

Socialist Senator Explains the Difference Between Democrats and Republicans

By [Mike Whitney](#)

Global Research, April 12, 2016

[CounterPunch](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

In-depth Report: [U.S. Elections](#)

What's the biggest difference between "socialist-lite" candidate, Bernie Sanders, and a political heavyweight like Huey Long?

For one thing, Long didn't mind bending the rules. After his scuffle with Standard Oil, (Note: The Louisiana legislature tried to impeach Long after he threatened to raise taxes by \$.05 on every barrel of oil refined in the state.), Long threw away the rulebook and decided he'd do whatever-it-takes to defeat his enemies.

"You sometimes have to fight fire with fire," Long said. "The end justifies the means. I would do it some other way if there was time or if it wasn't necessary to do it this way."

And he was right, too. You can't beat corporate America by playing nice and hoping that truth will prevail. It won't prevail. The corporations are too powerful and too willing to crush anyone that gets in their way. Long learned that the hard way. His falling-out with Standard Oil turned the media and the wealthy elites against him like a pack of rabid dogs. He was demonized in the papers and accused of all kinds of nefarious things including trying to have a political rival assassinated and attending parties "where half-naked women danced the Hula". Naturally, these fabrications paved the way for his impeachment.

But Long outfoxed them all. He fired up his base by barnstorming across the countryside denouncing Standard Oil and he enlisted the support of 15 senators who helped him block the impeachment. His critics claimed that the senators were bribed for their support, and they probably were. But the fact is, the experience taught Long how the game was played, how to fight dirty and win. And when he won, the people of Louisiana won, because the money he collected on the oil tax went to roads, bridges, universities and free books for schoolkids.

Can you imagine Sanders doing anything like that? Can you imagine him doing anything even slightly shady or underhanded?

Nope. Then he won't succeed, because you can't beat Wall Street and the giant corporations playing by the Marquess of Queensberry rules. Politics is bloodsport, not patty cake. If a person is too squeamish to get his hands dirty or twist a few arms, he should find another line of work. Like Long said, "I used to get things done by saying please. Now I dynamite 'em out of my path."

What's not to like about that?

Long was a scrappy streetfighter who liked confrontation and didn't mind getting his nose bloodied every now and then. He also liked winning, which is precisely what we need right now, someone who knows how to win and doesn't sweat the details. Leave that to the historians.

"I fought the Standard Oil Company and put those pie-eating members of congress out of office. I used a crowbar to pry some of them out and I'm using a corkscrew to take the rest of them out piece by piece." (All of this is available in the excellent [Huey Long Documentary](#))

Can you imagine Obama boasting that he just rubbed some corporate honcho's nose in the dirt?

Heck no. The man has been bowing and scraping ever since he took office in 2000. It's embarrassing. Name one corporation or financial institution he's taken to task? Just one?

There aren't any. The man is a complete lightweight, he couldn't even get Guantanamo shut-down after 8 years of trying. What kind of lame chief executive is that?

Should we care that Long might have bribed the 15 senators or should we focus on the schools, and bridges, and roads and universities he built? Here's what he said about the matter:

"They say they don't like my methods. Well, I don't like them either. I really don't like to have to do things the way I do. I'd much rather get up before the legislature and say, 'Now this is a good law and it's for the benefit of the people, and I'd like you to vote for it in the interest of the public welfare.' Only I know that laws ain't made that way. You've got to fight fire with fire."

Right on. This is exactly what the country needs, a brassy-brawling chest-thumping populist who likes a good slugfest and doesn't mind stretching the rules a bit when necessary. And if he happens to have some less-than-admirable human frailties, then so be it. Who cares? Elliot Spitzer certainly had his flaws, but that doesn't mean he wouldn't have been the best man to run the SEC. He would have been! In fact, If Spitzer had been the top regulator a lot of the scheming cockroaches who blew up the financial system in '08 would be cooling their heels in a federal hoosegow right now. You can bet on it.

By the way, Long was never convicted of corruption even though FDR- who saw Long as his biggest political rival- put the FBI and the IRS on his tail.

Why? Why would FDR hassle a progressive supporter who helped to get him elected?

Because Long was further to the left than FDR on every issue. Long was making the case for redistribution of wealth instead of the weak-kneed, watered-down, half-loaf "New Deal" gobbledygook that FDR was dishing up. Here's what he said:

"When you have a country where one man owns more than 100,000 people, or a million people, and when you have a country where there are four men, as in America that have got more control over things than all the 120 million people together, you know what the trouble is."

Here's more:

"We do not propose to say that there shall be no rich men. We do not ask to divide the wealth. We only propose that, when one man gets more than he and his children and children's children can spend or use in their lifetimes, that then we shall say that such person has his share."

Who can disagree with that? And check this out:

"We've opened up night schools to educate the adult illiterates. We've paved the highways. We've built free bridges. We have built a new capitol. We've taken the insane out of the jail cells and placed them in modern institutions.... And now, the corporate element of this State...who've profited by, who ransacked this state for the element of their allies — are being told what they can do and what they can't do. What they will pay [and] what they can't keep from paying for the welfare of the people of Louisiana. And we expect to have this State ruled by the people and not by the lords and the interests of high finance."

Isn't that the way the system is supposed to work? Aren't the representatives of the people supposed to have the power to tell the corporations what they "can and can't do"?

As far as FDR , well, he nabbed enough of Long's progressive ideas to preserve capitalism and keep the American people on his side, but he balked at doing anything too radical. Roosevelt never really intended to change the system or level the playing field. His real goal was simply 'damage control', to stop the bleeding long enough so that the 1 percent parasites could resume their relentless plundering. Which they did.

Long of course has been given the same treatment as Castro and Chavez. Anyone who opposes glorious capitalism and works for the poor, the needy, the uneducated, the underrepresented or the unemployed, has to be discredited, denounced and demonized. And, so he has been. But he was a great leader who put the corporations in their place, helped to lift millions of people out of poverty, and single-handedly dragged Louisiana into the modern era.

Booyah, Kingfish. We could use you now, buddy, that's for sure.

Mike Whitney lives in Washington state. He is a contributor to [Hopeless: Barack Obama and the Politics of Illusion](#) (AK Press). Hopeless is also available in a [Kindle edition](#). He can be reached at fergiwhitney@msn.com.

Notes:

1-Check out Huey Long's famous Bar-B-Q Speech-3 minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hphgHi6FD8k>

2-Quotes from: "Huey Long: The Man, his Mission and Legacy"

<http://www.hueylong.com/perspectives/huey-long-quotes-in-his-own-words.php#bbq>

The original source of this article is [CounterPunch](#)

[**Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page**](#)

[**Become a Member of Global Research**](#)

Articles by: [Mike Whitney](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca