



## Iraq-Iran War

*The most recent round of fighting between Iraq and Iran, in March, proved to be the heaviest and most atrocious battle in the entire war. The massive killing and destruction inflicted, without achieving any results, indicates the degree of frustration experienced by thousands of Iraqis and Iranians. The vicious circle perpetuated by the war is apparent in the contradictory statements made by the two sides, and in the course of the most recent battle, which lasted for two straight weeks, using a huge arsenal, including chemical weapons. As a result, the victims of the 41-month war rose sharply, not to mention the material losses. Human losses on both sides, as of the end of the third year of the war, are estimated at 125,000-175,000 killed, about 300,000 wounded and 50,000 imprisoned.*

*While the human and material losses are the most tragic aspect of this war, its recent escalation poses grave new dangers, threatening to enlarge the area of combat. One side of the danger is seen in Iran's having taken over a part of Iraqi territory. The other aspect is the threat of a US and NATO intervention which would lead to full imperialist control of the Gulf area, under the pretext of keeping the Hormuz Strait oil route open.*

From the start, we in the PFLP, along with a broad spectrum of progressive and national forces, opposed this war. We stressed that Saddam Hussein's battlecry of «liberating Arab land» was a false cover for the regime's own reactionary ambitions. When raised by a bourgeois regime that had pulled Iraq out of the confrontation with imperialism and Zionism, this slogan had nothing in

common with the goals of the Arab national liberation movement.

Today, however, the Iranian invasion of Iraq has raised the other side of this question. We now find ourselves forced to stress that it is equally unacceptable that any Arab territory be occupied, or any Arab country dismembered. Just as the Iraqi regime's original aggression diverted from the main con-

tradition and struggle in the area, that against the imperialist-Zionist plans, so does Iranian occupation of Iraqi territory.

Today, although the aggressor is forced to retreat and attempt to negotiate a ceasefire, the war is bound to continue. This is because the Iranian regime, that has been scoring victories in the last year, insists on continuing in order to impose its own maximum conditions. The declared Iranian conditions are: overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime, payment of war indemnities of around \$100 billion, and the return of all Iraqi refugees to their country. The Iraqi regime has accepted the last two conditions, but obviously not the first. For the Iranian regime, it remains essential that the present Iraqi regime be replaced by an Iranian-style Islamic system.

This insistence on continuing and escalating the war is tantamount to inviting imperialist intervention. Already more US and British warships are stationed in the Gulf area, which has long been defined by imperialism as an area of «vital interest». The Reagan Administration, as has been proved in Lebanon, Grenada and elsewhere, will jump at any chance to spread its hegemony. Thus, whatever party invites such interference is responsible for drawing a great threat on all the people of the area.

The threat of imperialist intervention underscores the urgency of solving the conflict on the basis of respect for each country's sovereignty and non-