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# Rebel Galloway defies critics and returns to York

By James Doughty  
NEWS EDITOR

STUDENTS HAVE EXPRESSED their "disgust" that a controversial MP who called on Arabs to "bomb" British forces during the Iraq war, has been "embraced" by the University.

George Galloway spoke in Central Hall after organizers were "refused point blank" from holding the event at the *Le Meridian* Hotel in the city. Galloway had attended the hotel last year for a similar debate but was rejected after he was deemed "too controversial."

The evening descended into heckling, intimidation and angry scuffles after students intending to voice their objections to Galloway's meeting complained bitterly of their exclusion from the debate.

York Tory Press and Publicity Officer, Normile Babz, described how she was outraged when her question was shouted down, booed and was told to "sit down". "For a rally that was meant to promote peace and democracy, it seemed to be lacking both" she said. Her comments were echoed by another protester, Hugo Bieber, who said he was "absolutely shocked at the intimidation and abuse".

Rory Palmer, one of the event organisers, admitted that the actions of some of the crowd were "questionable" and was left to "defuse" a growingly tense situation outside the meeting after Bieber left the hall with an Israeli flag raised to the audience.

However, he had little sympathy for the protesters. "They knew exactly what they were doing and should not have been surprised by the reaction they got." "They contrived the situation and they provoked the response they set out to get."

Galloway also hit back, spoiling with his critics: "I'm a former amateur boxer and I'll go a few



rounds with anyone." "I'm no pacifist", he added.

Galloway called on students to expel "treacherous" local MP Hugh Bayley from Parliament at the next election for breaking his promise not to vote for war unless there was a second UN Resolution.

The University refused to comment but a source said that the University had not had any reser-

ervations about his visit despite continuing allegations surrounding his checkered past.

Galloway who was expelled from the Labour Party after describing Tony Blair and President George Bush as wolves, this week unveiled a new left alliance dedicated to removing the PM from power, and launches its first election bid in June

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