

Labour Party lefts boost illusions in UN “peace” deal

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A section of the British Labour Party, together with the Greens and Communist Party Stalinists, are seeking to utilise the United Nations deal with Iraq to boost the “peace-loving” credentials of the UN.

A public meeting in the House of Commons on February 22, entitled “No to war and dictatorship,” was led by MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Tony Benn. It featured a total of twelve speakers from the Labour Party, the Iraqi Communist Party, the Iraqi Democratic Movement, the Communist Party of Britain, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Green Party and the National Peace Council.

An air of jubilation hung over the event. As far as the Labour left politicians were concerned, the main cause for celebration was the obvious set-back suffered by US imperialism in the deal struck by UN General Secretary Kofi Annan, and the opportunity for the European powers to strengthen their position in the Middle East.

Tony Benn lauded the United Nations as the true representative of the world’s people and the crucible of democracy and peace. He did not refer to the UN’s sponsorship of the 1991 Persian Gulf war, or the consequences for the Iraqi people of the UN economic sanctions, which have caused widespread malnutrition and a breakdown in public health. Benn endorsed these sanctions in 1991 as a supposedly “peaceful” alternative to war.

Benn denounced the United States, proclaiming, “The US wanted to rule the world by installing their own puppet governments.....Now this situation had ended!” However he and his fellow Labour left politicians are not opponents of imperialism as such. They are against only US imperialism. Their main criticism of the Blair government is that it has tied itself too closely to American foreign policy and, in doing so, undermined Britain’s national interests.

Robert Griffiths, the general secretary of the Communist Party of Britain, echoed Benn’s cheap anti-Americanism, saying, “Whatever happens, we must not tolerate America being the policeman of the world.”

During the meeting the Iraqi Democratic Movement (an anti-Hussein bourgeois opposition group) put out a press release calling on the UN Security Council to adopt a strategy of “Trying Saddam Hussein for his crimes against humanity” and “Providing the Iraqi democratic opposition with the moral and political support for salvation from the dictatorship.”

Endorsing this call, Dr. Ali of the Iraqi Communist Party warned that unless the United Nations acted to engineer a political change in the Iraqi regime, “people will take things into their own hands.”

This is an appeal for the UN to back the installation of bourgeois opponents of the Saddam Hussein regime as a means of heading off social and political revolution in Iraq and the Middle East as a whole.



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