

interference in internal affairs. Clearly, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime has been posited as a prerequisite for ending the war, but this must be the prerogative of the national and democratic Iraqi forces who can then determine the nature of the future government.

## Who can stop the war?

The question arises as to whether there is any way out of this vicious circle. Is there a way to stop the bloodshed, preserve the resources of the two peoples, avoid the occupation of Iraqi territory by Iran, and thus prevent Iraq from being divided? Last, but not least, is there a way to avoid US-NATO hegemony in the Gulf area?

As is clear from the above, neither the Iraqi nor Iranian regime is ready to make this decision at the present moment or in the near future. Nor can the so-called big powers put an end to this war.

From the beginning, the Soviet Union has stated that this war is destructive and not beneficial to either people, but rather serves only imperialism and its plans. Meanwhile, both regimes are deeply antagonistic to the Soviet Union and communism, and thus oblivious to its principled position.

On the other hand, the US and West European states have throughout had an interest in the continuation of the war.

On this basis, both sides were provided with arms. This dual support is motivated by the following considerations:

1. The continuation of the war, as desired by imperialist forces and Arab reaction, serves to squander the human, economic and military resources of both countries. It has reinforced the right wing trend initiated by Saddam Hussein's regime, that pulled Iraq out of the confrontation with the enemy, and given the reasons for deepening Iraq's cooperation with Arab reaction and imperialism. This was a welcome development for US imperialism for it has simplified the implementation of its plans in the area: spreading the Camp David accords, the invasion of Lebanon, liquidating the Palestinian cause, forming a reactionary alliance in the Gulf (the Gulf Cooperation Council), and finding justifications for stepped-up US-NATO military presence in the area.

2. The continuation of the war provides the reactionary rulers in the Gulf, and the Arab world in general, with a justification for their subordination to US imperialism and their participation in its plans under the pretext of the danger coming from Iran. At the same time, it gives the US and other NATO countries an opportunity to impose their hegemony in the Gulf under the pretext of «protecting» the vital oil interests.

3. Continuation of the war was intended by the imperialist and reactionary forces to weaken the possibility for

democratic change in Iraq. And indeed, Saddam Hussein's regime has utilized the war as a cover for its internal repression. A prime example of this was reported by Iraqi democratic forces in February: On Christmas Eve, 1983, security officers «called on» 670 Iraqi families in Baghdad and other towns in Iraq, to inform them of the death of a family member. The families were forbidden to hold mourning or to tell anything about the death of their sons and daughters. The authorities refused to hand over the bodies for the simple reason that these 670 men and women, of varying political and religious persuasions, had been tortured to death, and their maimed corpses would have revealed this fact. Public announcements of death are attributed to war victims.

## National democratic alternative

By inducing this comprehensive national catastrophe, the Iraqi regime has exhausted all justifications for its continued existence. The time is ripe for a national democratic alternative. The only solution is what has been agreed upon by all the Iraqi national and progressive forces: the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, to be replaced by a national democratic authority which would implement democracy, grant autonomy to the Kurdish people, and return Iraq to the confrontation against imperialism, Zionism and reaction. This could lay the basis for a reasonable negotiated solution to the war, based on principles which would secure the interests of both peoples.

Achieving this task requires unity among all the nationalist and progressive Iraqi forces in order to determine the future course of their country. It also requires efforts from the Arab national liberation movement, the nationalist regimes and progressive forces internationally, to aid in advancing this unity, in order to bring about democratic change in Iraq. Otherwise, the forces of imperialism and reaction will prevail... ●

Victims of a lost war

