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Tory PM Johnson Wants Britain's National Health Service Privatized

By Stephen Lendman
Global Research, November 28, 2019

Region: Europe
Theme: Law and Justice, Police State & Civil Rights

On Wednesday, Britain's Labor Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn released secret Tory/Trump regime trade documents, showing Britain's National Health Service (NHS) is on the table for privatization.

Does Tory leader Boris Johnson want healthcare in Britain transformed into a US pay or die system? Corbyn said documents he obtained say so. See below.

The US healthcare industry is controlled by predatory insurers, Big Pharma, and large hospital chains.

Patients pay double the amount for medical care than what's charged in other developed countries.

The US is the only developed country without some form of universal healthcare. If Tories triumph in UK December 12 elections, will Britain move in the same direction?

In the US, millions are uninsured, countless millions more way underinsured, universal single-payer the only equitable solution, what most congressional members and monied interests funding them oppose.

The US has virtual open-checkbook funding for militarism, warmaking, and corporate handouts. Its privileged class is served exclusively at the expense of most others.

It has the world's best healthcare system – based on the ability to pay, a fundamental human right commodified, profit-making prioritized over the public welfare.

No one ever seeks treatment from insurers when ill. If they're eliminated, hundreds of billions of dollars can be saved annually — enough to provide all Americans with healthcare the way it should be delivered.

Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) advocates for replacing dysfunctional Obamacare with a "publicly financed National Health Program (NHP) that would fully cover medical care for all Americans, while lowering costs by eliminating the profit-driven private insurance industry with its massive overhead."

"Hospitals, nursing homes, and other provider facilities would be nonprofit, and paid global operating budgets rather than fees for each service."

"Physicians could opt to be paid on a fee-for-service basis, but with fees adjusted to better

reward primary care providers, or by salaries in facilities paid by global budgets."

"The initial increase in government costs would be offset by savings in premiums and out-of-pocket costs, and the rate of medical inflation would slow, freeing up resources for unmet medical and public health needs."

Doctors in the US are frustrated by a system that requires them to divert valued time needed for patient care to dealing with insurers — concerned only about maximizing profits through rigorous cost control.

Marketplace medicine is all about treating patients as consumers, charging what the market will bear, a dysfunctional system, incomes failing to keep pace with rising costs, putting expensive treatments increasingly out of reach for growing millions.

On Wednesday, Jeremy Corbyn said the following:

> "If you watched the first TV debate between me and Boris Johnson, you'll have seen me hold up these censored, blacked-out reports of secret US-UK talks about breaking open our NHS to US corporations and driving up the cost of medicines," adding:
>
> "You'll have seen Boris Johnson lose his cool, very angrily react saying it was 'an absolute invention' and 'completely untrue.' "
>
> "He told the country there were 'no circumstances whatsoever in which his government or any Conservative government' would put the NHS on the table in any trade negotiations."
>
> "What I have here is something I can reveal to you — 451 pages of unredacted documents and information. All of it here."
>
> "His government released" a redacted version of these documents. "We have since obtained" an unredacted version, "which is a very different version of events."
>
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> "What I have here is something I can reveal to you 451 pages of unredacted documents and information. All of it here."
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> "Perhaps he'd like to explain why these documents confirm the US is demanding the NHS is on the table in the trade talks?"
>
> "These uncensored documents leave Boris Johnson's denials in absolute tatters."
>
> "Voters need to ask themselves some very serious questions: is the NHS safe

> in Boris Johnson's hands?"
>
> "We've now got evidence that under Boris Johnson the NHS is on the table and will be up for sale. He tried to cover it up in a secret agenda but today it's been exposed."
>
> "Now we know the truth, when Johnson says, 'get Brexit done', it's a fraud on the British people. This is the reality. Years of bogged down negotiations and our NHS is up for sale."
>
> "This election is now a fight for the survival of our National Health Service as a public service free for all at the point of need."
>
> "(L)et me give this reassurance: Labor will never ever treat our NHS as a bargaining chip in trade talks with anybody. We will never let Donald Trump get his hands on our NHS. Because our NHS is not for sale."
>
> "These reports cover six rounds of talks running from July 2017 until just a few months ago. The meetings took place in both Washington DC and London."

Negotiations are ongoing, Corbyn stressed.

"We are talking here about secret talks for a deal with Donald Trump after Brexit. A deal that will shape our country's future."

"These reports pull back the curtain on the secrecy that's being plotted for us all, behind closed doors, by the Conservative government. This is what they didn't want you to know."

Corbyn stressed the following points:

Big Pharma wants Brits paying exorbitant prices for drugs like Americans.

Tories say it's nonsense. Unredacted documents Corbyn obtained refute them.

Months of Tory/Trump regime talks are well advanced, agreement already reached on longer-term duration for drug patents.

The longer they last, the more Big Pharma can charge competition-free, putting health at risk because of unaffordability for low-income households.

Drugs in the US are far more expensive than in Britain and other nations with universal healthcare.

Corbyn: "One of the reasons for US drug prices being on average 250% of those here is a patent regime rigged for the big pharmaceutical companies."

In Trump regime/Tory talks, "US officials 'pushed hard' for longer patent" durations.

"Let's be frank. The US is not going to negotiate to sell its own medicines for less."

Time and again, Trump complained about "unreasonably low (drug) prices" abroad. The White House calls it "foreign freeloading."

"Big Pharma has ripped off and imperiled the health of the American people for years. Now these secret reports show they're looking to do the same to us – if the Conservatives are

elected on December 12th."

When Trump visited the UK in June, Corbyn quoted him saying: "When you're dealing in trade, everything is on the table, NHS or anything else."

Unredacted documents he obtained said "everything is included unless something is specifically excluded."

The Trump regime wants "total market access," the "baseline assumption of the trade negotiations."

If Johnson is reelected prime minister in December and Tories control parliament, changes to the NHS discussed above could follow and "be almost irreversible," Corbyn stressed, adding:

"Officials have discussed a system to give corporations the power to sue our country. This is not only a plot against our NHS. It is a plot against the whole country."

"These sell-out negotiations with Trump cover everything from food safety, to gender discrimination rules, to workers' rights" — to privatizing the NHS.

Reportedly six rounds of Trump regime/Tory talks were held from July 2017 to July 2019 — when Theresa May was UK prime minister.

Britain's Channel 4 broke the story, documents obtained through a Freedom of Information request.

"Drug pricing" discussions were called "valuing innovation," code language for Big Pharma wanting to operate in Britain as it does in the US, charging as much as the market will bear.

According to the Channel 4 report, the Trump regime "and (the) powerful (US) pharmaceutical industry want the NHS to pay more for their medicines which are much more expensive across the Atlantic," adding:

"They want to remove the UK's ability to block American drugs not deemed 'value for money' and restrict our powers to allow cheaper alternatives to be prescribed to patients which save the NHS hundreds of millions of pounds a year."

UK "democratic social justice" group Global Justice Now director Nick Deardon said that unredacted documents obtained by Corbyn "clearly show the British negotiators are being bullied (to) danc(e) to the tune of US big business."

Governments of Western and most other societies serve wealth, power and privileged interests exclusively at the expense of ordinary people.

So-called free trade isn't fair. It's hugely destructive, overriding sovereign independence, fundamental freedoms, labor and consumer rights, environmental concerns and social justice.

The scourge of neoliberal shock therapy denies equity and justice for all, prioritizing dominance over democracy, profits over populism, and private interests over public ones.

It's a zero-sum game, benefitting monied interests over popular ones, societies made unsafe

and unfit to live in.

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