

The ruling class, the CIA and the pseudo-left mourn Democratic senator Dianne Feinstein

Jacob Crosse
30 September 2023

On September 28, 2023, longtime right-wing Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein died in her home in Washington D.C. A senator from California for 30 years, and prior to that mayor of San Francisco, she personified the intersection of great wealth and the military-intelligence apparatus that is the hallmark of the modern Democratic Party.

Feinstein's death was announced early Friday morning by her staff, prompting leading members of both big business parties, former presidents, the current director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and phony "socialists" such as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to pay fawning tributes and eulogize her political career.

Feinstein, a fierce war hawk, like former secretaries of state Hillary Clinton and Condoleezza Rice, is being hailed by the entire American ruling class and mainstream press as a "trailblazer" for her sex. She showed the world that in America, women politicians could defend imperialist interests as ruthlessly as their male counterparts. They could authorize illegal wars, cover up government surveillance, and oversee the transfer of massive sums of wealth from the working class to the bourgeoisie.

The former national security adviser and then secretary of state in the George W. Bush administration, and apologist for US war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, Condoleezza Rice wrote on Twitter/X: "Feinstein will always be remembered as an extraordinary and influential figure in American political history... I was grateful to her for stepping across the aisle and introducing me to the Senate in my confirmation process. Rest in Peace."

The spearhead of US-NATO aggression against Libya, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton likewise praised Feinstein: "She blazed trails for women in politics and found a life's calling in public service. I'll miss her greatly as a friend and colleague..."

In perhaps the most damning eulogy of the late Senator, CIA Director William Burns wrote in a statement published Friday, "I was saddened to hear of the passing of Senator Dianne Feinstein—the first woman to chair the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence."

The CIA is a byword for assassinations, military coups, political subversion and crimes of all kinds. It is currently playing an "outsized role" in funneling weapons to Ukraine, according to *Newsweek*. Its current leader, Burns, declared that Feinstein's "long legacy of public service will serve as an inspiration to her colleagues, her constituents, and this Agency for a long time to come."

Former President Barack Obama wrote on Twitter/X that Feinstein, "will be rightly remembered as a trailblazer ... she broke those barriers." Obama added, "I came to rely on her as a trusted partner in the fight to guarantee

affordable healthcare and economic opportunity for everyone."

Republican senators and Trump co-conspirators Lindsey Graham and Ted Cruz characterized Feinstein as a "trailblazer" in their eulogies. Graham called on "any young person ... to study the life and career of Dianne Feinstein as a role model." Cruz said it was a "privilege" to spend 11 years with her on the Senate Judiciary Committee, where they helped oversee the confirmation of hundreds of right-wing judges.

Missouri Republican Senator Josh Hawley, who, like Cruz, voted to overturn the 2020 election following the storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021, wrote on Twitter/X that it was an "honor to serve with her in the Senate and on the Judiciary Committee." Feinstein was "always willing to work across the aisle to get things done," he wrote.

Joining his "Republican colleagues" in heaping praise on Feinstein, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders said Feinstein, "was a woman of great courage and achievement." New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez characterized Feinstein as a "history-maker who paved the way for women leaders in this country."

Like former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Feinstein was an upper-class woman married to a San Francisco multi-millionaire, who had no connection to the social struggles of the 1960s or 1970s when they entered politics, moving quickly into leadership roles.

Prior to her death, Feinstein was the longest-serving female senator in US history, and, according to financial disclosures reviewed by CBS News, "one of the richest U.S. lawmakers, with a net worth as high as \$69.4 million this year."

Even this figure is a gross underestimation. For 42 years, Feinstein was married to billionaire financier and major donor to the Democratic Party, Richard Blum. Her husband, who died of cancer in 2022, managed Blum Capital Partners, which counted among its clients Bank of America, according to the *New York Times*.

A brief review of some of the most consequential episodes of Feinstein's six-decade political career provides context to the outpouring of support the senator has received from the war criminals and reactionaries in the ruling class.

Feinstein was born Dianne Goldman in San Francisco on June 22, 1933 to Dr. Leon Goldman and Betty Goldman. Leon was a surgeon while Betty was a former model. Dianne went to a private Catholic high school but practiced Judaism as an adult. After she graduated from Stanford in 1955, Democratic Governor Pat Brown appointed Feinstein to the California Woman's Parole Board in 1960, where she served until 1966. In 1969, she was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, where she

remained for nine years.

After two failed campaigns for mayor of San Francisco, Feinstein succeeded to the position following the November 27, 1978 double assassination of then-Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk by former Supervisor Dan White. She was later elected in her own right, adopting a “law and order” platform and appealing to police and right-wing elements.

Backed by her wealthy husband, in 1990 Feinstein ran against Republican Senator Pete Wilson in the California gubernatorial election, losing by roughly 200,000 votes. When Wilson gave up his Senate seat to assume the governorship, Feinstein ran to replace him. In what was branded as the “Year of the Women” by capitalist publications such as *Time* magazine, Feinstein, along with fellow Democratic senators Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray and Carol Moseley Braun, were elected to the Senate in 1992, while Barbara Mikulski won reelection.

Standing on the right wing of the Democratic Party on both foreign and domestic policy, Feinstein was impervious to appeals from “progressives,” whether for a “single-payer” healthcare system or for a “Green New Deal.” However, she gladly joined in the identity politics promoted by the upper-middle class, through which the Democrats and their Wall Street backers have sought to give the party a “left” cover for its thoroughly right-wing agenda. This is the “pioneering” aspect of Feinstein’s career, as one of the first women to hold a Senate seat not previously held by her husband.

In her nearly 31-year tenure in the Senate, Feinstein became the first woman to chair the Senate Rules Committee (2007-2009) and the highly secretive Select Committee on Intelligence (2009-2015). Beginning in 2017, Feinstein was the ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Feinstein’s leading role on these committees, especially the Select Committee on Intelligence, is a testament to the faith the ruling class and its military-intelligence apparatus put in the senator to carry out the predatory objectives of US imperialism.

In 1999, Feinstein voted in favor of bombing Serbia. Three years later, she joined a majority of Senate Democrats in supporting the October 2002 Iraq war resolution that paved the way for the invasion and subsequent occupation of the country.

While Feinstein has since claimed she was “misled” by George W. Bush in voting in favor of the Iraq invasion, in a Twitter/X post made on September 29, former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter said he briefed Feinstein on the lack of evidence he found to support the claims of the Bush administration that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Ritter claimed that Feinstein told him, “Your position is causing us some difficulty. You are making the US look bad in the eyes of the world.” Ritter said he told her he would “shut up” if she could tell him she had proof Iraq possessed WMDs. Ritter wrote: “She looked at her retinue, and then me. ‘I have seen no such intelligence,’ she replied.”

“The blood of thousands of Americans and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis stains her soul,” Ritter added.

A long-time rubber stamp for the intelligence agencies, as chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee in December 2014 Feinstein oversaw the

publication of a heavily redacted report that documented the torture of prisoners at secret CIA facilities around the world from 2002 through 2007. The investigation revealed that CIA agents, acting at the direction of the president of the United States, engaged in a torture program that included forced rectal feedings (sodomy), waterboarding, mock burials, physical beatings and even death.

The report implicated virtually every leading member of the George W. Bush administration, from the former president to Vice President Dick Cheney, former CIA director George Tenet and Justice Department lawyers John Yoo and Jay Bybee, who authored memos declaring the torture legal.

Prior to issuing an executive summary of the redacted report, whose full text has never been made public, Feinstein accused the CIA of spying on Congress and withholding documents from the committee, and said that the agency was accusing the committee of stealing documents, which the committee had a right to see because of its oversight role.

Despite these damning accusations, and the revelations from her investigation, Feinstein joined then-president Barack Obama and the rest of the Democratic Party in whitewashing not only the illegal actions of the CIA in spying on Congress, but the torture program it oversaw for years. Obama provided assurances to the CIA well before Feinstein’s investigation that no one would be prosecuted, no matter how horrible the abuse and torture the agency oversaw.

As Obama said in an interview with the *New York Times* prior to his 2009 inauguration in regards to the torture program, “we need to look forward as opposed to looking backwards.”

“And part of my job,” he continued, “is to make sure that, for example, at the C.I.A., you’ve got extraordinarily talented people who are working very hard to keep Americans safe. I don’t want them to suddenly feel like they’ve got to spend all their time looking over their shoulders.”

In her last years, Feinstein, like the rest of the Democratic Party, was a vociferous supporter of unending war against Russia in Ukraine. During the Trump and Biden administrations, Feinstein was a reliable “yes” vote on the nearly \$1 trillion Department of Defense budget, and backed every crime committed by the national-security apparatus.

It is this long record of complicity with imperialism that accounts for the display of mourning in the political establishment and the corporate media.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact