

Tony Blair Institute Calls for NHS to Offer Paid Premium Service Plan

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Former UK Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair has proposed a plan to reform the 75-year-old NHS so that it will survive his own 80th Birthday. The proposal comes from his think tank, the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, and advocates for the use of wearable technology to collect biometric data, 'A.I.' machine-learning programs, a shared information system between the NHS and private sector, as well as an option to pay to jump the queue.

The NHS, with over 7 million people on its waiting list, is in a fatal decline following the contractions of the “welfare state” in the imperialist countries, and the acute crisis of British imperialism. We have previously covered the deterioration of the NHS, as well as the striking nurses and doctors fighting for their livelihoods and the very existence of the services they provide to the public.

However, Tony Blair’s plan will not fix the National Health Service, even by monetizing the agency with a premium subscription service and data trading. By adding an option to pay to jump the waiting list, Blair's 'institute' expresses its true class influence, and prioritizes enshrining the health of society's richest members, while the mass of working people suffering under a crumbling economy are condemned to lose access to 'their own' national public service. This is very much in line with the interests of capital that rule the UK, which prioritise profit over human well-being. This follows the greater global trend of an increased prevalence of subscription services, guaranteeing themselves steady stream of revenue and making the position of the worker more precarious.

By making the health service a commodity that can be bought and sold, its essence is transformed from social service to business venture, with its basis in acquiring value through exploitation. The British working class, insufficiently united and organised, and unarmed without class consciousness and revolutionary tradition, cannot impede the schemes of capital to reform society in its own interest.

The rest of Blair's plan is rife with technocratic and cybernetic ideology, and the usage of the word “AI” as a buzzword. Cybernetics claims that sufficient use of technology can overcome problems that are intrinsically social in nature, while completely neglecting the social nature of the problem. What this means concretely, is that upgrading the NHS’s systems with more technological integration will do nothing to pay the insufficient wages of the NHS workers, nor will it free the NHS from the capitalist system that has gutted it and left it into such dire straits. Even the buzzword “Artificial Intelligence” that Tony Blair is so fond of, mystifies the crux of this new technology. It is simply a tool (a powerful tool, but a tool nonetheless), that can be used like all other labour-saving innovations to shorten the workday and free human beings from the most tedious and dangerous work; not something to replace or domineer over the living, thinking human being capable of realising and struggling for his or her own interests (as imperialists like Tony Blair conceive it as).

Labour Party think-tanks will set aside the question of seriously restoring the service itself by a nationalization of the private sector as part of a comprehensive plan to unite their resources under a national service plan. Science, technology and labour productivity has developed unimaginably over the past 100 years. Our advancement has never been higher, our technology produces goods with rising efficiency, yet the prices of commodities increase and wages shrink.

Socialism seeks to abolish class distinctions by expropriating the capitalists and “dooming” them to a fate of common labour, where all would be compensated “from each according to their ability, to each according to their work”. In such a system healthcare (and all other goods) from manufacture, to the point of use will all be produced and provided for direct use by human beings, and not for exchange for profit. A person with such a criminal history as Blair's should be a mandatory resident of an institution, rather than the namesake of 'respectable' institutes that whisper venomous guidance to the ruling class.

Source 1

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