

but also the Palestinians as a people dispossessed and disenfranchised by Zionism, the Israeli leadership wants to deal with the Palestinians as a minority population who might have some human needs to be addressed on some level, in order to beautify Israeli military rule and abort the masses' daily resistance to occupation. Peres had already signalled his intents by meeting with Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij and Hikmat Masri of Nablus, both known as long-time supporters of the Jordanian option.

New Arab summit?

To fill the gap enforced by the predictable US and Israeli conditions, the rightist Palestinian leadership has thrown itself into the reactionary Arab regimes' efforts to convene an Arab summit. While the US seems in no hurry to talk to the joint delegation, Arafat for his part needs the semblance of Arab consensus to lend credibility to his chosen course before the talks with Murphy.

No Arab summit has been convened since autumn 1982. This reflects the general disarray in official Arab politics due to a number of factors—the Gulf war, Lebanon, etc. More specifically it is related to the reactionary regimes' failure to bridge political differences with Syria, or break Syria's opposition to Camp David in its original and revised forms. This has blocked the consensus policy on which the Arab League is based. So one can ask who wants a summit now and why. What are the possibilities for its being convened? What results can be expected?

The reactionary regimes, especially Jordan, want an official confirmation of



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their line for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict under US auspices. They, together with the rightist PLO leadership, want «pan-Arab» confirmation of the February 11th accord and a practical plan for implementing it. For this reason there have been intermittent attempts to convene a summit in the recent past, but these have not materialized. What makes this attempt more serious is that the reactionary forces feel encouraged by the differences that arose between various nationalist regimes when the Palestinian camps in Beirut were besieged. The reactionaries hope to play on these differences to attract as many as possible to the summit.

It will be impossible to have the February 11th accord and the reactionary line adopted by a full summit. Yet the reactionary forces may have deemed that the time is ripe to replace the consensus policy with decision-making by majority rule. Jordan has long been pushing for amending the Arab League constitution to this effect, and has tacit Saudi support in this matter.

Besides the political differences separating the nationalist and reactionary regimes, there are many other obstacles to the summit's convention, with various regimes competing for their own particular interests. For example, Iraq has refused to attend unless discussion of the Gulf war is on the agenda. Arafat's interest in gathering a reactionary con-

sensus was seen in his late July visit to Saddam Hussein, to iron out these obstacles. While Arafat was in Baghdad, it was announced by Hassan II of Morocco that the summit is to convene August 7th, with those who want to attend.

The intention of those pushing for this summit could make it the most dangerous Arab summit to date. Yet the fact that many obstacles and unresolved contradictions remain gives the nationalist regimes and forces good chances for blocking its convening or staging a boycott that would expose the summit's unrepresentative nature. Blocking the summit and its possible results puts the same demands to the progressive and nationalist forces and regimes, as does defeating the February 11th accord and the right-wing policy generally. The key to rising to this challenge lies in genuine alliance and solidarity between all nationalist and progressive regimes and forces, especially strengthening the Lebanese nationalist-Palestinian-Syrian alliance. Only the enemy forces actually profited from the war of the camps in Beirut. It is the duty of all opponents of the right-wing policy to close ranks in common struggle against the main enemies: imperialism, Zionism and reaction.

See update on Arab summit in Arab World section, page 20.