

Newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

DAY OF ACTION – MARCH 3:

Health Care Is a Right!

Events will be organised in every region throughout Britain on March 3 as the next part of the NHS Together campaign. The campaign is

planning a national day of action to enable health workers and all concerned people to champion the NHS and to show support for its values, its strengths and its

successes.

The day of action is important in the struggle to safeguard the future of the NHS as health workers' unions, patient groups,

other organisations such as the National Union of Students and the working class and people as a whole fight to prevent the NHS

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NO TROOPS ON FOREIGN SOIL!

NO TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY!

FIGHT FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT!



**- Statement of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) -
February 24, 2007**

Our Party salutes all the varied forces of the people participating in today's march, fighting in unity

with people throughout the globe, including the people of the US, who are building the resistance movement against war, fascism

and aggression, and struggling to plant the alternative of peace, progress and a better world.

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Commentary

Put An End to the Crisis in Education and its Funding! Education Is A Right – Increase Investment in Education!

DELECTING ATTENTION FROM THE CRISIS IN FUNDING EDUCATION and in the gearing of education to the concerns of the monopolies, Tony Blair declared on Thursday that the identification of crises is hugely overdone.

He was referring to the crisis in higher education when New Labour came to power in a speech to an audience at Brunel University. He pointed out that the crisis then in funding university education had become acute. But what is Tony Blair is saying is the saviour of

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As the Anglo-US imperialists persist with their crimes against humanity in Iraq, Afghanistan and countless other places, so the people's movement globally is resisting the return to Nazi-style aggression. Demonstrating their contempt for the people's calls for peace, the Anglo-Americans are again preparing their pretexts to attack Iran in a further crime against the peace.

In Britain, the fact that the Labour government's pretexts and support for and active participation in the crimes against humanity perpetrated daily in Iraq and Afghanistan have attracted almost universal opposition has not persuaded Tony Blair's government to change its course. The government persists in developing its own weapon of mass destruction – Trident – and actively participates in the wars and aggression of the US imperialists. It is complicit also in the preparations to bomb Iran. In so doing, the government

of Tony Blair is shamelessly declaring that it has no answers to the problems which face the world. Its only response is to strike out wildly and seek revenge. To this end, Tony Blair is elaborating his doctrine of "hard power", a new euphemism for military aggression and the imposition of the values of neo-liberal globalisation. In this climate, widespread opposition and action in towns and cities across the country and in the actions of the families of serving soldiers and those who have died in Iraq as a result of Britain's warmongering policies embody the opposition to the war.

People politicians

The demand of the anti-war movement is both that Britain scrap its own weapons of mass destruction and that all British troops be removed from foreign soil immediately. The use of force must be outlawed in settling international issues, and the right to sovereignty and independence

respected and defended. Britain must end its participation in the warmongering NATO military alliance, and a militarised economy replaced by one that serves the needs of the people and is pro-social. These demands are embodied in the resolution of the Stop the War movement and all progressive forces to create an anti-war government. The time is now to fight for and organise to bring into being such a government, bringing into play the immense power and initiative of the people's movement as a collective political force in its own right.

The people's movement in Britain is also resisting the targeting of those of the Islamic faith and outlook, and the criminalisation of ideology and the right to conscience. Its watchword in this context is: *All Together in Defence of the Rights of All!* The British government has determinedly imposed increasingly draconian and undemocratic legislation which criminalises society and attempts to undermine, sabotage

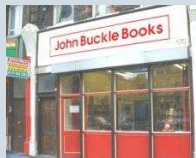
and fragment the opposition to its programme of developing war and fascism. In response, the people's movement has defended itself with the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all and strengthened its unity.

There can be no let up in the opposition to the plans of Bush and Blair to carry out more war and destruction, more crimes against humanity. Enough is enough! To put an end to pro-war government, together the people must discuss the issue in their committees, in their communities, in their places of education and their workplaces. The issue at stake is the necessity for the people to become that force which will create and constitute themselves as an anti-war government in order to end the crimes of warmongering and state terror once and for all.

**Hands off Iran!
End the Wars in Iraq and
Afghanistan!
Bring All British Troops Home
Now!**

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Education is a right!

NUS Demands that HE Must Not Be Abandoned to Market Forces and that "All American" Style Funding Is Not the Solution

The National Union of Students has made it plain that the NUS remains committed to lobbying for greater, direct public expenditure to ensure quality as well as to prevent the cap on fees being lifted. It has warned that politicians' apparent determination to emulate the American system, if they intend to emulate it wholesale, is deeply worrying.

Endowments on the scale of those reported in America's elite universities may be a welcome relief if similar alumni and corporate donations can be raised in Britain, according to the NUS, but this should be complemented by

greater public investment and not by adding huge debt burdens onto students.

The NUS says that maintaining the status quo in High Education (HE) is not enough:

- Massaging stats on overall admissions says nothing of mere "modest" rise in admissions from poorer students;
- Stable or even rising admissions disguise failure on widening participation and must not be an excuse for lifting the cap on fees;
- Bursary system not fit for purpose.

NUS President Gemma Tumelty speaking in advance of Tony Blair's speech said that

universities must do more to encourage applications from non-traditional students and to exceed their own target to see 50 per cent participation rates under the current system – and they must acknowledge the risks of further developing the tuition fees regime well ahead of the 2009 review regardless of the very welcome percentage increase in admissions to be reported by UCAS.

Further marketising the HE sector will jeopardise admissions from non-traditional students as well as creating a cavernous split in the quality of institutions, the NUS believes.

We stand firm in our belief that



the HE sector should be publicly funded, she said. We must step up public investment in the system to keep pace with other countries and to ensure quality and equity.

Furthermore, the current system of bursaries and grants is clearly confusing and needs a complete overhaul to boost take up and end inconsistencies. The NUS is calling for a national bursary scheme to ensure that all students receive the support they need regardless of where they study and that unspent funds are not left in the pockets of vice-chancellors.

Gemma Tumelty said that any new system must ensure that universities with less capacity to raise funds are not penalised compared to the Russell group, who can already boast decent endowments and whose alumni may provide a ripper market. New funding structures must benefit all institutions in the HE sector.

Put An End to the Crisis in Education and its Funding! Education Is A Right – Increase Investment in Education!

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the funding of higher education? Tuition fees, and now the government's focus on encouraging former students, businesses and philanthropists to donate money to universities.

According to Tony Blair, tuition fees are now the conventional wisdom. In fact, the government is increasingly following the US model and style of university funding and fees structure. It is predicated on meeting the needs of big business, linking the content of higher education to the demands of the monopolies, and pursuing the fetish of competition, as though the educational institutions themselves could only justify themselves by engaging in intense competition internationally with the US and

Europe, and, increasingly, as the Prime Minister points out, with China and India. Indeed, this rationale is leading to the situation where the paramount criteria for degree courses is whether they will attract funding. In this scenario, the humanities particularly are under attack. Languages, history and similar courses are being axed, and even the sciences are not exempt, with universities such as Newcastle and Reading shedding their Physics departments completely, and chemistry and other science courses are being closed at other universities.

It is only in words that Tony Blair pays tribute to colleges as sites of disinterested learning (as part of "our civilisation"). The whole focus in the government's policy is on competing in the global market place, so as to encourage

more students to come to Britain and hence attract greater funding. Research should be geared to industry and universities must develop research parks with business, setting up spin-out companies and consultancies. Thus, in this programme, Britain will compete with better-funded competitors abroad, not least in the US. Therefore, Tony Blair's logic goes, the funding of higher education in Britain must ape that of the United States. Despite the fact that students in Canada are also fighting a bitter battle to defend the right to higher education, reduce tuition fees and increase government funding for college education, Tony Blair has a special mention for Ontario's match-funding scheme.

The level, quality and content of education in a society is a measure of its progress. The issue is not some 19th century notion of "disinterested" education, but the fact that an advanced society will take pride and care in educating its young people and students so that they become human beings who are enlightened and will take up

responsibility for the fate of society and its members. The potential of the youth as a whole to advance along this path is being blocked, sacrificed on the altar of competition in the global market and kow-towing to the dictate of the monopolies.

Pursuing the anti-social offensive in education and refusing to provide the investment that education programmes require, the government is actually exacerbating the all-round crisis of society, and entrenching the strangle-hold of the monopolies and their values, or lack of them, over every facet of society, including the content and direction of education.

In opposition to this, students are upholding the principle that education is a right, that the government take responsibility for the funding of higher and further education. They are stating that the government's programme for education is not the solution, but that solutions are to be found in the course of building resistance to the all-round programme of retrogression of the ruling elite.

Day of Action - March 3: Health Care is a Right!

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becoming fragmented and undermined by the government's programme of "investment with reform", introduced to pay the rich and bypassing health workers and professionals as decision-makers.

This government's policy of "investment with reform" is leading to the destruction of the National Health Service and the rejection of people's right to publicly-funded health care. In order to facilitate the implementation of its programme, the government and corporate media are creating hysteria about "budget deficits" in the NHS and using these as a justification for cutting staff, closing wards and hospitals, and wrecking the existing health care services. This hysteria is entirely fraudulent. It takes no account of the right to health care of the human beings in society, but seeks to impose legally-binding budget restraints on hospital trusts that people have had no say in deciding. The government is negating the human factor and imposing entirely inappropriate and callous budget criteria, treating the hospital trusts as though they were competing businesses.

This situation must be brought to an end! The future of the health service is at stake, and now is a critical time in this struggle. Everyone has a right to effective health care at the highest level that society can provide without discrimination on any grounds.

Health care is a right!

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES/EVENTS PLANNED FOR 3 MARCH

LONDON

* a rally to be held at **Friends Meeting House**, 173 Euston Road, in the main hall 1.30-3.30pm. CSP director of Employment Relations & Union Services, Lesley Mercer, will be a key speaker

EASTERN

* **Cambridge** conference - 10am-1pm, Shire Hall, Cambridge

NORTH EAST

Two events currently being planned in:

* **Darlington** - 11am-1pm, corner of Bondgate and High Row, Darlington Town Centre

* **Sunderland** - assemble 10.30am, Barnes Park, Chester Road for march to Sunderland Royal Hospital and then march back to Barnes Park

NORTH WEST

In the North West:

* **Cumbria - Carlisle, Workington, Whitehaven, Kendal and Ulverston:** Flag distribution at main acute hospitals in Cumbria. Stalls at Cumberland Infirmary (Carlisle), Workington, Whitehaven, Kendal & Ulverston from 10.30-12.30pm. Contact: Dave Armstrong, Unison, 07985481327, email: dave.armstrong@unison.co.uk Also, NHS Together supporters will climb Skiddaw after leafleting Keswick and, on reaching the summit, will unfurl NHS Together flags and banners (assemble at Moot Hall at 9.30am)

* **Manchester** - assemble at 12 noon, Albert Square, followed by march round the city back to Albert Square (note: previous event at the Mechanics Centre is now cancelled)

* **Preston** - assemble at 12 noon, Flag Market

* **St Helens** - assemble at 10am, Victoria Square

Also, NHS Together partner unions want the focus of the day to be on:

* **Lobbying key MPs** at their constituency surgeries - If you don't know who your MP is you can find out and how to contact them at <http://www.locata.co.uk/commons/>, or telephone the House of Commons

Public Information Office on 020 7219 4272.

* **Campaigning** in town and city centres with leaflets and petitions

SOUTH EAST

* **Aylesbury, Bucks** - leafleting and petition in the town centre during the morning, then join the Oxford march and rally

* **Lymington, Hampshire** - march and rally at Lymington Hospital, assemble 11am outside Lymington Infirmary, East Hill

* **Winchester, Hampshire** - march from Winchester hospital down the High St to rally at Butters Cross

* **Folkestone, Kent** - march and rally, assemble at 11am WH Smith 57-59 Sandgate Road for 11.15am march to Radnor Park for midday rally

* **Maidstone, Kent** - march and rally: assemble at County Hall 1pm, then march through town centre to Brenchley Gardens for rally at 2pm

* **Woking, Surrey** - rally in town centre to save St Peters & the Royal Surrey County Hospitals. Assemble at 12 noon.

* **Woking, Surrey** - 'Rock for the NHS' concert at the HG Wells Centre, 2pm-10pm on Sunday 4 March

* **Brighton, Sussex** - rally outside the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Eastern Road, 10.30am-12 noon

* **Crawley: Street Theatre** in Celebration of the NHS!, 11am - 3pm, The Bandstand, Queen's Square, Crawley RH10 1HA. local schools, colleges, drama groups & individuals are being invited to perform a play, recite a poem, draw a picture - in fact (almost) anything they want to do to illustrate what the NHS means to them, & why it must stay as a public service in public ownership. Other attractions include a giant 'heat map' of local services & 'Patsy's Postbag' to post your letters to Patricia Hewitt in. Contact: Zena Dodgson, 07788 550577, email: zena.dodgson@nhs.net

* **Hastings, West Sussex** - stall in Priory Meadow shopping centre

* **Oxford, Thames Valley** - assemble Bonn Square by Westgate Shopping Centre from 11.30am for 12 noon march to Menzil Way (new East Oxford health centre site)

SOUTH WEST

* **Barnstaple** - stall in main shopping centre and rally by Library 10am-1pm

* **Bournemouth** - leafleting and stalls

* **Bristol** - march and rally from 1pm. Leaving from Castle Park the march will proceed down Union St, past the Eye and Dental Hospital, then past Bristol Royal Infirmary, continuing via Park Row and Park St to a rally

on College Green for 2pm

* **Gloucester** - Friday 2 March: candlelit 'Hands Around Hospital' vigil at 5pm T&G office, to rally at Gloucester Royal Hospital at 5.45pm (car parking is available at the back of the T&G offices, Great Western Road). Please congregate in front of the main hospital (but please take care not to obstruct any emergency vehicles)

* **Truro, Cornwall** - 10.30am-3.30pm, marquee in Lemon Street, Truro. There will be union stalls, petitions, children's entertainer, jazz band and culinary treats!

THE MIDLANDS (COMBINED EAST & WEST EVENT)

* **Birmingham** - 12 noon onwards outside Birmingham Council House in Victoria Square. Members from the NHS Alliance trade unions in the East and West Midlands will protest alongside likeminded community campaigners, patient groups, NHS staff and the general public. There will be key speakers and music. Bring yourself, your family and friends, your colleagues and bring your voice and banners too!

YORKSHIRE

In Yorkshire, a number of activities are currently being planned. These include:

* **a lobby of MPs' surgeries** on Friday 2 March/Saturday 3 March - especially ones with health responsibilities or Cabinet Ministers - If you don't know who your MP is you can find out and how to contact them at <http://www.locata.co.uk/commons/>, or telephone the House of Commons Public Information Office on 020 7219 4272.

* **Leeds - rally** from 11-12noon in Leeds Cathedral Hall, Great George St; then march to Millennium Square for leafleting the city centre from 2.30-4.30pm

* **Sheffield - rally** from 11-12.30 in city centre, assemble at Western Park (opposite the Children's Hospital) then march into town

* **a celebration of NHS successes** that have been achieved through negotiation with the NHS trade unions. If you have an example of where changes have been made to work for the better, through consultation and negotiation, please contact Warren Glover in the CSP's Employment Relations and Union Services function on 020 7306 6675; email gloverw@csp.org.uk

* **Petitions, leaflets, balloons** etc to be distributed in a variety of other areas to highlight the issues that matter to NHS staff and patients as widely as possible

WALES

a lobby of the Welsh Assembly to take place on Friday 2

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