

Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren glorify the late President Bush

By Genevieve Leigh
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Among the most notable comments on the death of the one term Republican president who oversaw countless war crimes, were from two prominent “progressive” Democrats: Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren.

Sanders tweeted early Saturday morning: “President George H.W. Bush served our country honorably. He and Barbara will be remembered for their humble and devoted service to the country they loved. Jane and I send our deepest condolences to the entire Bush family.”

Warren commented in a very similar vein on Twitter: “George H.W. Bush was an American patriot who lived his life and served our country with dignity. From joining the Navy during WWII to the presidency, his devotion to public service was unmatched. Bruce and I send our heartfelt condolences to his family.”

Also of note is the fact that of the 25 incoming congressional Democrats identifying themselves as “progressives,” all but four tweeted praise and condolences of the late Bush. Many even went as far to retweet Obama’s official statement.

The characterization of George H. W. Bush as an “American patriot” who served “honorably” and with “dignity” hardly needs to be refuted. Any truthful accounting of his presidency will confirm beyond the shadow of a doubt that he was a war criminal responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent people both at home and abroad.

Perhaps best known for orchestrating the first Gulf War which he sold to the American public on a pack of lies (a method employed years in the form of weapons of mass destruction by his son to sell the war Afghanistan). Throughout that conflict he oversaw the virtual destruction of Kuwait, dropping a combined 88,500 tons of bombs on the country killing thousands

of innocent people. Alongside this war abroad he also oversaw the vicious escalation of the “war on drugs” on home, which led to the incarceration of thousands of workers and youth.

These crimes against humanity are not a distant memory for many workers. In fact, a review of the comments under Sanders’ tweet Saturday morning reveal the immense anger and hatred felt within the working class for Bush Sr.’s presidency. Among hundreds of angry, and some very colorful comments one person wrote: “He was a war criminal. He loved the rich and lining his own pockets. Don’t falsely eulogize someone as repulsive as GHWB just because he’s dead. If there’s a Hell, he’s there for many crimes against the American people and the world.” Another, “Honorable? I guess that tells me a lot about what you believe to be honorable.”

What is the significance then, of the virtual universal praise of such a figure among the nominally “left” and “progressive” members of the Democratic Party? What about George H. W. Bush’s record rings “honorable” and “dignified” in the eyes of these figures? What does it indicate about the nature of the conflict between the two parties?

The outpouring of solidarity to the Bush dynasty expressed by the Democratic Party leaders, and especially Warren and Sanders, expresses a fundamental truth of bourgeois politics: despite the ferocious infighting between the Republicans and the Democrats, both parties fundamentally agree on all the basic questions. They agree on a defense of inequality, “strong borders”, war, and the system upon which their wealth and position in society rests: capitalism. It is not a question of morality or personal friendships but one of a shared class interest.

This reality has been confirmed countless times in the

past two years. Among the first actions of the Democratic Party in the aftermath of Trump's victory was to call for accommodation and cooperation to ensure a "peaceful transition." Obama went as far to proclaim that the elections were only an "intramural scrimmage" in which all sides were "on one team," while Sanders announced that he "and other progressives are prepared to work with" Trump on policies to "improve the lives of working families."

The same script was played out after this year's midterm elections. After making an extremely limited appeal to popular anti-Trump sentiment, only in order to divert it along safe channels for the capitalist system, the first order of business for the Democrats as the polls closed was to call for "unity." Pelosi's deputy in the House, Steny Hoyer, declared shortly after the results were that: "His [Trump's] objectives are objectives that we share ... there is an opening for us to work together."

As for Sanders, the declaration of solidarity with George H. W. Bush is no sudden change of heart. Rather it is completely in line with his 2016 in campaign in which he funneled the support he had won by appealing to popular hatred of the billionaires, behind the despised candidate of Wall Street, Hillary Clinton.

The exaltation of war criminals such as John McCain a few months ago and George H. W. Bush this week is part and parcel of the ferociously right-wing campaign of the Democratic Party, in which they are actively seeking to garner support among the population for future wars. The main focus of the Democratic Party's campaign against Trump has been, not his fascistic attacks on immigrants or on democratic rights in general, or his own warmongering, but on the claim that Trump is insufficiently committed to a confrontational policy against Russia.

The elevation of George H. W. Bush by the Democratic Party is a politically calculated move. Workers and youth who may have remaining illusions that the "blue wave" of Democrats hailed as the "most diverse" incoming freshman class in history should take note of such events and draw the necessary conclusions. The "diversity" of those elected in the midterm elections consists of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and other "identities". But when it comes to political views, they are remarkably

unified as status quo Democrats who have no problem with honoring war criminals.

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