

# PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION

**Action  
Organising  
Information  
Contractors  
New threats**

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AN ANTI-PRIVATISATION NEWSLETTER FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT No 9 AUGUST 1984



Philip Wolmuth

## Hammersmith Strike into 2nd month

Over a thousand health workers, miners and other trade unionists from all over the country joined the picket lines at Hammersmith Hospital on 18th July in support of the striking cleaners.

The day of action was called by COHSE to coincide with the Special Health Authority's meeting to decide the future of the cleaning service. The cleaners have been out since 13th June not only in a bid to resist privatisation but also the management's in-house tender which itself means massive job losses and cuts in hours and pay.

As well as industrial action, COHSE and NUPE negotiated jointly with management to put forward an alternative proposal which would settle the dispute 'while fulfilling the terms of the specifications with the minimum amount of pain inflicted on the staff' but did not 'represent what the union side would wish in total as it still means considerable loss of jobs'. The Health Authority however voted 11-2

in favour of management's in-house tender, turning down not only the unions' proposals but also bids from Crothalls; Exclusive; Hospital Cleaning & Ward Support Services; Hospital Hygiene Services; Hospital Service and Mediclean Health.

The staff have rejected the SHA's decision and agreed to continue the strike. Action is being stepped up; hospital porters have joined the strike with no expected date of return to work and catering workers are also supporting their colleagues. Further mass action is being planned. Support for the picket lines and financial help are urgently needed. Contact Hammersmith Strike Committee, c/o 273 The Vale, London W3. Tel: 01-743 4566.

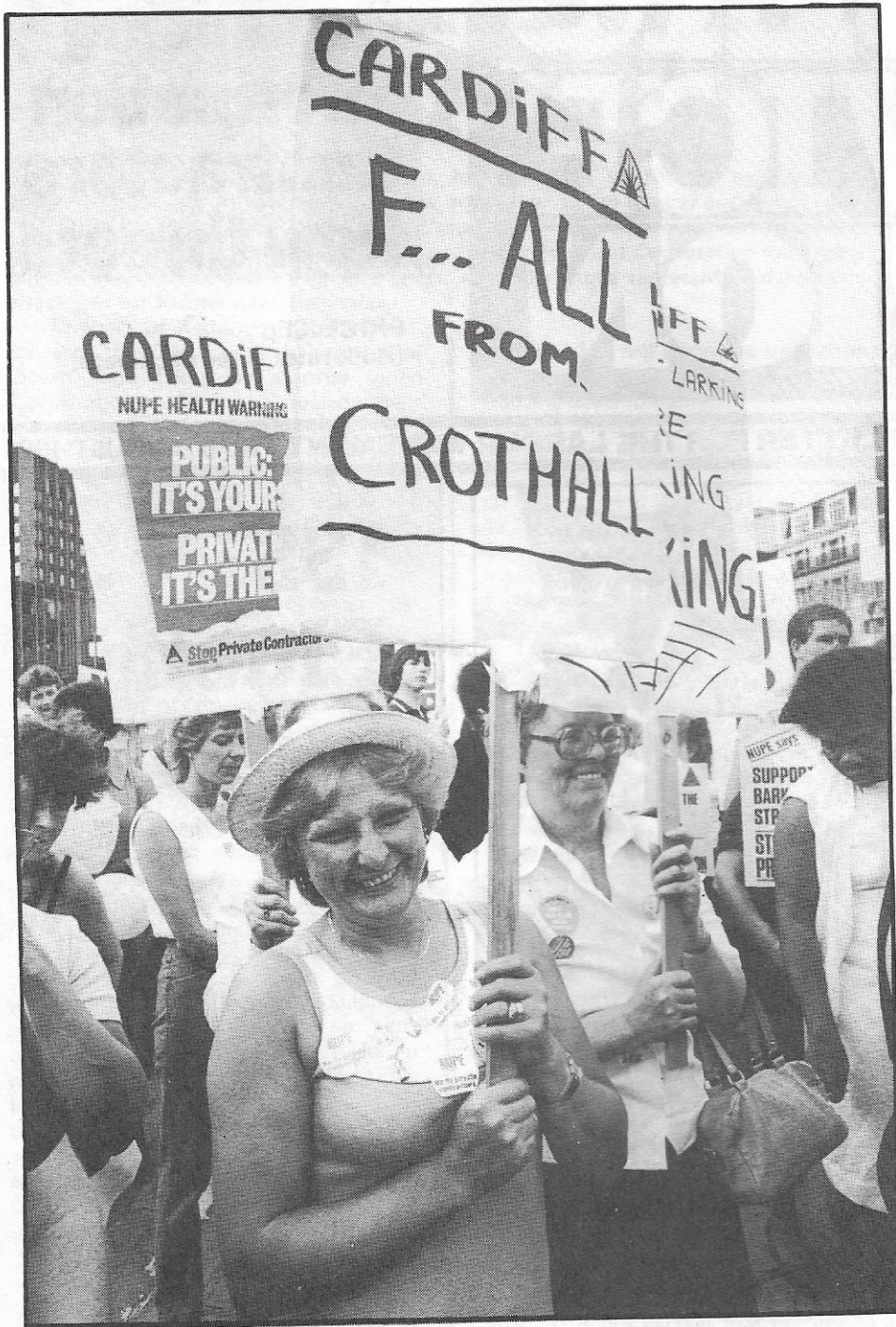
## ISS Flushed Away

ISS Servisystem, the Danish multinational that took over Birmingham's school cleaning last year will lose their contract as of 3rd September. Since the contract began there has been a constant stream of complaints about the standard of cleaning from teachers and school governors. It also became obvious that the company had not only been unable to provide a service but also to make money out of the contract. Now ISS have to pay Birmingham Council £150,000 over the next two years and also hand over equipment. It has also been revealed that the contract that was to save Birmingham ratepayers £500,000 cost over £700,000 in redundancy payments to the sacked direct labour force, many of whom will undoubtedly be re-employed in September.

Another loss for ISS is the contract to clean two schools in Norfolk, where complaints from teachers and school governors have been steadily mounting since the contract began in September 1983. Reports of 'consistent corner-cutting', 'lack of dusting', 'unflushed WCs and dirty washbasins' have now led to the sacking of the contractors and a return to direct labour. Unfortunately the in-house cleaners won't be enjoying the same employment conditions as their predecessors before ISS moved in. Norfolk County Council decided against full-scale privatisation of school cleaning after seeing the fiasco in Cambridgeshire, and instead negotiated new contracts with NUPE involving a substantial cut in hours.



# BARKING OUT TO WIN



Phillip Wolmuth

Five months on, the strike by domestics at Barking Hospital is still going strong. Despite Crothall's refusal to meet, the unions are still mandated to negotiate a full return of working hours. The strikers hope that the appalling state of cleanliness at the hospital, particularly the kitchens, will help break the dispute. The hospital is on Crown land and is therefore immune from prosecution under Public Health legislation. In mid-June, Barking and Dagenham Council wrote to the Health Minister asking that the hospital be exempted so that prosecutions could be brought. As yet they have not received a reply and the Council are considering their position.

Crothall's workforce has a hard core of scabs but there is a high rate of turnover amongst the majority. The strikers claim some success in deterring scabs by meeting with them before they go to work. Patients are now beginning to refuse admission to the hospital because of the health risk and they are being referred to other hospitals. The Orsett Hospital in Basildon, under threat of closure, has apparently had a new lease of life as a result.

Meanwhile, Pritchards (Crothall's parent company) have been severely hit by the dispute. A spokesperson for the strike committee told PSA 'Several DHAs have removed Pritchards from their approved list of contractors and hopefully other DHAs will follow. Pritchards are unlikely to win many new NHS contracts on the basis of their performance at Barking'.

Pritchards' shares have also suffered and shareholders are extremely concerned. The strikers however are planning further action to try and win their demands. They still need support on the picket lines and financial help. Cheques payable to Barking & Dagenham Health Emergency Strike Fund should be sent to AUEW House, 588 Rainham Road South, Dagenham, Essex, RM107RA. More information from Strike Line 01-592 5138.

## BEWARE: SON OF CROTHALL

Graeme Crothall, eldest son of 'the pioneer of hospital domestic services' Alan Crothall, returned from the USA last year to join Mediclean Ltd, a subsidiary of the Hawley Group (see earlier PSAs). Both Crothall, who is Chair of Mediclean, and his sidekick Jim Derham who is Managing Director both worked for Crothalls USA before the Pritchard takeover. Mediclean are currently tendering for NHS contracts.

**BACK  
BARKING**

NUPE  
National Union of Public Employees  
20 Grand Depot Road  
London SE18 6SF



# CONTRACTORS Fines & Failures

## EXCLUSIVE!

**Exclusive Cleaning** took over Ealing's street cleaning contract in October 1983. Their performance has been dismal and the company wrote to the Council asking for a review of the terms of the contract so that they would have less work to do. Instead of sacking them Ealing Council agreed to the company's requests. Ealing's Director of Technical Services reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 26th June that 'the contractor is not achieving acceptable levels of performance' and that 'between 17th October 1983 and 27th May 1984 the company achieved only between 57% and 79% of the specified service approved by the Council'.

The report also says 'The contractor contends... that there are instances where the characteristics of certain streets by virtue of their relationship to shops, transport interchanges, the incidence of commuter car parking, and in some cases the flagrant deposit of litter, where he is unable to achieve the standard of cleanliness specific without the application of a level of manpower and plant resources which he considered to be unrealistic'.

The Council have accommodated the company by relaxing the specification so that 'the standard of performance achieved is not less than 75% of the specified standard and 'partially completed work can qualify for the appropriate payment'. The company's performance is to be reviewed in six months' time.

**EXC**

**Exclusive's** contract to clean Wokingham Hospital started on 1st June. At least two of the conditions attached to their contract have not yet been complied with: union recognition and health screening for employees. A number of workers have joined the union but Ian Keys, the GMBATU District Officer, told *PSA* that his attempts at negotiating with the company have been frustrating. 'Exclusive's management are generally unavailable and they seem to change the person responsible for union negotiations almost weekly'. Health screening, an absolute essential for employees, is not provided despite some workers having to perform hazardous duties. Rates of pay are £1.70 per hour and each worker is expected to carry out the work formerly done by three people. Conditions are so bad that all Exclusive's employees are apparently looking for other work which could lead to the company being in further trouble with the contract. More information from Ian Keys, GMBATU. Tel: 0734 594128



Philip Wolmuth

**Exclusive** have been ordered to cut hours and increase wages for refuse and street cleaning workers in Milton Keynes by the Central Arbitration Committee. The case was brought by NUPE which formerly represented the cleaners when they were directly employed by the council, under the now defunct Fair Wages Resolution. The case had been brought before the Government's abolition of the Resolution and the C.A.C. ruled that working hours should be reduced to 39 a week, and that wages for refuse collectors, street cleaners and non-HGV drivers should be increased by £4 a week. The victory may yet prove to be a hollow one — there is as yet no indication as to whether or not Exclusive will implement the ruling.

**EXC**

**Exclusive** have angered local residents of Long Rock, Penwith by basing their depot in the village before planning permission has been obtained. The company, which won the refuse collection contract recently, are now having to deal with the adverse publicity caused by the residents' petition opposing their arrival.

**EXC**

Four dustmen employed by **Exclusive Cleansing Company** in Eastbourne, Sussex, were sacked on 7th June — for sharing a 20p tip left by a resident as thanks for clearing extra rubbish. The sacked men claim they were never told to stop accepting goodwill tips. No verbal or written warnings were given before the sacking, and appeal to Exclusive's managing director failed. The sacked workers did not belong to a union, since Exclusive does not recognise trade unions.

## "Workhouse Food" for elderly

There is a growing concern in the London Borough of Merton over the drop-out rate among the elderly receiving meals on wheels, since Sutcliffe took over the supply of meals on May 11th. While old people complain of 'workhouse food' Tory councillors are claiming to be 'delighted with the savings'.

It came as no surprise to Merton's trade unions that Sutcliffe, already running the borough's school meals service (see *PSA* 8), were awarded, without competition, a social services contract for the supply of meals to residential homes, day centres and the meals on wheels service. After meat pies were served 5 times in 8 days, and a voluntary weekend worker resigned because the meals were so poor, growing complaints about the quality, quantity and variety of meals have led to an investigation of the service by the borough's Chief Executive.

Meals on wheels workers are afraid that old people dropping out of the system may be losing their only lifeline to the outside world. For many of their clients the workers also do shopping, feed meters, change light bulbs and call doctors and ambulances, and it is clear that these people will not be capable of shopping and cooking for themselves. Merton has the highest proportion of elderly in its population among the London boroughs but is closing residential homes, reducing home-help hours to clients and cutting grant aid to voluntary organisations.

When Sutcliffe took over the supply of meals, some 60 council kitchen staff lost their jobs and others were forced to accept a cut in hours and lower gradings. The remaining meals staff are still directly employed by the council and successfully fought off a threat of 'single manning' for meals on wheels rounds — which would have reduced the service to dumping meals on doorsteps. But the staff now fear that the council may hand over the running of the whole service to Sutcliffe next year, which will bring renewed threats of reducing the service and destroying their employment conditions in the same way as it has for the borough's school meals staff.

**The Brengreen Group** (Exclusive's parent company, see earlier *PSAs*) increased its profits by £594,000 last year. But this has been wiped out by the £661,000 cost of the group's abortive attempt to buy the Sunlight Group (see earlier *PSAs*). Yet Chairman David Evans says that 'the factors for optimism this year can be seen very clearly'.



## More News

### SILICON SALE

Thorn EMI, the electronics and consumer goods groups which has recently been in the bidding for British Airways, has succeeded in a £95m take-over of Inmos the state-backed micro-chip company. This sale means the loss of a strategic resource which might have been the centrepiece of future developments in the field of micro-electronics.

Inmos was set-up in 1978 under the last Labour Government, with backing from the National Enterprise Board. Under a shared ownership scheme the company was owned partly by the NEB (76%) and partly by the original workforce (24%). After the NEB was scrapped under the Tory Government, the major shareholding was passed onto a newly formed quango, the British Technology Group. It is BTG's shareholding which has been sold, so far, to the Thorn EMI Group. A further offer has been made to other shareholders to buy the remaining shares at the same price offered to BTG which means there will be enormous personal gains. The three founder members of Inmos could gain £5million while 300 of the original workforce could receive £40,000 each. Inmos is a unique company which has led the field in developing advances in the manufacture of silicon chips.

### ORDNANCE FACTORIES

Government plans to sell off the Royal Ordnance Factories received a setback in the House of Lords on 19th July. An Opposition amendment to the Ordnance Factories and Military Services Bill requiring any transfer of assets to be restricted to only one company was carried by 103 votes to 97. The vote could be overturned by the Government at a later stage so that the ROFs can be sold off as separate companies. The setback could however give the unions more time to step up their campaign of opposition to privatisation.

### UNIONS IN AT BP

BP were so keen to have a trouble-free takeover at Wytch farm, the former British Gas oilfield, that they have agreed to local union agreements with the T&GWU and NALGO. BP's white collar staff do not usually even have a staff association let alone a union, and Mick Pearce of NALGO reckons that this move is 'unusual'. NALGO have even managed to secure the maintenance of existing contracts for its members including a decent pension scheme.

# DLO Building Workers UNDER ATTACK



Direct Labour Building Organisations (DLOs) already squeezed by Government legislation, face new threats in London, where the GLC has been forced to cut grants to borough councils for work on ex-GLC housing estates transferred to the boroughs over the last few years. Less work is therefore available to DLOs to tender for but in addition, some councils are adding to the pressure by their own policies.

On May 11th all the manual workers in Merton's DLO involved in housing maintenance, highways, sewers and vehicle maintenance were made redundant, following the sacking of all 30 council painters on 31st March. The council had never seriously attempted to make the DLO viable under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act and in its negotiations with the unions over the last six months, its determination to close down the DLO at any cost became clear. In a sop to the workers it promised advice to any of them who wished to form co-operatives or businesses to tender for council building work, (and did the same with council nursery workers) but the workers never had access to senior management with the expertise and information to make it possible. In a last stand, the unions succeeded in winning the same redundancy deal as refuse and cleansing staff had before them, by a threat to withdraw all emergency cover in essential services.

### Hammersmith

The Tory-Liberal administration in Hammersmith has announced plans for a cut in its building department of 149 staff — more than 50%. Since early 1982 the DLO has been managed by consultants from Bovis Construction Ltd at a cost to the council of some £250,000 a year. The unions fought the introduction of Bovis into the departments, but have since worked with them to make the DLO viable. A productivity agreement in May 1983

changes in the Land Act Regulations (which forced 60% of all work under £10,000 out to tender). Now management is claiming that the workload is sufficient to sustain only half the workforce and wants a programme of cost-cutting measures including the 50% cut in staff. The DLO workers are committed to fighting the plans... and waiting to hear if the council still considers Bovis management good value for money.

### Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets unions have been told that the Dept. of Environment has written to the council expressing concern over their DLO. They have also been told that there is only enough work for their 320-strong repairs and maintenance section to last till Christmas. More details are awaited: meanwhile a threatened 6.5% cut in the housing maintenance budget for next year adds to unions' fear of possible job losses.

### Camden

Labour-controlled Camden council has raced ahead to bring in a 'right to repair' scheme for council tenants even before the Government's own scheme under the Housing and Building Control Bill is finalised. Despite opposition from both building workers and the Tenants' Federation, who have campaigned jointly for over 2 years for an improved DLO repairs and maintenance system, the council have approved a scheme for tenants to call in contractors to do their repairs if the DLO does not complete work within set time limits.



# Council House Sales

## THE FACTS

By far the biggest aspect of the Government's privatisation programme is the sale of council housing. The Tories have sold over £12 billion worth of public housing since they came to office. Unsatisfied with auctioning off the future of thousands of families they now propose to increase sales discounts to 60% under the Housing and Building Control Bill.

An analysis of sales in England, Wales and Scotland since May 1979 up to the end of last year reveals that the value of the 620,000 houses sold is £11.8 billion. Sales since then will have taken it over the £12 billion mark. The give away value of cash discounts alone reached £4.8 billion in this period.

Advertised as a redistribution of wealth, it is nothing of the sort. Public housing stock built up over the last 70 years is being given away at the expense of those desperately needing housing. A recent report by the GLC on sales reveals:

- in Tower Hamlets 82% of sales have been of houses which represent only 10% of the Council's stock.
- more houses have been sold than started or completed since 1980.
- the demand for transfers is far higher in the estates with rundown housing and flats which have low levels of sales.
- the average household income of those buying in London was £229.43 in 1983, whilst in 1982 only 12% of

tenants had a gross weekly household income of more than £200.

- sales also have had effects on the Greater London Mobility Scheme and on women and ethnic minorities.
- there is evidence of some buyers facing financial difficulties.

Just as closing pits means selling off future jobs so council sales means selling off future housing opportunities. On average 4 out of 100 houses or flats come up for reletting each year. The Tories sales policy so far does not create a single extra house but means in the next 20 years half a million families or individuals will be deprived of housing. Moreover, within a few years the glut of short term financial gains from sales will translate into losses meaning higher rents for council tenants.

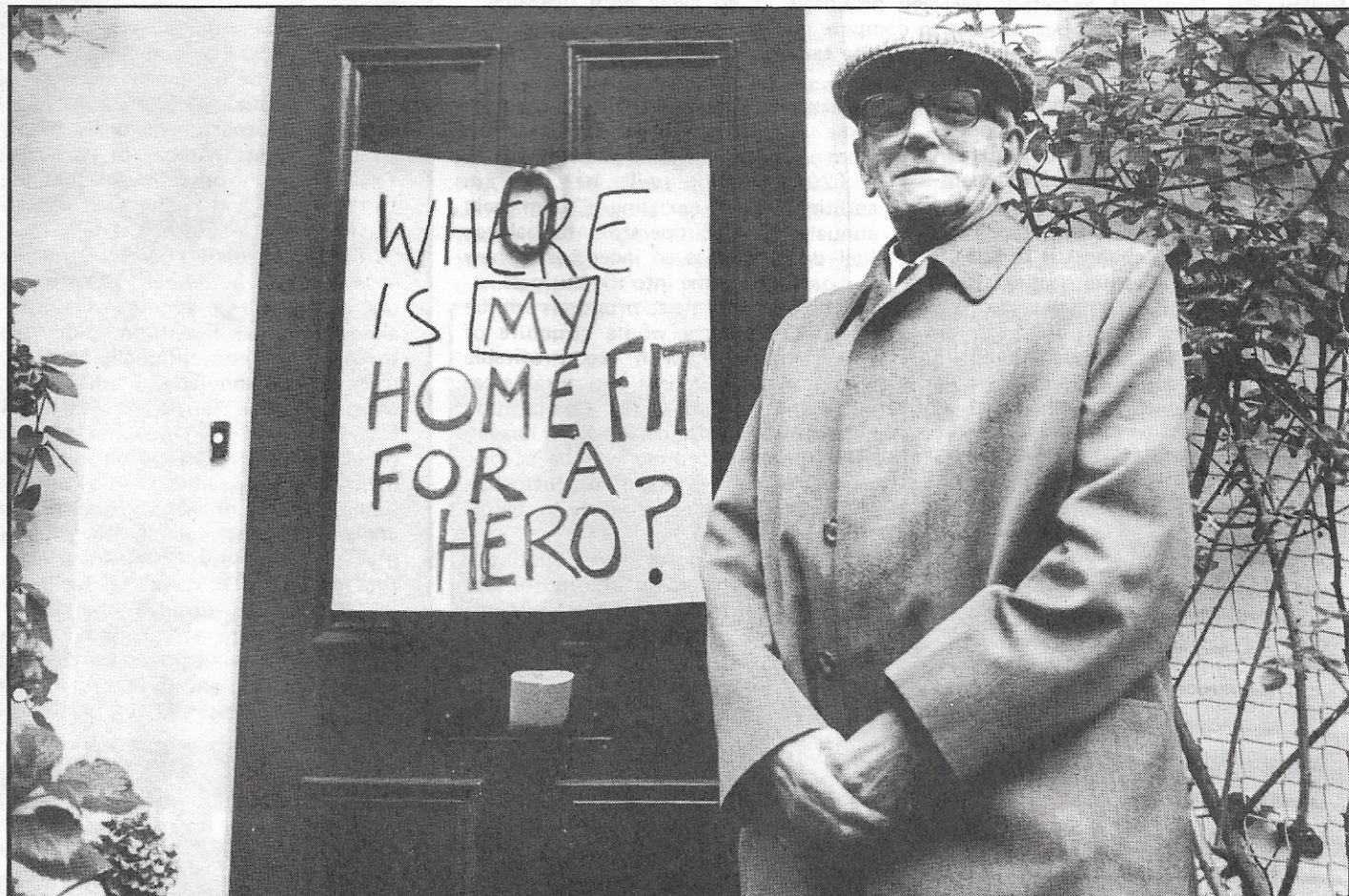
Note: these figures are based on Housing and Construction Statistics and the Scottish Housing Statistics covering May 1979 to December 1980 but updated to May 1984 prices using the Retail Price Index.

### HAMMERSMITH

Hammersmith and Fulham Council are to go ahead with their proposed sale of the Fulham Court Estate (see PSA 7) despite opposition from the tenants who want their homes modernised. The Council have been trying to sell to housing associations set up by either the Abbey National or Woolwich Building Societies but at a recent Housing Committee meeting it became clear that a number of other developers were interested in the 374 flats. Ian Beddowes, Chair of the tenants' association, said as the tenants left the Housing Committee in disgust 'The Tories have totally ignored everything we have said. So far we have been very polite in our opposition. Now the fight is really on.' Contact Ian Beddowes 01-731 6694 or Ian Harrison 01-318 5529.

### ... and in Westminster

Westminster Council continue their programme of sell-offs by announcing the sale of a block of flats on the Ebury Bridge Estate. The block was decanted for modernisation so that tenants on the nearby Grosvenor and Regency Estate could move in while their estate was being modernised. The council now say that they don't have the money for modernisation despite there being £9 million surplus due to underspending in previous years. Tenants now fear that another partially decanted block on the estate will also be sold and a campaign to stop the sales has been launched. Contact Gerald Ramsbottom, 42 Gatliffe Close, Ebury Bridge Road, London SW1.



Philip Wolmuth



# LICENCE TO KILL



Philip Wolmuth



The Government plans to devastate public transport throughout the country by privatising the entire bus network. In a recently published White Paper, Nicholas Ridley, the Transport Secretary, revealed proposals to do away with licensing controls, force municipal bus services to compete and to encourage taxi buses. A free-for-all will be declared which will damage services, destroy jobs and create hazards on the roads.

Consultation on the proposals have already begun and Ridley seems determined to have a bill ready for debate in the autumn. This will seek implementation of the proposals by September 1985.

The aim of the changes is to cut 40 per cent off the revenue support (subsidy) which currently goes to the industry. In effect the cut will be much greater because the new system will do away with cross-subsidisation within the industry, currently estimated at £1,500m.

The main proposals in the White Paper are:

- The National Bus Company will be broken down into several dozen local units and sold off.
- Municipal operators will have to compete for passengers within a private market.
- Route licencing will be scrapped, opening up competition on profitable routes.

- Taxis and hire cars will be freed of some restrictions which prevent them from carrying additional passengers.
- £20m subsidy will be paid in addition to the existing £100m paid annually to bus operators to balance fuel duty. This is an incentive to new companies to come into the business.

The effect of these proposals will be to undermine the whole structure of public transport with less profitable routes in the suburbs and rural areas being the first to suffer. Competition may bring down prices on a few heavily used routes but these will be accompanied by buses racing for customers and operating vehicles which are below standard.

The plan poses an enormous challenge to transport unions such as the Transport and General Workers Union whose members' jobs are directly threatened. Unless action is taken, thousands of jobs will be lost within the industry.

## Hereford HELL ON WHEELS

The de-regulation of bus services proposed by the Government has already been tried in Hereford. Since 1981, privatisation has been the subject of an experiment which demonstrates without doubt the disadvantages of the system being proposed.

Within Hereford the rules for anyone wanting to run a bus service have been made as simple as possible. Most of the controls that apply elsewhere have been suspended. Anyone need only give six weeks notice to the County Council that s/he wants to run a particular route. The result has been that competition on the main bus routes centred on Hereford was increased. Fares have been cut by a third and twice as many buses are operating — but only a few 'profitable' routes. This has been interpreted by Mr. Ridley as a doubling of services. What it really shows is that services may become cheaper and more frequent on busy routes. Meanwhile less profitable routes suffer. During the operation of the scheme no new rural routes were created and fares on existing rural services went up.

Where the number of buses has increased there is evidence that this doesn't necessarily mean an improvement in the quality of the service. Buses often delay departure in order to pick up the greatest number of passengers. Twice as many buses means that they are bunching and racing each other in an attempt to get customers.

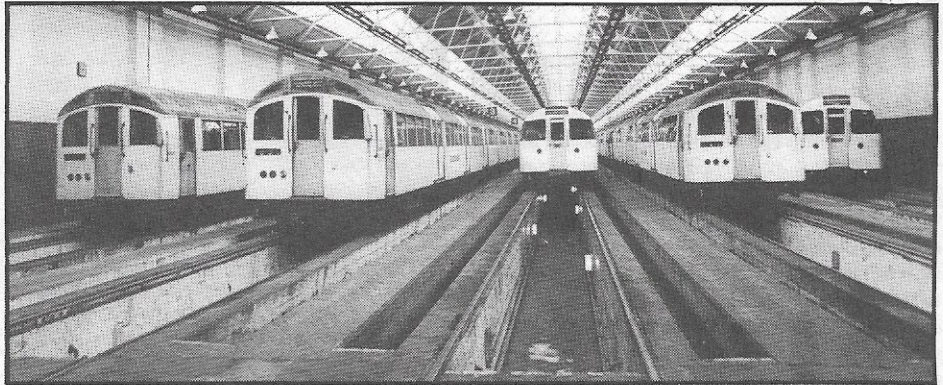
The companies' operating practices leave much to be desired. These operators have used a variety of vehicles, almost without exception, older than those used on conventionally controlled routes. One company, Flash Coaches, which has subsequently left the business, was found to have been operating a vehicle with five inches of free movement in the steering wheel, defective brakes, broken or missing shock absorbers and an incorrect mixture of cross-ply and radial tyres. Mr. Ridley claims that Hereford has led to savings of £60,000 on a subsidy of £160,000. How much extra is it going to cost to adequately police this service to ensure consumer safety and to pay for redundancies in the industry?

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT JOBS



# LONDON TRANSPORT END OF THE LINE

Phillip Wolmuth

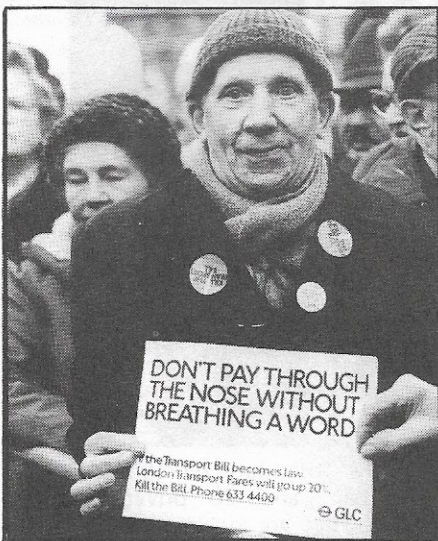


London Transport is no longer under the democratic control of Londoners. At the end of June, the government took its first step in asserting direct rule in the capital by taking over public transport and placing control in the hands of a new quango, London Regional Transport. The final takeover which came as a result of recent legislation, was pushed through ahead of schedule. Allegedly this was to stop GLC sabotage of the plans.

Under the GLC the record of London Transport has been impressive. A policy of fares reduction and a subsequent fares freeze combined with the popular introduction of the travel card system has reversed the trend of many years by winning people back to the tubes and buses. Significantly better results have also been achieved in a commercial sense than were expected and there have been considerable cost savings — not least the reduction of congestion and road accidents last year. In total there has been an increase in bus and tube mileage of 16% which is proof that a policy of cheaper fares and expanding services has made sense. Such progress will be halted if LRT get their way. In PSA 6 we outlined the future which could be expected once the London Regional Transport Bill became law. Higher fares, job losses and privatisation were seen as inevitable conse-

quences. These fears are now borne out by LRT's short record.

- On the day before LRT took control it was announced that a private coach service would operate from Newcastle-on-Tyne to London and would use the LT bus terminus at Victoria Station rather than the Victoria Coach Station owned by the National Bus Company.
- Twelve days after taking control, Keith Bright, Chairman of LRT warned that 6000 jobs will have to go in the next three years (other estimates suggest that this may be as high as 15,000 job losses).
- Fare increases are being discussed with figures of 10-12% in the first year.
- Plans for privatising cleaning, catering and maintenance are being discussed. These are early days yet for LRT and major privatisation moves can be expected in line with government proposals for public transport.



Phillip Wolmuth



- In response to the takeover of London Transport, a day of action was organised on 4th July to show opposition from the people of London. CAPITAL, the campaign to protect and improve London's transport are now planning a Public Transport Day to be held in November (provisionally 27th) which will involve widescale leafletting within London and a lobby of parliament. Effective opposition to London Regional Transport will now depend on the response of the trade union movement.



Phillip Wolmuth

## & SERVICES THREATENED



## Women's Hospital Campaign

The struggle over the South London Hospital for Women has been a long one, and with closure due for July 27th, workers and supporters occupied the hospital on June 29th. Wandsworth DHA has resisted the pressure from women all over the country to keep this unique hospital open. The occupiers are optimistic since their action still has official NUPE support. The hospital consultants, all offered good posts elsewhere, seem to be starting to accept new patients again. Since the hospital has a rapid turnover of patients, continued admissions are essential to keep the hospital open. The occupation committee is asking for help on the picket line, particularly from women. Messages of support and donations to: South London Women's Hospital Campaign, 19 Vardens Road, London SW11. The hospital is on Clapham Common South Side, London SW4.

## THATCHER DHA DEFIES GOVERNMENT

Barnet Health Authority have agreed to include Fair Wages Clauses in all its tender documents and contracts. The decision was taken despite a warning by the Chair of the Authority that this would constitute defiance of the DHSS circular. Health unions in Barnet had been campaigning for this measure and a spokesperson for Barnet Health Joint Shop Stewards Committee said 'We have been successful in convincing the Health Authority to back its own staff by preventing contractors undercutting pay and conditions. However, this is only one victory in the battle to protect the NHS and prevent the privatisation of services.' More information from Mike Jackson, NUPE 01 446 0061.

## BIRMINGHAM HEALTH CAMPAIGN

Workers in the Central Birmingham District Health Authority area have launched a determined campaign to stop cuts and privatisation. NUPE member Peggy Gilbert told the July meeting of the Birmingham Trades Council that local hospital workers could take no more: they are being attacked from several different directions at once — bonus schemes are being undermined, work rates are under attack and the threat of privatisation is being used to batter the workforce into submission. Details of the campaign from Gerry Bartlett, NUPE, tel. 021 350 0777.

## THORNTON VIEW Occupation a year old

The workers' occupation against the closure of Thornton View Hospital, Bradford reaches its first anniversary on 5th August. Throughout the year patient care and the maintenance of the hospital has been kept to the highest standard. Morale is still high thanks to the continued support of the patients' relatives, the general public and the Bradford labour movement. The Health Authority recently interviewed all staff supposedly to offer them alternative employment but Betty Elie of the occupation committee told PSA that this was a ruse to break morale: 'anyway there are no other jobs so we can't see where they're going to find them!' she said. The occupation committee still need support for their picket lines and of course, money. The occupation office is staffed 24 hours a day and can be contacted on 0274 817574. Cheques, made out to the Thornton View Occupation Fund, should be sent to: Betty Elie, Resource Centre, 31 Manor Row, Bradford 1.

## HACKNEY HEALTH ACTION



Neil Martinson

After 5 years of run down and repeated threats of closure, workers at St Leonards Hospital in the City and Hackney Health District occupied the hospital after a final DHA decision in June to close it. The DHSS moved fast and slapped injunctions not only on named individuals involved, but also a blanket injunction on NUPE. This is the first time an injunction has been taken out against the whole membership of a union and obviously a dangerous precedent. Unfortunately NUPE decided not to fight the move and withdrew its support for the occupation.

St Leonards was raided at 6am on

Monday 16th July by 15 bailiffs, 20 policemen, and 20 private security guards. They are moving patients out as quickly as they can but no alternative places have been allocated to the mostly long-stay patients, so arrangements are piecemeal and makeshift. Now 12 security guards are on the premises round the clock — at a cost of £900 per day. Further information from Hackney Health Emergency, 01-254 6689.

As we go to press we hear that the campaign to save St Leonards is going strong, with the picket line outside the hospital still in action, with plans to camp outside the gates.



Philip Wolmuth





# NHS more news and scandal



Philip Wolmuth

## BLOOD MONEY

On July 5th one of the country's leading blood specialists, adviser to government and universities, former Tory candidate and GLC Planning Chair, Dr Mark Patterson, was convicted of perpetrating a gigantic swindle on thousands of people, including many soldiers who had donated blood for the NHS. For almost 3 years from October 1977 some 80% of the blood sent to the National Heart Hospital where Patterson worked ended up outside the hospital, mostly in his consultancy network at private clinics including the Harley Street Clinic and the Princess Grace Hospital (part of the giant American AMI Group). And the 'time expired' blood which should have been returned to the Blood Transfusion Service, was stolen by Patterson who used it for a grubby plasma-extraction business carried out in a washroom and garage. The plasma was sold to the Danish Nordisk laboratory with profits of £158,000 for Patterson.

Patterson, friend of leading Tory politicians like Gerard Vaughan and the late Reginald Maudling, had amassed a personal fortune through property deals and through a lucrative private practice which included a £6000 a month consultancy with the AMI Group hospitals and clinics. He is said to have bank accounts in Switzerland, America and New Zealand, and his manor house in the Isle of Wight is worth some £600,000.

## Come Clean DHSS!

Neil and Spencer Holdings, manufacturers of laundry, drycleaning and specialist electrical equipment blame the depressed demand from the UK hospital and laundry sectors for denting their growth. Although profits are up this year, pending decisions on privatisation have held the company back. Company Chairman, Stephen Proctor, has also been concerned that the NHS hasn't been buying enough of his equipment. Last year he wrote to the Government complaining that his company, the leading suppliers of laundry equipment to the NHS, was being undercut by foreign companies and therefore losing sales. It turned out that DHSS consultants had — absolutely free of charge — been advising American and Italian companies on how best to adapt their equipment for British use. In one particular case the DHSS had spent 'hundreds of man hours' adapting sterilising equipment produced by an Italian firm which was then purchased with the aid of a Dept of Industry Product Development Grant. The buyers were not the NHS however; it was Speywood Laboratories, a private pharmaceutical concern owned by a group of British institutional investors!

## ACCIDENTALLY PRIVATE

The Medent International Group of Stockholm have opened the first private health emergency clinic in London. It costs a mere £35 to walk (or be chauffeur-driven) in and tests and treatment are additional; an X-Ray for example costs another £15. The company's publicity brochure says that the clinic is 'open to anyone who needs swift, effective treatment at any time during the working day including Saturdays'. Apparently rich people don't have emergencies on Sundays. . . .

## PRIVATE TRAINING FOR DOCTORS

A plan by a Harley Street doctor and an American university to start a private medical school in London has been condemned by the British Medical Association. The plan involves buying the splendid Bedford College building in Regents Park currently being sold by London University, charging fees of £7,000 per year, and attracting students with 'unconventional' academic qualifications. The BMA fears that it would lower standards by allowing people to buy their way into the profession. There is currently pressure to close two existing NHS medical schools and concern over the number of unemployed doctors.

## NHS Consultants' Ethics

Following several recent scandals, the British Medical Association is to launch an inquiry into the ethics of

doctors with financial interests in private hospitals to which they also admit their own patients. At the recent BMA annual meeting members complained that the increase in private hospitals could lead to a conflict of interests as a number of consultants had heavily invested in private hospitals.



Philip Wolmuth



# WINS In Wandsworth

Public sector unions and tenants in Wandsworth have successfully defeated two more of Wandsworth Council's plans for privatisation. Attempts to put out council laundry services to private contractors have been stopped and building societies have been prevented from using council offices.

At the end of June, the council were forced to accept the continuation of direct laundry services after only one of four companies originally interested in the contract lodged a tender. The council agreed that the companies' methods of working were likely to be less satisfactory than the council's own laundry. Commenting on the latest developments, a local GMBATU spokeswoman said; 'If Wandsworth Council had bothered to listen to us and all the people that wrote to the Town Hall supporting us, none of this would have happened. Our union the GMBATU, told the council months ago that private laundries would take one look at the incontinent laundry that we do for the old people of the borough and run a mile. Door to door collections take a long time and you can't cut corners.' The decision now means that new investment will take place and new machinery will be purchased for the laundry service.

As part of its council house sales policy Wandsworth have been trying to give Abbey National and Woolwich Building Societies space in housing district offices. This plan has now been defeated through joint action between tenants and housing department staff.

# LAND SALES

Valuable land owned by 7 councils is being threatened by Patrick Jenkin, Environment Secretary. In a move which could spell the start of new pressure to sell public land, he has written to Oldham, Nottingham, Leeds, Hounslow, Barking and Dagenham, Darlington and Sunderland councils giving them 6 weeks to argue that the sale of 9 local sites would be 'of serious detriment to the performance of their functions or the carrying on of their undertaking'. If they do not prove their case to his satisfaction he has the legal powers to force a sale.

Local councils, the GLC, Development Corporations, nationalised industries, and other bodies have all set up land registers of their unused land. Now the government is trying, for the first time, to use the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act to force sales. If these are successful a wave of similar sales could follow.



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Finding a telephone kiosk out on a remote country road could soon become a thing of the past. When British Telecom goes private in the autumn about 5,000 kiosks out of a national network of 77,000 will be put at risk. Under the terms of a new operating

licence which will come into operation after the sale of BT all kiosks taking less than £185 a year will be liable for closure. In the past there has been no economic limit placed on the provision of kiosks which were seen as a service to the community.

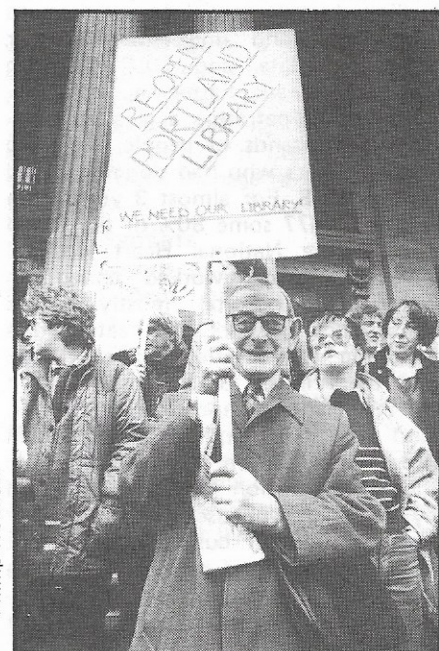
# CLEANERS WIN

Seventy cleaners at Somerset College of Art & Technology and the nearby Castle School in Taunton have successfully beaten off the threat of privatisation. A long-running campaign by NUPE members along with teachers, other education workers and school governors persuaded one of the oldest Tory councils in the country to look realistically at privatisation in terms of loss of control, quality and reliability. Eleven private firms tendered for the work but the Education Committee finally agreed to keep their own staff. National terms and conditions will be kept rather than the £1.40 per hour offered to workers by one of the private firms that tendered. More information from Linda Perks, NUPE, 0272 656081.



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# Library Campaign



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The Library Campaign is a national group recently formed to campaign to defend and improve library services. They welcome information on cuts and campaigns from around the country for their newsletter. They also need financial support. Details from (and donations to) Terry Hanstock, Library Campaign, Central Library, Surrey Street, Sheffield, S1 1XZ. Tel 0742 734750 or Alan Beevers on 0742 734707.



## NEW THINK TANK

# Lady Porter's Rubbish

Lady Shirley Porter, leader of Tory-controlled Westminster Council, has formed a new company, Efficiency In Local Government Ltd, to campaign for the abolition of the GLC. At the recent press conference to launch the company, she introduced some of the members of the advisory council and then said 'I've always been obsessed with rubbish so it seemed pretty clear that I ought to get involved once again with rubbish.' Members include:

- Michael Ivens and Professor Donald Denman (Aims of Industry). Denman was also described by Lady Porter as 'a world expert on property'.
- Peter Bowness (Chair of the London Boroughs Assn and leader of Tory-controlled Croydon Council).
- Geoffrey Edwards (Westminster Chamber of Commerce).
- Walter Goldsmith (Institute of Directors).
- Leslie Chapman, described by Lady Porter as being 'of very great fame' for being the scourge of London Transport.
- Lord Taylor of Hadfield (Taylor Woodrow).

The Baronesses Cox and Hornsby-Smith, Sir Graham Rowlandson lend their weight as does right wing Tory MP for Westminster North, John Wheeler. There are other right-wing notables too.

Finance for this company has come from big business such as Allied-Lyons and individuals such as, according to Lady Porter, 'a man from Indonesia who sent us £5.' Over £50,000 has apparently been raised so far. The company's slogan is 'London will be better off without the GLC' and to get the message across, a hysterical pamphlet has been produced along with car stickers, balloons, badges, T-shirts and posters.

Company spokesman Peter Davis (Institute of Economic Affairs) told PSA recently that they've had to 're-print the leaflets and re-do the T-shirts' due to the heavy demand from individuals and organisations such as 'motoring clubs, Conservative Associations, groups of ladies in factories, office firms and civil servants'. The company intends to hold study groups on 'certain topics' but they 'can't yet reveal what they are'. A new pamphlet will be published in September written by 'four people who are well known in local government'. Future topics to be taken up include the arts and direct labour organisations. Davis told PSA that 'the NHS had not come up for discussion yet'.

The company claims to be 'non-party political' and 'will not hesitate to put forward ideas to the Government'. The *Guardian* Diary of 22nd June described the company as 'another right-wing think tank with big ideas, possibly indulging in profitable operations for its supporters to raise additional funds'.



Philip Wolmuth

## TEA MONEY

Allied Lyons, one of the companies supporting Efficiency In Local Government Ltd, has in the last five years donated £10,000 to the Conservative Party and £360,000 to British United Industrialists. BUI's objectives are to 'further the cause of free enterprise'. Although these sums are nothing compared to Lyons' profits for 1984 — £195 million — every time you drink a Double Diamond beer or Long Life; Lyons or Hornimans tea; Gaymers or Coates cider; Britvic juices; Warninks advocaat or Cockburns port; eat Hales cakes; Lyons Maid or Baskin & Robbins ice cream — just think where your money could end up!



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## More News

### WHAT PRICE WATERHOUSE?

Price Waterhouse, leading multinational auditors and consultants, have been having a rough time in the West Midlands recently. Several months ago they failed to win a contract in Walsall mainly because of opposition by NALGO. Then last April just as they were completing an 'efficiency study' they were kicked out of Wyre Forest District Council when the Liberals on the council joined with Labour in opposing their contract's continuation.

In Dudley, where Labour recently won control of the council from the Tories, the firm's contract has been ended. Their fees, which ran to a seven figure sum in recent years, were for acting as consultants and auditors to a council that made some of the harshest cuts in the country. The firm's latest blow has been an obscure row blowing up in the pages of accountancy journals. Six Tory councils commissioned the firm to produce a report supporting the abolition of the Metropolitan Authorities. Their fee was paid through Trafford Council and this has been considered in some quarters as a breach of the spirit of Audit Commission guidelines.

### COOPERS & LYBRAND CAUGHT

Consultants and auditors Coopers & Lybrand (see earlier PSAs) sell themselves on the basis of their 'efficiency and value for money'. Waltham Forest Council commissioned the firm to prepare a report on the alleged inefficiency of the Borough Architect's Dept but local councillors are now concerned about Coopers & Lybrand's own efficiency; they are three months late in producing their report.

### UNENTERPRISING SALE

The Government's privatisation programme continues to be a source of political embarrassment to them. The recent sale of Enterprise Oil, the company formed to take over the British Gas Corporation's North Sea oil assets, was a disaster with only 12% of the shares offered for sale being taken up. This allowed the multinational mining company, Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ), the opportunity to bid for 49% of the shares. The row over RTZ's bid continues but the failure of the sale yet again highlights the flaws in the Government's argument that privatisation returns state assets to the public through small individual shareholdings or City institutions. The City now fears for its capacity to deal with the forthcoming sales of Jaguar, British Telecom and British Airways. Meanwhile the 'great shareholding democracy' that the Government say they are creating by asset sales appears to be hard to find; and it is significant also that the Government do not keep records of the number of small shareholders in the newly-privatised companies.



# Redditch NEW TOWN FOR SALE!

Redditch, the West Midland new town, has been put up for sale on the open market. In a major privatisation bonanza, more than £30m of land and buildings — the entire holdings of the Development Corporation — have been put out to tender. This will be the first time that the assets of a Development Corporation have been offered lock, stock and barrel in a single sale. The move represents a dangerous precedent for further new town sales.

Members of Redditch District Council and the Development Corporation Board were taken by surprise when Corporation officials revealed their plans for sale. No consultation had taken place with local people despite the fact that months of preparation had gone into development work with 40 estate agents. Now the Board will consider several multi-million pound bids which have been received from a range of property companies and institutional investors.

The holdings which will be offered for sale include building land, leases on 4.5m sq. feet of factory space, commercial property and the lease on the town's successful shopping centre. These are resources which could have passed into the hands of the local community. Instead the sale will deny local people the benefit of income from commercial

leases and it will starve the local council of much needed building land for housing development.

Most insidious about this particular sale is that a local private monopoly will be created, making Redditch into a company town. The buyer will be able to wield enormous power over the democratically elected council. Investment decisions, the future of local industry will depend upon the decisions of the company's board of directors.

The Government is running down a number of Development Corporations at the present time, transferring their property to the Commission for New Towns. Piecemeal privatisation has, of course, been going on but Redditch is the first Development Corporation known to be privatising through a single sale.

**EMPLOYEE SHARES IN BT:** Leaflet available from POEU, Greystoke House, 150 Brunswick Road, London W5. Employee shareholding is being offered as a carrot in the proposed sell-off of British Telecom. This leaflet sets out the POEU's opposition to employee shareholding and examines all the issues surrounding it.

**HEALTH REPORT:** report from a day conference on Health and the Bangladeshi Community in Tower Hamlets. Available from Training in Health and Race, 18 Victoria Park Square, London E2, or the Federation of Bangladeshi Youth Organisations, Montefiore Centre, Deal St, London E1. This pamphlet comprises workshop reports and recommendations, background information and conclusions which add up to an indictment of the way in which the health services have failed the Bengali community in Tower Hamlets. The reports of workshops covering women's health services, mental health, primary health care and practice, alternative health care, equal opportunities and environmental health care show not only the grave inadequacies of existing services and the racism inherent in them, but offer constructive proposals for a way forward. Some 200 people attended this conference, an indication of both the state of the services and the degree of local concern. Though the report is about Tower Hamlets, it has a far wider relevance. A checklist for looking at local issues 'PROVIDING EFFECTIVE HEALTH CARE IN A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY' is also available from Training and Race.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ACTION Information

**ANTI-PRIVATISATION LEAFLETS.** Available from NALGO, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ. NALGO have brought out a series of leaflets as part of their campaign against privatisation. There are seven leaflets in all and each one tackles a different aspect of the Government's attack on public services.

**OCCUPY AND WIN:** A manual for fighting hospital closures. 50p from London Health Emergency, 335 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, tel 01-833 3020. This excellent 24-page pamphlet explains in systematic detail why and how to organise a hospital occupation to prevent closure. It draws on the experience of past and current occupations and contains useful sections on early warning signs and building support in and outside the hospital, as well as the actual mechanics of occupation. Its arguments for occupation are unanswerable: 'It is not certain that occupying a threatened hospital will keep it open, but it is certain that if you do not occupy, it will close.'

## 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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