at seizing trade union funds. Four partners in Price Waterhouse were appointed by the High Court to seize the bank accounts and assets of the NGA during its recent dispute with the Stockport Messenger Group.

Contractors & Consultants

SCANDAL

CROTHALLS DHSS AGENTS

Crothall Hospital Services is a subsidiary of Pritchard Services Group (see PSA no. 4). They claim to have 35 NHS domestic and housekeeping contracts and want to win a large slice of the privatised NHS ancillary work. Crothall's advertising brochure which it is circulating to District Health Authorities makes special mention of six contracts. The contacts (apparently for references etc) for five are all DHSS officers. The sixth is a Ministry of Defence hospital which lists a Wing Commander as the contact. It is scandalous behaviour but it is likely to increase as contractors gain an even larger foothold in public services.

The six contacts are:

A.P. Bryan, Deputy District Administrator, East Hertfordshire Health Authority.
R.E. Titley, Aylesbury Health Authority.
P. Milford, Unit Administrator and E. Jackson, Regional Supplies Officer, Oxfordshire Health Authority and Oxford Regional Health Authority respectively.
D.R. Lees, Supplies Officer, Redbridge Health Authority.
Wing Commander Boden, Ministry of Defence, RAF Wroughton.

SCANDAL 2

A senior civil servant who helped to prepare the DHSS Circular on privatising support services has been given two years unpaid leave to work with the parent company of Hospital Hygiene Services (see PSA No 4) which recently won three NHS contracts. Dick Clements, a DHSS Principal, joins Tory MP Marcus Fox (see PSA No 5) on the board of Care Services Group. It has the same registered office as Hospital Hygiene in Shipley. These and other companies in the group are run mainly by Lesley and Richard Holdsworth.

Dick Clements has been involved in the privatisation of support services by Medway Health Authority. A DHSS letter to the District Administrator in Medway indicated that Mr Clements had been involved in 'informal contact ... about your competitive tendering exercise for cleaning. ...'.

GRANDMET PROFITS SOAR

Grand Metropolitan had a 33% increase in pre-tax profits to £295m in the year ending September 1983. 56% of the trading profits came from the USA and other overseas activities.

WASTE PROFITS

The Hargreaves Group, the waste disposal, transport and fuel distribution firm (see PSA no. 3) has doubled the profit on its waste disposal activities despite overall profits dropping £½m in the half year to September 1983.

WHO OWNS WHOM

BRITISH FIRMS IN US TAKE-OVERS

Sketchley, the workwear, linen hire and dry cleaning group which is trying to gain NHS laundry contracts, has bought two companies in North America. It paid £9.1m for Blessings Corporation of New Jersey which runs the largest diaper service in the US covering hospitals and nursing homes. Blessing's had £1.6m profit on £26m turnover in 1982. Sketchley has also taken over Embassy Cleaners, a chain of dry cleaning shops based around Toronto.

Meanwhile the Hawley Group (see PSA no. 4) has acquired Ever-Green Lawns for over £10m. The firm specialises in treating lawns with chemicals and fertilisers. Hawley also took over Harry H. Stroh Associates, a hospital cleaning and maintenance group in New Jersey. Hawley has also bought a 29.9% stake in a firm of Birmingham stockbrokers Fyshe, Horton, Finney & Co. Together with the recent acquisition of a £10m investment management company and Hawley's merger broking outfit, Procroft (it is reported to have stakes in over 1000 companies) they form the spearhead of a strategy not only to profit from privatisation but also get a foothold in the financial services sector.

SOUTH AFRICAN EXPANSION

Reckitt and Colman, whose subsidiary Reckitt Cleaning Services Ltd bid for the Medway Health Authority domestic services contract, are expanding their activities in South Africa. They are building a new factory outside Johannesburg to manufacture household products such as polishes and bleaches and another factory at Durban for pharmaceuticals. The firm plans further investment in South Africa at a time when many British companies are making substantial disinvestment.

SUNLIGHT BUYS GUARDS

Sunlight Services Group, the laundry and cleaning firm, has bought Security Arrangements for £1.2m. This is a holding company for other companies — Security Guards, Security Couriers, and Security Office Cleaners. This is part of Sunlight's plans to expand its security contacts.

ISC

Another laundry and cleaning group, Initial, have made a second major takeover in the USA by acquiring United Service Company in Ohio for £9.44m. The firm has linen rental and cleaning contracts with hospitals and motor and steel companies.

BRENGREEN BIDS

Brengreen Holdings (parent company of Exclusive Cleaning Ltd and Exclusive Health Care Services Ltd) has made a £5.5m takeover of White Cross which builds and operates refuse compactors. White Cross already has contract with Labour controlled Manchester council. Brengreen suffered big losses as a result of its failed £33m bid for Sunlight Services Group last year. The bid cost £600,000 with a £200,000 paper loss on the value of the Sunlight shares it still owns. Despite this Brengreen announced a 24% rise in half yearly pre-tax profits of £804,000 on turnover up from £15.7m to £20.8m.



FAILED ACADEMY AFTER MORE CONTRACTS

Securiguard Group is the parent company of Acadamy Cleaning Services Ltd (see PSA 5) and Securiguard Services Ltd. Group pre-tax profits for the half year to 1.5. 83 were £235,000 on a turnover of £3.62 million. The Group, with over 2,000 employees most of whom are hourly paid, expects £½ million profits for the year.

Robin Pritchard (of the famous rubbish and gardening family) founded Acadamy in 1967 and has a controlling stake in Securiguard worth some £3½ million. Alan Baldwin, Chairman and Chief Executive of the group (and world powerboat racing champion) has a 12% stake worth over £860,000.

Acadamy has over 190 major cleaning contracts including Ford, Plessey, British Rail, National Westminster Bank, Smiths Industries and Racal. Despite recently losing the £250,000 Merton schools cleaning contract due to inefficiency, Baldwin reckons to 'have learnt a lot from the experience'. Speaking about NHS cleaning contracts he says 'there are just a handful of companies with the expertise and capacity to carry out the work. We are one of them'. (The Times 19.9.83)

Securiguard Services provides security guards, store detectives and alarm services and has contracts including the Civil Aviation Authority in the Shetlands, companies such as Courage, Blue Circle and International Stores and a £100,000 a year contract with Middlesex Polytechnic. The Group recently acquired Property Guards, one of the largest 'manned guarding' security companies in the UK.

HOMES FOR ELDERLY SOLD

In the last four years Tory-controlled Croydon council have closed down a number of residential homes for the elderly, with the excuse that the buildings were too old to be safely and economically renovated. All but one of the sites have been sold off. Two hundred beds have been lost.

Two sites were sold to Wimpeys who are building luxury homes for sale. Davidsons Lodge, a Class I listed building (given to the council years ago by the freemasons) was so dilapidated that the council couldn't sell it. So they hired contractors, Mansells, to convert it into flats which when completed will be sold off.

Gibson's Lodge was closed in December 1982. Remarkably, six months later it reopened as a private home! The new owners had no difficulty registering the home with the council and are reported to have spent some £70,000 re-furbishing the building. Business in the 30 bed home is booming with rates of between £75 and £95 per week depending on the amount of care a person needs.

Croydon social workers are concerned about the standards of care offered by private homes particularly as they are increasingly having to 'pick up the pieces' once the private homes can't cope. One case that went largely unreported concerned an 80 year old woman who was transferred from a private home in Norbury Crescent SW16 as she was too ill for the staff to cope with her.

NALGO Branch Secretary Malcolm Phillips told PSA 'All the unions have challenged the council's policy of closure of residential homes. A very large number of private homes have started to operate in the borough. We believe that the council should have spent money on improving facilities because of the growing demand from the community for residential care for the elderly.'



SCHOOL MEALS

Hertfordshire looks likely to be the first education authority to get rid of its entire school meals service — apart from its legal obligations for free meals and to special and boarding schools.

45% of school children in the county have school meals at present. Over three-quarters of those children whose parents pay, will lose their meals, and the 12,000 or so 'free meals kids' will be offered frozen sandwiches supplied by a private contractor. But to get a frozen sandwich their parents will have to produce evidence of receiving Supplementary Benefit or Family Income Supplement. Children who now get free or reduced price meals on parents' means testing will lose this right. Social Services luncheon clubs and Meals on Wheels services will also lose their source of supply. Nearly two and a half thousand staff face redundancy (including over 100 administrative staff). The council committee papers actually acknowledge the fact that an increasing number of parents rely on the school dinner as the main meal of the day for their children, and that there are serious

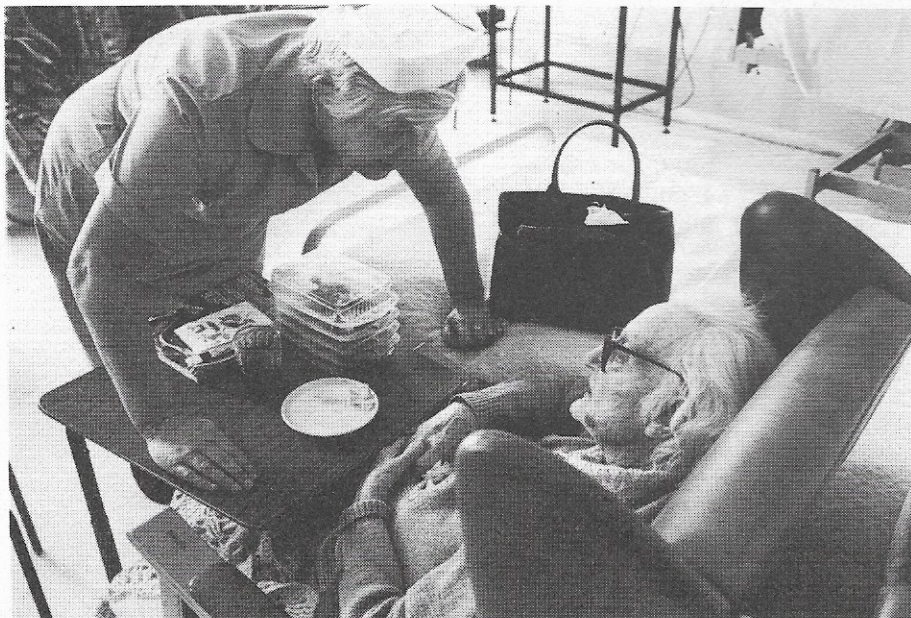
'potential social implications of identifying children who take free meals' but these 'cannot be avoided'. Is it possible that the plan, approved by committee and going to full council in March, is connected with a NUPE victory in the High Court last November against the County which had tried to unilaterally alter the meals staff's contract of employment — and then became liable for thousands of pounds' back pay?

The unions had less than a week's warning of this plan, but the campaign to save school meals has rapidly swung into action. As well as NUPE and NALGO, the teaching unions, parent-teacher associations and the 'Save Herts Education' group are all involved. Local action groups have been set up and public meetings are drawing large audiences.

SCHOOL CLEANING TO GO?

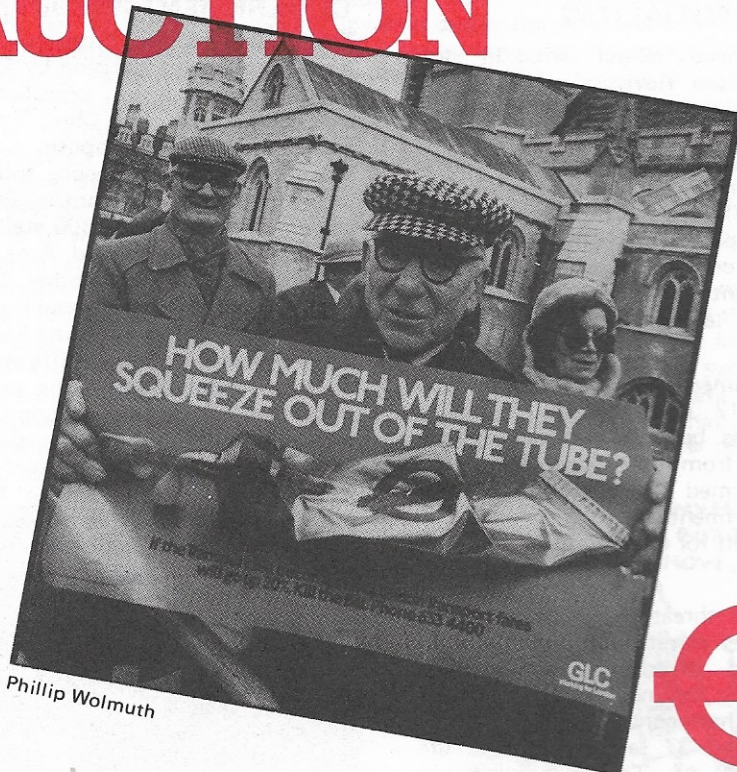
Also on the line in Hertfordshire is school cleaning facing possible privatisation. The consultation with school heads and governors produced a universally negative response — based not only on concern for standards but for the loss of existing staff who were part of their school community. This response has not deterred the council who also acknowledge the poor performance of contract cleaning in other parts of the country. It feels in Herts it would be different: 'with this knowledge, the authority could avoid the more extreme problems these pioneer authorities have experienced'!

The privatisation threat is being used as a stick to persuade the unions to accept an alternative proposal — new terms and an alternative proposal — new terms and conditions involving an annual pay cut of some 30% (by cutting hours and bonus and loss of holiday pay). All staff would be made redundant and re-employed on a new contract.



Philip Wolmuth

Transport Bill BUS & TUBE AUCTION



Phillip Wolmuth



Fares increases, big cuts in services, loss of democratic control, assets and services hived-off to private firms — these are just some of the consequences if the London Regional Transport Bill, published in December 1983, comes into effect next year. The Tories want to abolish London Transport as well as the GLC. This Bill will have a devastating effect on public transport in London.

- Private coach operators will be able to run services on main routes in competition with public services who will have to provide a service on other routes with less subsidies. If private firms cannot reach agreement with a new holding company, London Regional Transport (LRT), they will be able to apply directly to the Traffic Commissioners for a licence (at present London Transport is the licensing authority).

- Higher fares, services slashed and big job losses. Real control over the level of subsidies will pass to the government who are already arguing that the GLC's subsidies to public transport must be cut substantially. Two thirds of the financial support for LRT will come from a levy on all London ratepayers. Cuts in subsidies will mean higher fares, fewer jobs, station closures and termination of services already inadequate in many areas.

- Pensioners' free passes severely restricted. Responsibility for pensioners' passes will be transferred to the boroughs — several Tory controlled authorities have said they will not continue the present system. This will mean no passes at all, introduction of charges for passes or restricting them to those receiving

Supplementary Benefit. Those in the outer boroughs will be hardest hit — fewer passes, higher fares and fewer buses and trains.

- Public money and resources will be ripped-off by private firms. The Bill will permit LRT to give grants, loans and subsidies together with planning and managerial support to private companies running services — as long as LRT has a handful of shares in the companies. Public money, skill and experience will be drained off directly to support owners' profits, not services.

- Centralised power — no democratic control. LRT will be run by between 5 and 12 members appointed by the Transport Secretary. The government will have the power to set the objectives of LRT (the courts will not be allowed to rule that LRT should perform general duties or to direct LRT to provide a particular service), to direct LRT to sell its assets including buses, tube trains, stations, workshops and track if LRT refuses to privatise such services. Decisions on subsidies, services, standards and fares could all be taken by the Transport Secretary leaving Londoners with no democratic control over a

fundamental service. The Transport Secretary will also have reserve powers to extend the powers of LRT over the London regional rail network. This could lead to attempts to privatise the more profitable British Rail commuter lines.

- Divide and rule... and then sell. Buses and the underground will be run by two separate companies. LRT will also set up other companies to run support services such as catering, cleaning, engineering workshops — carving up the service will leave each part very vulnerable to privatisation. Shares in these subsidiary companies will be sold to investors. Whereas the GLC has a legal duty to provide public transport 'to meet the needs of Londoners', the new LRT will only have to take 'due regard' to passengers' needs.

Resistance to this Bill is gathering pace. A lobby of Parliament was held on 17 January organised by CAPITAL, an alliance of transport unions, pensioners and community organisations. A series of trade union meetings are now being held. Many Tories are even up in arms over these draconian proposals.

Further information: CAPITAL, 308 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, tel. 01-278 7801. The GLC has produced a KILL THE BILL pack with poster etc available from Room 82, County Hall, London SE1.

More News

SEALINK FERRIES HIT ROUGH SEAS

The government are pushing British Rail to sell its £100m Sealink Ferries service later this year. Merchant bankers Morgan Grenfell have been advising BR but another bank, Hill Samuel has been appointed to finalise the sale. Despite losses in 1982 Sealink is expected to be profitable in 1983/84. Trafalgar House, the shipping, contracting and engineering multinational with record £79m pre-tax profits last year has told BR it is interested in buying Sealink, particularly if its current bid for the P and O shipping group fails. Some of the Sealink staff want to set up a management buy-out along the lines of National Freight. The government seem set on selling to the highest bidder rather than selling shares on the Stock Exchange.

NCB RIP-OFF

The National Coal Board has sold its 30% stake in Associated Heat Services for £7.5m (less sale expenses). The NCB helped to set up the company in 1966 to design, install and operate boiler and air conditioning plant. Pre-tax profits in 1983 were £3.3m on turnover of £35m. The 2.4m NCB shares were sold for 312p — since the sale in late November last year the shares have reached 346p — leaving the public short changed by over £800,000. The company is run by the former NCB chairperson Lord Ezra.

More News

NUR BLACK MERCURY

The NUR has blacked work on laying the optical fibre cables for the Mercury private telephone network. Work was to have started laying cables alongside British Rail tracks in the Sheffield/Chesterfield area early this year but the NUR Tinsley branch threatened strike action if BR attempted to send the trains (private contractors will actually lay the cables). Last year's NUR conference agreed a blacking policy, however, following Mr Mercury's successful court action against the POEU (the full hearing will not start until July 1984), the NUR could face legal action.

Meanwhile, Mercury is rapidly expanding its planned services — now much more extensive than the original proposal which was to be a limited service for a few large firms. Mercury has made a deal with six American firms and is negotiating with telecommunication authorities in Europe to provide services by satellite. Mercury is now competing directly with British Telecom's most profitable services.

NHS TO RENT PRIVATE BEDS

The Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Health Authority is negotiating with the Hospital Corporation of America (see PSA No 2) to rent 12 beds in a nearby private hospital. This will cost at least £400,000 at a time when the authority is proposing to cut services and jobs with £½m budget.

DIRECT LABOUR WIN BUT...

Tory controlled Plymouth housing committee recently rejected a £3.3m repairs and maintenance tender from a private firm in favour of a slightly higher one from its DLO. They argued that if they contracted out the work then up to 100 workers would lose their jobs with £294,000 redundancy costs. Knock-on effects would threaten the whole DLO with the possible loss of 343 jobs and redundancy costs of at least £848,000 plus other additional costs. The next private tender was £¾m higher than the DLO bid. Meanwhile, Humberside County Council DLO has won 13 out of the last 15 contracts it has tendered for. Elsewhere Southend DLO is still facing closure with 116 jobs to be lost; Rossendale has just sacked 59 out of its 86 DLO workforce; Lincolnshire County Council Property Management Committee is to close its small DLO;

CIVIL SERVICE

-manpower targets threat

WHAT PRICE CONFIDENTIALITY?

A spontaneous all-out strike by staff at the Inland Revenue sorting centre at Kew greeted a proposal to privatise all or part of the centre's work, threatening 227 jobs. The work involves handling individual tax returns, including matching returns from both sides of alimony payments. The unions are refusing cooperation with an internal management review and awaiting sight of outside tenders to decide on future action.

A Government plan to privatise 500 jobs in 12 new regional processing centres has been dropped after angry reactions from the IRSF. The union was informed in mid-January that the Department will recruit and train its own staff for the centres.

Another threat to confidentiality is posed by privatisation of security services at government departments. Security at the new Liverpool court complex has gone straight out to contract and 37 security staff at the Department of Trade buildings in Victoria Street, London have received redundancy notices. A private security firm is taking over their work — the unions have not been told which firm. Other departments are expected to follow.

All the 'common services' — security, messengers, typing, reprographic services — are now a major target for privatisation. But hiving off to the private sector is not always so simple. A recent plan to privatise the work of 72 staff at the Eastcote typing pool in Southend which services the Department of Trade has now been dropped.

'SPIRAL OF DECLINE' FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCY?

The future of the Property Services Agency rests on a decision by Environment Secretary Jenkin expected in the next few weeks. The Chief Executive Alfred (see PSA 3) proposes a massive restructuring of the Agency splitting it into two Directorates, for Civil Property and for Defence. Some 300 staff in the 44 existing Regional and Area offices face redundancy and another 400 will have to move under mobility agreements, when 29 'Controlling Tiers' and 6 sub-offices replace their offices.

United opposition to the proposals from the Civil Service Unions is based not just on the immediate threat to jobs. They argue that the Chief Executive's costing of £4 million for the change, recoverable over 2 years, is a gross underestimate and that the actual cost will be three or four times as high. The plan, prepared with the assistance of a consultant from Deloitte, Hoskins and Sells on semi-permanent secondment to Alfred, is seen as heralding a 'spiral of decline' for the civil side of the Agency's work leading to eventual privatisation. Two years of turmoil while people, responsibilities and files are reshuffled will encourage users of the Agency's services to go elsewhere. The restructured organisation will involve such long and complex lines of communication and accountability that a rapid and efficient response to urgent local needs will be impossible. It is expected that an increasing quantity of building and supply work will go out to contract and eventually the Agency will be left only with estate management, and will therefore be a prime candidate for privatisation. Already Bovis Management and Shepherds are known to be interested in this area of work.

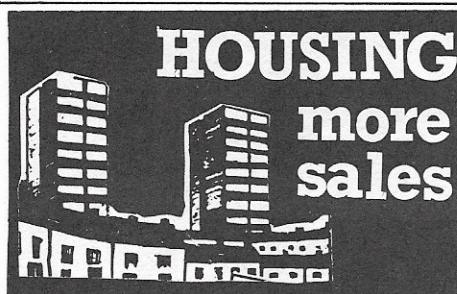
HOUSING

PRIVATE RENT COLLECTION — AT A LOSS

Since November 1982 Merton Council have used a private debt collection firm to try to recover rent arrears from former tenants. By September 1983 213 cases involving £47,238 arrears had been given to this firm. In true private enterprise style it was very successful. The firm reported 85 cases involving £17,909 as untraceable. It did however find 79 former tenants and recovered £2,561, but put in a collection and legal fee to the council for £3,847... so it cost the council £1,286 to collect the debts.

FOR SALE

There are long waiting lists for the million or so council flats built for the elderly — and now the Government plans to force councils to offer these for sale. Tenants of these flats, formerly ineligible for the 'right to buy' will now be able to claim discounts of up to 60%. If they live for a further five years after the purchase, their heirs can inherit the property with no liability to repay the discount. If the property is re-sold within 21 years of purchase, the council has the right to buy it back — but at full market value. Until now even this government recognised the need for public sector housing for the old and the disabled.



Sandwell

More council estates are up for sale. A Department of the Environment Task Force in Sandwell in the West Midlands have secretly drawn up a plan to sell about 2,000 council dwellings in the Windmill Lane area. A housing association or private company will be set up to take over the estate, improve 1,500 dwellings and demolish the rest to make way for new private housing for sale. A national building society and central government will provide £11m to finance the scheme and a private builder, rumoured to be Tarmac, will carry out the work.

These major plans for privatisation have not yet been revealed to the Labour controlled Sandwell Council. As with other schemes it will be presented as a package deal with all the ends tied up and treated as an offer the council 'cannot refuse'. Unless this scheme is defeated by Labour councillors, tenants' organisations and council unions then this type of scheme will become a central tactic in the government's strategy to wreck council housing.

Bradford Leeds

... Meanwhile in Bradford and Leeds both Barratt's and Wimpey's are bidding to buy estates. On the Sloan Square estate in Bradford, tenants have been campaigning for major improvements. An independent architects report has detailed the work to be done and suggested how it could be phased to allow some demolition and rehousing of tenants. But Barratt's and Wimpey's have told the council they want to buy the estate.

In Leeds, Wimpey's are after the 238 dwellings on the Raynville Road estate, Bramley. They want to rehab the estate and sell it along with 43 new houses. Built in the mid 1960's the estate has over a hundred vacant dwellings and suffers from damp and disrepair. Tenants are campaigning for rehousing. Wimpey's claim the scheme is only viable if they receive a cash handout in the form of an Urban Development Grant from central government.

It is clearly apparent that the major construction firms, responsible for many of the building defects in council housing, are scouring the country looking for estates to buy, give a bit of cosmetic treatment, and profit yet again out of public housing.

Fulham

Tenants on the Fulham Court Estate in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham are campaigning to stop the council selling their estate to private developers. Despite agreeing to modernisation plans with the tenants' association in 1981 and starting interim works in 1982, the council stopped work when they froze all capital spending later that year.

The 1930s built estate has serious defects including asbestos. The 372 flats house over a thousand people and the tenants are determined that the council should continue to own the estate and carry out their legal duties to maintain it.

So far the tenants have taken legal action against the council which forced them to set aside £100,000 in their repairs budget for the estate. They have also contacted NALGO, NUPE, GMBTU and UCATT to organise support for their campaign. Other actions have included pickets and demonstrations. A march to Parliament to protest against the proposed sale will take place on Wednesday 7th March leaving the estate at 1pm. A petition will be handed in to Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for the Environment.

Contact Ian Beddowes 01-731 6694 or Ian Harrison 01-381 5529.

Knowsley

In Cantril Farm where 3500 council houses have been sold to Stockbridge Village Trust, a private company headed by Tom Baron (confidante of Michael Heseltine and director of Christian Salverson — a major multinational company) speculation has been growing about Baron's presence on the board of the Trust.

Baron and leading housebuilder Sir Laurie Barratt are close friends and Barratt's are the main contractor on the estate. It has recently emerged that Barratt's may not carry out all the construction work. Another firm, Welmar Homes, may be in the running for building speculative private housing on the vacant land on the estate. Welmar already have a foot in the door with five staff seconded to the Trust and their basic designs are in use for bungalows currently being built on Cantril Farm. Welmar Homes is a subsidiary of Christian Salverson Ltd. Baron assured local critics on a recent television programme that he was acting as a completely disinterested party.



Philip Wolmuth

Wandsworth

Property developers Regalian recently bought a Wandsworth council estate in Battersea for £4m. Now 280 refurbished flats are on sale at prices ranging between £35,000 for a one bed flat to £59,000 for a five room apartment. Service charges are about £400 per flat annually. The estate, built 50 years ago to high space standards by the old London County Council, was allowed to deteriorate and decline. The Thatcherite Wandsworth Council hived it off instead of improving it for council tenants.

Tower Hamlets

The fight over the Tevot Street sell off in Tower Hamlets (PSA 4&5) continues after the defeat by tenants and unions of the council's plan for 'consultation' on the estate by invitation only. Now the DOE has funded a new consultation exercise in the form of a 25% survey to be carried out by private consultants Floyd, Slaski & Partners. The Tenants' Federation and council housing officers have combined to outmanoeuvre this plan by installing a Safe Neighbourhoods Unit team on the estate to work with the tenants on an alternative plan for improvements.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION

Information

HANDS OFF BURY'S BINS, £1.15 inc. post from NALGO Branch Office, Bury Town Hall, Lancs BL9 0SW. This pamphlet, published by the Bury Joint Trade Union Committee, is a step by step account of how council trade unionists successfully campaigned against privatisation of the refuse service. It shows how trade union unity was built up, how the campaign was taken out to the public, and the effects of various tactics such as industrial action and days of action. It draws out both the successes and the failures and the missed opportunities. Full of examples of leaflets produced in the campaign. Essential reading.

CUTS AND PRIVATISATION IN THE WEST MIDLANDS Issue No 1 published by Birmingham Trades Council, c/o Trade Union Resource Centre, 7 Frederic Street, Birmingham B1. The bulletin aims to exchange information and ideas as part of the campaign against cuts and privatisation in the West Midlands. The first issue has news reports on the health service, education and other council services.

THE PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR THE ROYAL DOCKS £1 from the People's Plan Centre, 10 Pier Parade, London E16. Started as a response to the STOLport threat in Newham's docklands, the People's Plan project has resulted in an impressive well-produced and readable report giving a local analysis of the problems of Docklands and proposing an alternative plan for creating jobs and improving services and facilities. Produced with the assistance of the GLC Popular Planning Unit and local agencies, it clearly represents the voice of the local people, their needs and demands and their vision of what the area could be. Prepared as evidence to the public inquiry on the airport, the Plan presents a clear set of demands for organising.

WIRRAL

Recently a rather strange application found its way to the NALGO district office on the Wirral. It was a request from the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign for NALGO support for a temporary employment scheme to clean up streets in the Wirral. Only last year Tory councillors forced through privatisation of the refuse collection and street cleaning services and put them in the hands of a Warrington-based company, Waste Management Ltd. Since that time street cleaning services have deteriorated and now it seems that the Manpower Services Commission are prepared to come to the rescue.

ALLIANCE

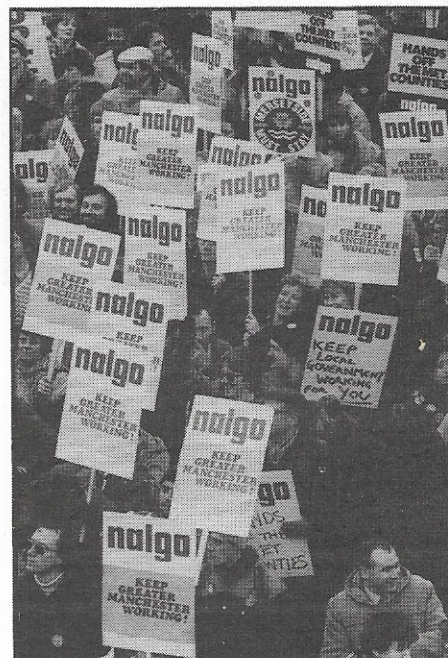
In the face of widespread cuts and privatisation in Taunton, a broad based campaign representing trade unionists, community groups, political parties and the public has been formed. PIPS (Protect and Improve Public Services) will co-ordinate action in the area and make information available to other groups with similar aims.

Contact Phil Gregory, 0823 88031 or Crispin Deacon 0823 73703.

THE GREAT TRAINING ROBBERY The Role of private training agencies in YTS in Birmingham and Solihull. Published by NATFHE, prepared by Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre, 7 Frederick Street, Birmingham B1 (50p plus post). A detailed criticism of the schemes, agencies and the way they operate and the effects on young people. Includes NATFHE, Trades Council and TUC criticism and demands.

A BETTER HOUSING SERVICE. An alternative plan for local housing services by Roehampton District Tenants Associations and Wandsworth NALGO Housing Shops Stewards Committee.

An alternative Plan for Caretaking Services by Roehampton District Tenants Associations and Caretaker Stewards. Produced as part of a joint campaign by tenants and trade unions against privatisation in Wandsworth. Alternative plans are essential and these well-written documents will be useful to other groups involved with similar campaigns. Available from Wandsworth NALGO, Municipal Buildings, Wandsworth, London SW18. Tel 01 874 6464, Ext 394.



Resolution

Wandsworth and Leeds NALGO branches are joint sponsors of a comprehensive anti-privatisation motion for this year's NALGO conference. The motion calls on the National Executive to develop a long overdue co-ordinated national campaign at all levels of the union. Full text from Peter Ramage, Wandsworth NALGO, Municipal Buildings, Wandsworth London SW18. Tel 01 874 6464 Ext 394.

Information needed

PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION needs:

- campaign news reports from trade unions, shop stewards committees, trades councils, tenants' groups and other organisations;
- information about contractors' failures, lost contracts etc;
- copies of authorities' reports discussing and comparing tenders and any trade union submissions;
- details of contractors' wages, conditions and benefits;
- copies of any campaign leaflets and publicity material.

Please write or phone SCAT Publications.

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