

## US Elections: Continuation of the Reagan Era

On November 8th, Americans went to the polls to vote for several things. They voted on a president and chose Republican George Bush over Michael Dukakis. They voted heavily Democratic for Congressional Representatives and Senators. And in four cities, separated by thousands of miles, they voted on referendums on Palestinian human rights, self-determination and statehood. Indeed, this was an election that has been heavily observed by progressive activists internationally, because it will have serious results affecting them until at least the year 1992.

For Palestinians, in the occupied territories and the diaspora, this election was also important. They watched to see who would become President of the United States and how that would affect the American position on the one-year-old uprising. They watched to see the results of the congressional elections and how much aid Congress would vote to 'Israel'. And lastly, Arab-Americans witnessed for the first time a detailed and serious discussion take place in subcommittees, caucuses and conventions of the two major political parties around the issue of Palestine.

This year, for the first time, in Democratic State Conventions, 10 states adopted a plank calling for Palestinian self-determination and statehood. It was also this year that in four cities, referendums were held for voters to state their position on the Palestinian quest for self-determination and a homeland. And it was this year, for the first time since the creation of the state of 'Israel', that a plank was introduced at the Democratic National Convention around this issue. Additionally, it was this year that more Arab-Americans were registered to vote and active in the electoral process than in any other election. Therefore, we at the staff of *Democratic Palestine* decided to write a detailed article on the US elections with special emphasis on both presidential candidates' positions on the Middle East and specifically, the Palestinian question.

### BUSH

There is no doubt that George Herbert Walker Bush, soon to become that 41st President of the United States,

represents the military-industrial complex in the US and therefore poses a danger to all peace and justice causes on the domestic, as well as, international level. He represents the extreme right-wing in Washington. Bush, 64 and the son of former liberal Republican Senator from Connecticut, has held the following positions: Director of the CIA (1976), Vice-President to Ronald Reagan (1980-1988), Chairman of the Vice-Presidential Committee on Terrorism (1986), former Ambassador to China and former US Representative to the UN. Bush is also a member of the Trilateral Commission\* and of the Council on Foreign Relations.

On the domestic level, Bush outlined several proposals, none with any real substance or ideas that had not been put forth during the Reagan era, such as a «war on drugs», maintaining the minimum wage at a rate workers cannot live on, tax cuts for the wealthy,

nothing new in health care or housing, while maintaining support to the death penalty.

In the military field, Bush said he would call for a NATO meeting to reassess the alliance's purpose as it heads into its fourth decade in 1989. He asserts, «NATO is not just a military organization and our policy must be more than defense initiatives» (*International Herald-Tribune*, September 23, 1988). He said of chemical weapons, «If I am remembered for anything it would be this: a complete and total ban on any chemical weapons.» Bush proposes international censure against any nation that uses chemical weapons, and on-site inspections on demand of suspicious plants. This, of course, is a farce. Bush stated this due to the domestic and international outcry against the use of chemical weapons. It is a well-known fact that the US used chemical warfare during Vietnam, i.e., Agent Orange. ►

Bush - the military industrial complex's man

