

**BERNIE SANDERS: THE WORKING CLASSES' CANDIDATE**

A Thesis

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by

Catherine Alison Hill

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is the story of Bernie Sanders, the Socialist Mayor of Burlington and his campaign for Governor of Vermont in 1986. The campaign is used as a prism to explore his version of socialist politics and policies within a capitalist state. The policies which Sanders developed in this campaign for lowering property taxes for middle and lower income people, increasing social spending, increasing citizen participation and raising the taxes for wealthy people and corporations are examined in detail. Sanders claims that city governments can work for poor and working class people, however this thesis demonstrates the difficulties leftists have in getting elected and in implementing policies whenever they do win. In conclusion, I examine the questions about left participation in the electoral process, the autonomy of the state, and what socialist municipal and state policies should be.

The data for this work includes coverage of the campaign in the "Burlington Free Press", "The Rutland Daily Herald", and Montpelier's "Times-Argus". In addition, I used the position papers of all three candidates, interviews with Sanders and his campaign workers, and national coverage from leftist publications such as "North Star" and "In These Times". Statistical research was drawn from the summary of the election results by town published by the State of Vermont. Information from the U.S. Census 1980 was also used for background information.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Catherine Hill was raised in Ithaca, New York and considers herself to be an Ithacan to this day. She also considers herself to be a feminist, a Marxist, and an urban planner. She is currently working as a planner for the City of New York, and working against the City's policies in her spare time.

Ms. Hill received a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology from Cornell University in 1985, and with the completion of this thesis expects to receive a Masters of Regional Planning in 1989.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed to this thesis; first and foremost was Professor Pierre Clavel whose work on progressive cities is integral to this work. I am also grateful to all of the people in Burlington, not least of all, Mayor Sanders, Peter Clavel, Micheal Monte, and all the CEDO staff, Peggy Luhrs, Lynn Vera and the Women's Council members, George Thabault and the rest of Sanders' campaign volunteers. I am grateful to them not only for the time and energy they gave to me for this thesis, but for the work they do on a daily basis in Burlington.

Finally, I am grateful for the insight and support provided by my friends: my sister Sara Hill, Molly Klein, Phil Gasper, and David Sweeny. Without their intellectual prodding, I would never have explored these questions in this depth, and without their support, I could never have finished this thesis at all.

## PREFACE

I wrote this thesis from altogether biased perspective. If you are looking to read an indepth voting analysis of the candidates for Governor of Vermont in 1986, this isn't it. Nor is it a play by play account of Sanders' administration in Burlington; Renee Jacobs' thesis on the early years of Sanders' administration may be more useful in this regard. This thesis is an exploration of one man's version of class politics in the 1980's, and the story of his campaign to bring that vision to the people in Vermont. At each turn it is juxtaposed to the argument that the left should not engage in the government at all, and that government, even local ones, are merely the instrument of the ruling class.

In this thesis, I hope to clear government of the charge that it is a mere "committee for the management of the whole bourgeois class" and explore the role of the local government in supporting working class political identity. I contend that, as leftists have carved appropriate technology out of the capitalist scientific establishment, so too should leftists in government create an "appropriate bureaucracy" out of the capitalist state. We have a responsibility to understand the existing state with historical and critical eye, while exploiting whatever political and organizational opportunities we find in it.

Left organizations have argued, often very persuasively, that participation legitimates the myth of democracy and pluralism, and demoralizes socialists who necessarily become disillusioned with

socialism in one city (or state). I take this argument very seriously. Yet I am also aware of the marginality of the left in the United States. While I accept the arguments concerning the limitations of electoral politics, I also believe we must look at the limitations of non-electoral politics. By refusing to engage in elections, American leftists cut themselves off from the arena in which most Americans look for politics. The Democratic Party has proven to be a poor conduct for the voice of poor and oppressed Americans, being ineffective as well as too conservative. As the power of our unions declines, the workplace too became depoliticized. Meanwhile, our major cultural institution, the television industry, remains firmly in the hands of the ruling class and squarely in the center of every working class living room. And so American leftists ask themselves, again, what is to be done?

In the summer of 1984, I chose to work for a different kind of mainstream politician. I had read a newspaper article about Bernie Sanders, socialist mayor in the Burlington, Vermont, and with the help of Pierre Clavel obtained an internship at the Community and Economic Development Office of the City of Burlington. In the summer of 1984, and again in the summer of 1985, it was my honor to work with a dedicated, progressive team of planners and organizers who make up the Sanders' administration.

Retrospectively, as a planner for the city of New York, I can say that the vitality and dedication of Burlington's city workers is very unusual. Burlington's city workers create and enforce policies from the perspective of what is good of working and poor people.

Worker ownership, city funded day care, access to the waterfront, women's economic opportunities are not terribly radical demands; but in Burlington they are taken seriously. They are taken seriously because poor and working people are understood as the constituency of the administration, not a problem to be solved humanely. Working for the City of Burlington I came to recognize that government, while not the powerful tool I once hoped, could work for poor and oppressed people. Writing my thesis on this vision of government, I hope to lay the groundwork for a concept of the state which, while not losing sight of the controlling hand of the ruling class, suggest ways for the left to participate in the government.

In this thesis I will use Sanders' campaign for Governor as a prism through which to view Sanders' socialism. As his theory is part and parcel of his practice. Sanders is not a theoretician, and yet I believe his work is vitally important to radical theory. Sanders does not work with Marx' definition of class. Rather than explicitly reworking the concept of working class, Sanders starts his analysis from the other direction. He explores the interests and behavior of the ruling class of Vermont. What are the interests of the shareholders of the public utility board? How does corporate bypassing of taxes affect the rest of us? Perhaps his success is due to his ability to ignore the problems of definitions, and to forge these definitions as they emerged from practice.

Throughout this work a number of terms will be employed loosely. I define a socialist perspective to be an analysis which uses the category of class and which advocates the overthrow of the



ruling class, whether by peaceful or revolutionary means. By this criterion, Sanders is a socialist. I will also refer to the "American Left" by which I mean individuals who describe themselves as being farther left than the Democratic Party. Generally, they advocate economic equality, democracy, local control, social equity, and claim to fighting racism, sexism and against the ruling class. As the American left is not organized into a single party or even a series of parties, I believe it is appropriate to employ the term loosely. I have specified "progressives" within this category by which I mean those who work within the arena of municipal socialism. Again this is a self-defined category; those who consider themselves to be part of a progressive city administration are included. The term was used this way by Pierre Clavel who documented the emergence of "the progressive city" in the late 1970's and 1980's. Sanders' campaign for governor is a culmination of his work as a progressive mayor and it is important to examine this movement as part of an introduction to the campaign.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNOR:

#### INTRODUCTION AND SANDER'S EXPERIENCE AS MAYOR

In this thesis, I will record the story of a campaign which lost but which nonetheless contributed significantly to the history of progressive participation in American electoral politics. When Bernie Sanders, socialist Mayor of Burlington Vermont, became what incumbent Governor Madeliene Kunin termed "a second credible candidate"<sup>1</sup> in the 1986 race for Governor of Vermont, he broke a barrier rarely surmounted in American politics. Winning 15% of the state-wide vote constitutes a challenge to the two party system, suggesting that third party or unaffiliated candidates can be serious contenders for political office. Moreover, by winning a sizeable percentage as a socialist, Sanders brings into question the conservative argument that socialism has no constituency in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Sanders' support came from both middle class and working class areas, demonstrating that socialists can have an appeal for the American "masses", as well as middle class progressives.

One outgrowth of Sanders' political success is an exploration of the rarely confronted questions concerning socialist policies in a capitalist city or state. Rather than engaging in the vague

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<sup>1</sup> Fundraising brochure "Kunin's Campaign Report" 1986.

<sup>2</sup> Werner Sombart makes this argument in 1906; more recently proponents include Theodore Lowey.

rhetoric of mainstream politics, in his campaign for Governor Sanders laid out specific policies for the state building on his administrations' policies in Burlington. This included a progressive tax reform program, new controls over utility and telephone rates, raising the state minimum wage increase, and increasing social spending for farmers and poor people financed by an increase tax on the wealthiest Vermonters and the large corporations. Sanders' campaign represents one construction of socialist policies for local governments; a construction which has demonstrated appeal for many working class and middle class voters.

Sanders' decision to run for Governor developed from his experience as a socialist mayor, and his work as mayor lay the groundwork for the campaign. Sanders' record as an efficient and progressive mayor ensured that he was taken seriously by the electoral establishment as well as by the voters. George Thaubault, Sanders' campaign manager, explains:

We also had the record of pretty good government. There hadn't been any scandels. He hadn't raised taxes too much. We'd been portrayed as very efficient and businesslike, and innovative.<sup>3</sup>

The history of this and other progressive cities is then an important prelude to our discussion of the campaign. Sanders is often touted by the press as a curio; in reality, Sanders' work as mayor of Burlington, while unique in many ways, is also part of a larger progressive movement. While Ronald Reagan and the conservatives have controlled the national government throughout the

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<sup>3</sup> See Interview of Thabault in Appendix.

eighties, progressives and liberals have won local office in many cities. Sanders' election as Mayor of Burlington in 1981 was one of a number of victories in the 1970's and 1980's by third party coalitions which fought for city hall and won. For ten years, between 1969 and 1979, a progressive city council majority controlled Hartford, Connecticut. During this same period in Cleveland, a powerful neighborhood movement and a sustained concern with planning developed into a radical agenda under the leadership of Dennis Kucinich. Kucinich served one term as mayor between 1977-1979. In 1979, Berkeley Citizen Action gained four of the nine seats on city council and the mayor's office; given the tentative support of city councilwoman Carole Davis, BCA was able to govern Berkeley. With the exemption of one two-year period, the Berkeley Citizen Action retained leadership with majorities as high as 8 of 9 seats through 1988. In 1981, progressive coalitions won in Santa Monica and in Burlington.

These administrations share a number of characteristics. Unlike Democratic city administrations, they tended to be independent of local business interests. In the preface to The Progressive City, Clavel defined the progressives:

The main features of progressive politics as practiced in these cities included attacks on the legitimacy of absentee-owned and concentrated private power on the one hand, and on nonrepresentative city councils and city bureaucracies on the other. These attacks led to programs emphasizing public planning as an alternative to private power, and to grass-roots

citizen participation as an alternative to council-dominated representation.<sup>4</sup>

Progressives interfered with business as usual, replacing private corporate decision-making with planning and community control. Rent control, linking public benefits to the concessions awarded developers, support for worker-owned businesses and land trusts are some of the economic initiatives which have come out of progressive cities.

The Progressive Coalition in Burlington appears to have a longevity not enjoyed by other progressive administrations, with the possible exception of Berkeley Citizen Action. Bernie Sanders has won four elections over a period of seven years, and progressive candidates have consistently held the working class wards of Burlington. When Sanders was first elected in 1981, he had only two supporters on the council. In the following aldermanic election, the Progressive Coalition won three additional seats, destroying the Democrats' control of the council, and breaking the City Council into thirds: five Progressives, five Republicans and three Democrats. The formation of the Community and Economic Development Office in 1983 established a stronghold for progressives within the administration of the city. The new department, together with Sanders' appointments to the city's commissions, made it possible for Sanders' to develop effective policies.

Renee Jacobs in her thesis Planning and Politics documented Sanders' administration in its early years. She describes the

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<sup>4</sup> Pierre Clavel The Progressive City page 1.

opposition Sanders faced from the top city personnel, and the innovative mechanism he employed to circumvent it:

Though Sanders' initial victory can be seen as a protest vote against an inefficient and unresponsive city administration, his re-election two years later was a tribute to his hard work and down-to-earth style, his effectiveness as an administrator, and his appeal as a defender of the common people.<sup>5</sup>

Sanders was successful in bringing disenfranchised groups into process of governing the city. The Sanders administration, lead by neighborhood activist Micheal Monte, generated an effective mechanism for neighborhood participation which left the decisions for how to use the federal Community Development Block Grants to Neighborhood Planning Assemblies. Monte and the CEDO office simply facilitated meetings, and followed the direction dictated by the neighborhoods. The neighborhood assemblies funded youth programs, park improvements and other local concerns.

Sanders generated more avenues for citizens participation through the creation of the Youth Office and the Arts Council. The Youth Council would grow to help establish a daycare center for downtown Burlington, a newspaper written by and for young people and a training program for young "hard to employ" people interested in construction. The Arts Council is best known for the free concerts in the parks and occasionally in City Hall itself.

A third avenue for participation, perhaps Burlington's most innovative, is its Women's Council. The Women's Council is one of

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<sup>5</sup> Renee Jacobs Planning and Politics: A Case Study of Progressive City Administration p.7.

the most militant and independent of the city councils, as well as one of the most powerful. The Women's Council brings together women from all of the women's organizations in Burlington to represent women's interests. The Council includes young and old, conservative and radical women and has produced numerous conferences, sexism speak-outs, free clinics, and other educational events. Its first major initiative was an affirmative action ordinance which reserves 10% of all city funded construction jobs for women. The ordinance was passed by the City Council in 1983, and the Women's Council Coordinator (a city-funded position) runs a job bank of available trained and/or interested women. Its second major initiative is a transitional housing project for low income women, which is currently underway. While the Women's Council has taken the lead in the fight for employment and housing, it retains its role as the forum for voicing women's issues within the city government. By incorporating the interest of these groups into city administration, Sanders substantially increased public participation in Burlington.

Sanders' record in terms of economic development, which was considered to Sanders' original ticket into office, was more mixed. Sanders stood firmly opposed to the Southern Connector, the highway which the previous administration and downtown businesses had called for while the affected neighborhoods and other anti-development advocates denounced. However, Sanders and the CEDO office negotiated on the waterfront issue, and came to support a mixed use private development plan which included both public access and condominiums. This compromise was not supported by the voters and



the bond act for the waterfront proposal was defeated in 1986. Generally by the end of his first term Sanders came to be seen among some business leaders as supportive of development. Nick Wylie, manager of the Burlington Mall and a downtown business leader, took this position:

First, he is competent. He is running the city. Second, he is pro development. He really wants it. He has figured out that it is a cow to be milked. He wants to build his tax base. Previously there was this lurking presence...low-income people who could rise up and stop any project. Paquette was not dealing with them. Sanders has dealt them in.<sup>6</sup>

Sanders wanted to represent the interests of low income, working people. In his estimation, an anti-development stance which ignored the need for creating new jobs did not achieve this end.

The conflict between middle class concerns and working class interests surfaced at several points of Sanders' administration. Sanders identified with what he considered to be the working class position. For example, Sanders did not support the efforts of middle class radicals in Burlington to close down the GE factory which produced Gatling guns for the military, despite the fact that many of his staff were involved. His position was that until the workers of the plant were involved in the protests and in the creation of a viable conversion scheme, he would oppose the efforts. Sanders asked the peace activists to talk to the workers and to gain their confidence. Sanders worked for reforms which he saw as emerging from a working class agenda, and rejected middle class activism which was the life blood of other progressive city

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<sup>6</sup> Pierre Clavel The Progressive City page 177.

administrations such as the movement in Santa Monica.

In these ways, Sanders administration is more akin to the "gas and water" municipal socialists of the nineteenth century than to his contemporary counterparts. The United States has a rich history of municipal socialism which is long ignored by historians. Milwaukee is the best known example beginning with the election of Socialist mayor Emil Seidel in 1910 through World War I to the defeat of Mayor Dan Hoan in 1940. Socialists were also elected in other smaller cities such as the election of George Lunn in 1911 in Schenectady, and important socialist movements in cities as disparate as Oklahoma and New York. In his introduction to Socialism and the Cities, Bruce Stave describes these socialists:

Often coming to power as a consequence of voter reaction to corruption within major party administrations, fearing programs that would raise taxes and alienate business and the public, limited by city charters and at loggerheads with hostile state legislatures, believing that a socialist municipality in a capitalist nation had little chance of success, the city Socialists determined to be "in the world and of it".<sup>7</sup>

Sanders and the other progressives of the 1970's and 1980's can also be said to be "in the world and of it"; Sanders was an honest and effective administrator as well as a committed socialist. Sanders' bid of governorship was a consequence of his "loggerheads with state legislatures" in particular over the issue of taxation, and his run for the Governorship was an attempt to break out of the limitations of constraining city charters, and the hostile state legislatures.

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<sup>7</sup> Bruce Stave Socialism and the Cities p. 5.

While Sanders recognized the capitalist interests of developers and businessmen, he also saw the need to work with them.

From his experience as mayor, Sanders brought an ability to identify working class positions and to make them his own; at the same time, he recognized the need to work with the ruling class. The policies which Sanders developed in this campaign serve as a model of American municipal socialism. They are an example for socialists and progressive city and state workers of a compromise with capitalism which also challenges ruling class ideological hegemony. All told, the campaign offers a compelling argument for progressives to work in the state.

Traditionally, Marxists have claimed that the progressives should not participate in electoral politics because the state is dependent on the ruling class and thus bound by their agenda. In the "Communist Manifesto", Marx and Engels described the state as, "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" and the Marxist viewpoint has focused around this position. Since the 1960's Marxists have begun to explore the relationship of the state and the ruling class more closely. Why does a democratic state remain in the hands of the ruling class? How does the local and state government serve "the ruling class"?

Two complimentary arguments have developed around these questions. The first relies on the notion that powerful elites control elections directly through contributions and control of the Democratic and Republican parties. In the race of governor, Sanders' opponents were able to raise half a million dollars each,

while Sanders was only able to raise \$60,000. Obviously, a candidate who explicitly condemns the powers of the very wealthy cannot hope to solicit their financial support. One lesson afforded by Sanders campaign for Governor is that city elections are much less expensive and thus easier to win than state or national campaigns. The remaining question is whether the cost is prohibitive or whether it merely makes campaigning more difficult.

The second argument which supports the hypothesis that the ruling class controls the state focuses on the structural and ideological constraints. Proponents of this position claim that the state must ensure the accumulation and reproduction of capital, and thus it is bound to policies and positions which support a ruling class agenda. For example, the threat of capital flight which local progressive administrations face is often cited as the rationale for conservative policies. If progressives attempted real redistribution of wealth, businesses and their wealthy owners and administrators will simply move on to a city with a better "business climate".

Sanders' defeat in the race for Governor reflects these arguments; wealthy elites controlled the election through campaign contributions. In addition, structural and ideological factors limited his policies as mayor, and thus limited the list of accomplishments Sanders could point to during the campaign.

If elites use ideological as well as structural constraints, then an "achilles heel" may exist. Progressive politicians have intuitively sensed this. First some politicians simply refused to

play ball. Dennis Kucinich, progressive mayor of Cleveland from 1977-1979, was such a political and he saw his very presence as disruptive:

The establishment is accustomed to winning all elections. When they don't succeed in electing their preferred candidates they readily co-opt the winner into their preferred circle. But what if he won't make the book. An elected official who has no price is too dangerous to be permitted to survive.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly some have argued that political office could function as a new structural niche for the emergence of working class consciousness. Clearly this is a different vision of class consciousness from the notion of the workplace as the focus of class formation, although it is not necessarily in opposition. This expanded notion of class formation, with its attendant expanded definition of class, is suggested by the work of Antonio Gramsci and others; however, Sanders' understanding of class and political practice must be understood as original work.

Sanders was able to successfully bring socialism into the picture in Vermont politics and to draw the line between working class and ruling class interests persuasively. In his campaign for Governor, Sanders developed policies for the State which reflect a working class analysis and which captures the idea of non-reformist reforms. By this I mean that his policies whose immediate impact may be simply reform but which by their nature challenge ruling class ideology. For example, as mayor Sanders supported an affirmative

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<sup>8</sup> "Kucinich Defines Urban Populism" Reprinted from The Cleveland Press October 3, 1978.

action ordinance, initiated by the Women's Council, which helped bring women into the well paying construction trades. Affirmative action is an important reform, but essential liberal. In this case, while women benefit materially, ideological assumptions about women were challenged. Sanders' administration did not merely fight for women's right to jobs, they fought for the right to any job, including jobs requiring unfeminine qualifications and paying a "family wage".

In the main body of this thesis, I explore Sanders' positions using the campaign as a prism into Sanders' political thought and his work as mayor. There are two overriding questions: first what evidence is there of Sanders' class analysis, and secondly what was the resulting practice. Since the sixties, the American left has been turning away from class as the analytical category; sex and race attained equal prominence as tools for understanding oppression. Sanders uses a class as his analytical tool, and focuses on understanding the ruling class and its behavior. This allows him to bypass the problem of defining who constitutes the working class. The remaining question is whether Sanders' version of class analysis is radical in the 1980's.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CAMPAIGN; OPPONENTS TO THE RIGHT AND LEFT

Unlike their European counterparts, American leftists do not participate in electoral politics to any great extent. In their infrequent ventures, they usually claim to be conducting educational campaigns which are not intent on actually capturing office. Sanders himself had run four educational campaigns for state-wide office Vermont with the Liberty Union Party in the 1970's. At that time he had stressed the educational aspects of the campaign.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of an educational campaign is simple--to channel people's attention, captured by the legitimacy of elections and maintained by the media, into a particular issue or perspective. Participation may be perfectly opportunist, and does not invoke the complicated questions concerning endorsement of existing system of government. However, educational campaigns place "candidates" in an awkward, seemingly hypocritical position of running for an office which they have no intention of holding; voting for such a candidate is an equally obscure act. While elections do offer an opportunity for educating the masses, voters are logically more interested in the ideas of candidates who genuinely want to take office and have concrete ideas for change.

Sanders entered the 1986 race for Governor with an eye to

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<sup>1</sup> Rutland Daily Herald May 10, 1986

educating people and to win office.<sup>2</sup> His opponents, Madeleine Kunin the Democratic Governor and Peter Smith her Republican challenger, are in many ways typical of their respective parties. Kunin considers herself to be a conservative democratic, and in the campaign stressed her role in retiring the state deficit during her first administration. In her first two years, she took a strong stance for environmental protection, winning approval for laws regulating underground storage tanks, protecting groundwater, and creating a state fund to finance clean-ups of hazardous waste.<sup>3</sup> Kunin also considered herself to be an advocate for education. The Free Press summarized Kunin's campaign, as "highlighting education, the environment and keeping the state in good fiscal shape".<sup>4</sup> Kunin projected an image of moderation and fiscal conservatism, and ran a low key campaign.<sup>5</sup> She was criticized for a lack of leadership ability, as well as, in the minds of some liberals, being overly concerned with retiring the deficit. While most of the papers endorsed her, they did so criticizing her first two years in office for lacking leadership.

Smith criticized Kunin along somewhat different lines. In announcing his candidacy, Smith promised to halt increases in state spending and the growth in the state's bureaucracy. He claimed that the message of his opponents was, "more government, more regulation

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid 1

<sup>3</sup> Vermont Affairs p. 44

<sup>4</sup> Burlington Free Press June 16

<sup>5</sup> Burlington Free Press November 5



and more bureaucracy".<sup>6</sup> He felt that the state should limit itself and return control to the local communities. The theme of the campaign was that government close to the people can do the best job, and Smith stressed the fact that he was a native of Vermont. In one of his television ad, Smith is portrayed riding on a ferry on Lake Champlain saying, "This boat is no stranger to me, I scrubbed these decks as a kid, sold newspapers, I learned what Vermont self-reliance is all about".<sup>7</sup> Smith saw himself as reinvigorating Vermont's traditions of self-reliance and local control.

Yet Smith was unable to ground this image in substantive issues. In Montpelier's Times-Argus, the editor noted the Republican candidate's limitation:

Even Republicans admit that Smith has not latched onto an issue that has caught the attention of the public. Smith has criticized Kunin for being a heavy spender. However, during her first term, the state paid off a 35.6 million deficit and ended the last year with about a \$8 million surplus".<sup>8</sup>

Smith opposed Kunin's tough stance on environmental issues, arguing that it was time for a "re-evaluation" of environmental legislation. He also opposed Kunin's support for increased spending for education, claiming that "you can't regulate your way to excellence".<sup>9</sup> Smith even tried to persuade voters that Kunin had a secret plan to raise taxes after the election; yet none of these

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<sup>6</sup> Burlington Free Press May 22

<sup>7</sup> Burlington Free Press June 16

<sup>8</sup> Times-Argus October 5

<sup>9</sup> Burlington Free Press May 22

positions struck a responsive chord with the voters.

In as much as Kunin and Smith were typical of respectively the Democratic and Republican parties, Sander's campaign has even greater potential as a model for third party or independent candidacy. For a cursory look at their positions, this seems to be the case. Kunin stressed liberal issues such as the environment and education, while keeping an eye on the budget. Smith called for a return to local initiative and a general reduction in the government. While Smith did not have the strength which has typified his party for the past eight years, his perspective parallels that of the Republican party nation-wide.

In keeping with the recent practices of their parties, Kunin and Smith both used television advertisements in the campaign. They both spent close to half a million dollars on their campaigns which primarily went to pay for television advertisements; Kunin spent \$400,000 and Smith spent \$500,000. In comparison, Sanders spent only \$60,000. The difference between the campaigns is further demonstrated by the location of the campaign headquarters. Smith, the son of a prominent banker, located his office in swank accommodations above a Montpelier bank; Kunin's headquarters were located above a sporting goods store; while Sanders' headquarters were located above a pizza parlor in the working class section of Montpelier. (Free Press June 16) The three candidates literally came from different sections of town.

Sanders ran the campaign as an independent socialist, claiming that "for every person we lose...we gain at least as many more.

Many will tell us, 'I don't know what socialism means, but if you're not a Democrat and you're not a Republican that's good enough for me.'<sup>10</sup> In my interview with Sanders, he reiterated these sentiments:

I think we are the only state in the United States where the word socialism is not automatically thought of as a negative. I think that's primarily because we've been alive here seven years and accomplished certain things...I think the positive of it is that it indicates to people that I am not a conventional politician. If they are not happy with the status quo then that is a positive thing...I would say that it indicated in the campaign an unorthodoxy and a willingness to take on the system.<sup>11</sup>

As well as invoking the label, Sanders took positions in the campaign which emerge from a socialist perspective: for example, in the Burlington Free Press Sanders is quoted as saying that, "wealth and power are synonymous", and that "half of 1 percent of the population in this country owns 35 percent of the wealth of the nation".<sup>12</sup> Kunin responded, in the same article, with a typical democratic party position-- her administration tried to help "those in need". While Kunin saw herself as running a compassionate administration, she did not consider ending inequalities as a serious goal. Moreover, she did not respond to Sanders' claim that wealth and power are synonymous, which is a direct confrontation with a liberal understanding of democracy. Smith responded by claiming

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<sup>10</sup> "Against the Current" Sept.-Oct 1986 p. 63

<sup>11</sup> Interview see appendix

<sup>12</sup> Burlington Free Press August 27, 1986

that Sanders had merely issued a vague statement without substance, and then restating a need for economic vitality in the region. I will discuss the specific character of Sander's positions in more detail in the following sections, but at this point it is important to note that Sanders ran as a socialist and discussed issues from that perspective. By running a campaign to win as a socialist Sanders was embarking on an unusual project.

Sanders faced opposition to his campaign from both leftists such as the editors of "In These Times" and his some of his local supporters in the Progressive Coalition. George Thabault, Sander's campaign manager, noted that the Progressive Coalition was only marginally involved in Sander's campaign for Governor; "in the beginning there were a few meetings...but to expect that the organization would be that effective in a governor's race was not the right perception".<sup>13</sup> Thabault described the Progressive Coalition as unable to function effectively on the state-wide level for two reasons. First, the coalition was tired from recent aldermanic elections. Secondly, coalition members were jealous of their time in short summer of Vermont. Generally there was very little energy in the Coalition. Secondly, Thabault noted that the organization is Burlington based and ward oriented. Even if the coalition had gotten involved it is doubtful that they could have functioned effectively. Their contacts were local, and their strategies-- such as leaflet drops and door to door canvassing--

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<sup>13</sup> Interview page 6 see appendix

more appropriate for city-wide elections.

There were other reasons for the lack of support from the Coalition. Some Coalition members, such as Micheal Monte, felt only partial support for the effort. Monte felt that the campaign stretched the organization and Bernie's energy too far. Moreover, structurally the coalition had no mechanism for choosing candidates for state-wide office. Sanders made his decision and then came to the coalition for support. This process might have raised some suspicion or resentment from coalition members who had not chosen a candidate but had been chosen by one. The Progressive Coalition officially supported Sanders campaign, yet the low number of volunteers from the Coalition indicates that the concerns of Monte were shared by other members of the group.

"In These Times" editors opposed the campaign on more theoretical grounds. First and principally, they claimed that Sanders divided the left. Their logic went as follows: Madeline Kunin was a better candidate than her Republican opponent, therefore people on the left should support her candidacy in order to avoid a Republican victory. This question is an old one for the left, and one which has received much attention. In an "Address to the Central Committee of the Communist League" in 1850, Marx discussed this question:

In this connection they (the workers) must not allow themselves to be seduced by such arguments...as, for example, that by doing so (putting up their own candidates) they are splitting the democratic party and making it possible for the reactionaries to win. The intention of all such phrases is to dupe the proletariat. The advance which the proletarian

party is bound to make by such independent action is infinitely more important than the disadvantage that might be incurred by the presence of a few reactionaries in the representative body.<sup>14</sup>

In many ways, Marx's comments seem appropriate to this situation. It is not clear that Smith's policies vary substantially from Kunin's; both advocate conservative state spending and saw economic development as the result of attracting big business to the state. More generally, both are members of parties which believe capitalism, with a little help from the state, is a fair and prosperous system. While Kunin supported more environmental regulations and more funding for education than Smith, their differences are of degree rather than kind. In my interview with him, Sanders scoffed at the idea that he was dividing the left, noting that Kunin was a moderate democrat at best. He noted that the Kunin administration had conservative policies, particularly in regard to minimum wage and taxation issues.

The editors of "In These Times" raised a second, related argument against Sanders' campaign for governorship; they claimed that because women are underrepresented in government, a progressive should not run against a women candidate. Sanders' response to this claim was that he felt he was better on women's issues, particularly child care and employment than Kunin. Sanders' claim is that women's issues are what is at stake, not the gender of the candidate. However, in general, Sanders seems skeptical of feminist politics. He believes leftists should fight the ruling class,

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<sup>14</sup> Alan Gilbert Marx's Politics p. 239

other "ism". In interview, Sanders became particularly annoyed by the concept of classism, stating that class is not an attitude problem, but a division of power. While Sanders supports women's issues, particularly their poverty and the lack of child care, he does so as a socialist rather than as a feminist.

It is unclear how much the desire to support a woman candidate, and Sanders' ambivalence toward feminism, detracted from Sanders' support. Lynn Vera, a member of the Burlington Women's Council explained her position thusly; "I think I'm going to vote for Kunin...Sander's has not been good on women's issues in Burlington, we've had to push him every step of the way and then he takes the credit".<sup>15</sup> Her claim, however, was not that one should vote for a woman candidate "at all costs", but that Sanders was not in fact good on women's issues. Ellen David-Friedman, Sanders campaign manager for the early portion of the campaign, stated that Sanders' fundraising efforts were hindered in part by the reluctance of progressives to contribute to a campaign against an incumbent woman.<sup>16</sup>

Sanders tried to counteract this sentiment by proposing measures to make child care more available, to end discrimination against women with respect to business loans, and pledged support for poor women's right to abortion. One indication that Sanders was not successful in overcoming the gender issue is that there is a negative correspondence between counties that voted in support of

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15 Personal conversation

16 Burlington Free Press, Sept. 12. 1986

the state-wide ERA and support for Sanders.<sup>17</sup> I will address Sanders' position on women's issues in more detail in the following section. At this point it is important to note that the issue of gender seems to have had at least some negative implications for Sanders' campaign.

In Sander's view, there was no left to divide. The democratic party was not, in his estimation, part of the left; moreover, Kunin was not even to the left within the democratic party.

Reasoning and strategy behind the campaign was somewhat more vague. In interview, Sanders' cited a need for growth, claiming that to do otherwise would risk isolation. As I have noted earlier others in the Progressive Coalition felt differently, and wanted to avoid spreading themselves too thin. Moreover, they felt an embarrassing loss would undermine future efforts.<sup>18</sup> In this respect Sanders was simply more confident.

Furthermore, Sanders and his campaign manager Thabault both felt that there were issues which could only be addressed at the state level. Specifically they cited the taxation issue. I will go into this at greater length in the following section, however, it is important to note that this issue was formative in Sanders decision to run. Burlington had attempted to enact a series of tax reform proposals which were cut down by the state legislature. The distribution of the tax burden is a fundamental issue for a

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<sup>17</sup> See appendix figure 1.

<sup>18</sup> Micheal Monte took this position. From personal discussion.



candidate interested in income redistribution, and Sanders was frustrated by the legal limitations of the city charter. Education was a second issue, also controlled primarily by the State government, which Sanders mentioned as important in his decision to run for Governor.

In other ways, Sanders' rationale for the campaign seemed to be more of the same. Sanders describes the influence of a socialist at the state level would have the same character as a socialist as a mayor; both could effect policies which effected people's lives while getting the media to expose the public to socialist view. Sanders views the power of propaganda at the state level as a very power vehicle. In an interview with North Star, Sander's contends that, if even two governor's called a special session of their legislatures on Nicaragua, Washington could be bludgeoned by popular opinion into halting the war against that country. In other words, he sees the leverage of the state level as much more extensive than the local level. Sanders waged his campaign for governor to extend the powers he had enjoyed as mayor.

There were decisive differences between the campaign for governor and the campaigns for mayor. Most important were the financial constraints. Sanders was unable to raise the kind of funding necessary to spend even half what his opponents spend. In fact, he was outspent ten to one by both Peter Smith and Madeleine Kunin. Sanders had to rely entirely on newspaper ads and on the newspaper and radio coverage, while his competitors placed ads on television. While his campaign manager notes that the papers were

television. While his campaign manager notes that the papers were quite fair in their coverage, not being able to fund television ads put Sanders at a distinct disadvantages. Sanders was not able to fund even a skeleton staff by the end of the campaign.

There are several systematic reasons for Sanders' lack of funding. Firstly, Sanders ran as an independent. Unlike the Democratic and Republican candidates, there was no internal structure for fundraising in place. Where Smith and Kunin received support from the local party machines, Sanders had to rely on individuals from the Progressive Coalition and from the state-wide Rainbow Coalition. The Progressive Coalition donated its computer, but it simply could not contend with the well entrenched parties in terms of fundraising. And as I have noted earlier there is evidence that it did not lend its full, enthusiastic support, and volunteer help was not overabundant. The Rainbow Coalition was also unable to provide adequate support for Sanders' candidacy. Moreover, it is clear that there was also some hesitancy within the Rainbow Coalition over Sanders positions. Ed Stanak, a member of the Coalition in Barre, claimed that he did not support Sanders because, "I don't see Bernie moving anywhere in terms of a willingness to develop a consciousness on environmental and land use issues".<sup>19</sup> While the Rainbow Coalition was initially important in organizing support for Sanders, by the end of the campaign their support as an organization had dwindled down to virtually nothing. In many ways, Sanders was a third party candidate without a third party. Lacking

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<sup>19</sup> Times-Argus Feb. 27, 1986

a party apparatus, Sanders campaign staff worked without volunteer help and without adequate funds. I have mentioned this earlier, but would like to stress its importance to Sanders and Thabault. In interview, both Sanders and his campaign manager George Thabault cited financial constraints as severely hampering their prospects for victory. Sanders went as far as to claim that had he only been outspent 2:1, he would have won the election. Hoff and Wright, voting analysts, agreed with Sanders' claim that he would have constituted a serious threat had he had more money.<sup>20</sup>

Sanders was, from the beginning of the campaign, well aware of the financial difficulties they would face. Sanders and his campaign staff tried to come up with resourceful ways of getting their message across. For example, Sanders made the announcement of his candidacy through letters to people's homes rather than through the media. The idea was to communicate directly to people, and this was to set the tone for a non-traditional campaign. Chris Wood, a campaign spokesman, said, "the leaflet drop announcement is symbolic of the campaign. He (Sanders) wants to talk directly to the people. He likes going door to door".<sup>21</sup> Wood went on to say that increasing voter turn-out and getting "those who do not vote to cast a ballot for Sanders" would be a key element in the campaign. This emphasis on increasing voter turn-out and speaking directly to the people was dropped later in the campaign as the participation of the Rainbow Coalition declined, although Sanders continued to run an

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<sup>20</sup> Times -Argus, Oct. 5. 1986

<sup>21</sup> Rutland Daily Herald, May 10, 1986

Sanders' campaign staff tried a number of unorthodox tactics to get their message across. In interview, Thabault described one tactic in which advertisements would include coupons which would request funds for the next advertisement. Each advertisement would list the supporters who made the advertisement possible. This tactic was also unsuccessful; according to Thabault, people just did not take the time.<sup>22</sup> Sanders seems to have been more successful in more traditional campaign strategies-- making public appearances, seeking favor from local groups, and participating in debates with the other candidates.

So who supported Sanders? It is often assumed that progressives get support from liberals and disgruntled ex-Democrats. In Santa Monica, for example, this seems to be a direct relationship between liberal and progressives; Ruth Goldway describes the leaders of the movement as influenced directly by democratic leadership and liberal issues:

When we had Carter for president, a certain national direction of democratic issues, allowed people to focus in on local issues...We all felt some shared value system about the war, about the environment, about consumer issues, women's and civil rights issues.<sup>23</sup>

In Middle Class Radicalism in Santa Monica, Mark Kann claims that the progressive coalition in Santa Monica was almost exclusively concerned with a middle class agenda. He notes that middle class radicals benefit from their activism around quality

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22 Thaubault interview see appendix

23 Interview see appendix

of life issues, and have little incentive to work for redistributive policies which might encroach upon their privileges.

While Sanders also participated in the anti-Vietnam protests and civil rights movement, his politics are explicitly socialist. Sanders claims that he has a working class rather than a liberal constituency; he also claims that he took away as many votes from Republicans as from the Democrats. Christopher Graff, chief of the Vermont Bureau of the Associated Press, followed the campaign and came to the same conclusion.

Regarding Sanders' performance in the election, Graff states:

It isn't just the size of Sanders total; it is the fact that it came from the conservative hill towns, the Republican strongholds, the farming communities. Windham County, Vermont's fastest growing area for progressive candidates, gave Sanders his lowest county total-8%-while his greatest countywide support-19 percent-came in the conservative Northeast Kingdom county of Orleans. It is clear that Sanders drew some of his support from progressives, but it is equally clear that there is a receptive audience for his call to arms.

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It takes money to be a liberal, claims Sanders. As I noted earlier, Sanders' support showed no correspondence with support for liberal issues such as the Equal Rights Amendment. The Counties Lamoille, Orleans and Washington which gave Sanders his highest ratings state-wide, all voted against the ERA. Windham, Addison and Bennington, which supported the ERA bill, gave Sanders some of his lowest levels of support.

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<sup>24</sup> Christopher Graff Vermont Affairs p. 46

Sanders some of his lowest levels of support.

There is no direct relationship between the income of a town and the support Sanders received; for example, the southern part of Vermont is as poor as the northeast Kingdom, yet they did not vote for Sanders in the same numbers. The level of support seems to be regional and reflects exposure as well as ideological differences between the regions of Vermont. One thing is clear: Vermonters were interested in this race, more people cast ballots in the gubernatorial contest (196,716) than in either the U.S. Senate race (196,532) or the ERA referendum (184,973). And of the first time since 1912, none of the candidates won the majority of the vote required under the state constitution and the race was determined by the state legislature. By winning 15% of the electorate, Sanders received enough support to seriously challenge his Republican and Democratic opponents.

Sanders faced two formidable established opponents in the race for Governor. He did so with a fraction of his opponents' budgets and without the support of any organized progressive organization. He drew criticism from the left as well as from the right; he was literally a third party candidate without a third party. Nevertheless he was able to effectively challenge the Democratic establishment and to win a sizable portion of the vote. He was able to bring a working class agenda to the campaign and to generate widespread support, bringing us not only closer to winning the state election but also bringing

## CHAPTER 3

### A WORKING CLASS AGENDA

Sanders prides himself on representing working class interests, and his campaign represents his attempt to create a working class agenda for Vermont. While Sanders' campaign and his tenure as mayor are part of a broader movement of progressive cities, in many ways his political position is unique. Sanders, unlike other progressive mayors in the United States, openly avows socialism. Moreover, his socialism is grounded in class analysis and, in the eyes of his detractors, is more akin to the socialists of the nineteenth century, than to the current progressive movement. Murray Bookchin, a local rival, argues that Sanders is an opportunist who is more interested in self-aggrandizement than in socialism:

To spoof him for his unadorned speech and macho manner is to ignore the fact that his notions of a "class analysis" are narrowly productivist and would embarrass a Lenin, not to mention a Marx...The tragedy is that Sanders did not live out his life between 1870 and 1940, and the paradox that faces him is: why does a constellation of ideas that seemed so rebellious fifty years ago appear to be so conservative today?<sup>1</sup>

The focus of Bookchin's argument with Sanders is around his "productionist politics" which he claim lead Sanders into negotiating with developers, supporting growth, and concerning

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<sup>1</sup> Murray Bookchin "Socialism in One City?"  
Socialist Review p.52

himself with running an efficient government to the exclusion of more radical policies. Bookchin fails to outline what these more radical policies might be, although he does suggest that Burlington develop a system of citizen participation similar to Berkeley's.<sup>2</sup>

The question Bookchin raises is important, but I would ask it differently. The question at hand is not why a constellation of ideas which seemed rebellious fifty years ago appears to be so conservative today, but if these ideas are trully conservative. Given that Sanders is a socialist, is he a radical? The campaign for Governor is an ideal summary of Sanders "constellation of ideas" which we can examine in terms of this argument. Are class politics a radical politics in the 1980's?

Some of the material that follows is drawn from position papers; the rest is drawn from newspapers and journals which covered the campaign. For each issue, I will look at how Sanders defines working class and ruling class interests, and explore the positions this generates. It is my conclusion that class analysis was able to generate a radical agenda for the state, and Sanders politics, an uneasy blend of Marxist theory and progressive strategies, is the wave of the future for the American left.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid 1 p. 56



A. Taxation

I will discuss tax reform first because it seems to have been a central issue in the campaign. Sanders considered tax reform as a central motivation for the campaign, and it was cited by his campaign manager as their most successful issue. In a nutshell, Sanders proposed a comprehensive tax reform program through which the state could break its dependency on the property tax. The program would provide the following: 1) A reduction in property taxes for homeowners and renters by providing a 20% cut in residential property taxes and expanding the "Renter Rebate" program to provide a rebate of 20% of the property taxes tenants pay indirectly through their rents. 2) Stop property tax increases by providing a 20% increase in State Aid to Education under a reformed state aid formula and by providing 12 million dollars in State Revenue sharing for cities and towns to replace Federal Revenue Sharing. 3) Improve state programs by providing an immediate 10% increase for human services and appropriately 2 million dollars for family farms. The program would be financed through progressive taxation as follows: 1) An increase of the state income tax rate for persons with incomes over \$50,000 a year to recover 1/3 of the combined federal and state income tax cuts over the past five years. 2) Increase the state corporate income tax rate to recover the cut in state taxes due to the federal tax cuts in corporate taxes. 3) Establish a state-wide tax on vacation homes whereby the local community would receive the taxes it would levy on such properties and the state would receive the excess taxes up to the average tax

rate for all Vermont. 4) Increase the Property Title Transfer tax by 1/2%. This program is summarized in the appendix. Briefly, the program is a redistribution of the wealth, or more exactly of the burden of government services. Wealthy individuals and corporations would pay a larger share in order to provide tax relief to homeowners and renters, as well as expanded aid to education, human services and the family farm.

In his position paper, Sanders explains the need for tax reform by describing the history of the present tax structure. He notes that Vermonters pay more of their income in property taxes in all but four states. While the figure is dropping nationally, in Vermont it has increased. Sanders juxtaposes this increase with the tax breaks enacted under Reagan's administration. He notes that on the national level 50 of the largest corporations in the nation earned 56.9 billion dollars in profit and paid no federal corporate tax. In Vermont, the tax system is coupled with the federal system and therefore the tax breaks enacted by Reagan have been reproduced at the state level. It has been estimated that between the years 1982-1987 the State of Vermont will have lost over \$291 million as a result of Reagan's policies and the fact that Vermont's tax system is coupled to the federal system. In sum, Sanders claimed that the property tax had risen sharply while the personal and corporate taxes paid by upper income people and corporations had decreased sharply. Sanders' proposal addressed this inequity head on, and coupled increases in taxes for the rich with relief for middle

income homeowners, renters, farmers and those who depend on state assistance.

Thabault cited the taxation reform program as the high point of the campaign, "that much of Bernie's campaign had gotten through to them (the voters)".<sup>3</sup> In some ways, the program was quite respectable. After all, as Sanders noted, many of the tax increases for corporations and wealthy individuals merely made up for cuts imposed by Reagan. The corporate income tax recovery program would raise \$6 million in 1987 which is, in fact, what corporations would have been paying in Vermont before the Reagan tax breaks of 1981. In other words, the program did not create anything new. Yet the structure of the proposal itself was radical. Sanders related tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy to an increased tax burden for the rest of the people. The program suggested what it did not proclaim--a confrontation between classes.

Sanders believes that the United States is controlled by a small minority of individuals whose economic power translates into political power as well.<sup>4</sup> The owning class is a ruling class in the most literal understanding of the term. The tax reform proposal cuts into the wealth of that class for the benefit of the rest of society. Instead of pitting property owners against people depended on social services, or money for education against money for farmers, Sanders pits them all against the biggest corporations and wealthiest individuals. It is a strategy which, in the estimation

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<sup>3</sup> Interview see appendix

<sup>4</sup> Burlington Free Press Oct. 19, 1986

of Thabault, improved Sanders' standing in the polls considerably.

Obviously neither Kunin nor Smith supported Sanders' proposal. Kunin felt that some taxation reform was in order, but proposed no specific plan. Smith felt that the standing taxation system was fine, and "warned against making big business the victim of the tax structure".<sup>5</sup> Again Kunin and Smith took positions typical of their parties. The Democratic candidate recognized the existence of the injustice, but balked at the possibility of change; and the Republican candidate did not recognize the need for change at all.

Sanders' taxation proposal contains radical policies which aid poor people while it educates them. Sanders took the opportunity afforded by the injustices of the taxation system to point to larger injustices in the system and to by-pass the usual detours into in-house fighting. A class analysis in this instance seems well-placed; it enables Sanders to draw the line between the classes in a provocative way while it allows him to offer a concrete plan for an immediate amelioration.<sup>6</sup>

#### B. Economic Development

As we should expect, Sanders took a controversial position on economic development as well. While his opponents favored enticing large corporations to the area with tax breaks and a low minimum wage, Sanders proposed a more local and worker oriented strategy. He proposed assisting communities in improving infrastructure,

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5 Rutland Daily Herald Oct. 2

6 See appendix for summary of tax reform plan

providing a quality education for Vermont children, promoting local control and ownership of business, and maintaining Vermont's beautiful environment. Sanders claims that the strength of Vermont's economy lies in the small business and locally controlled enterprises. He rejects emphatically smokestack chasing and creating a good business environment.

Sanders stated:

A report came out several months ago. The governor thought it was great. I didn't think it was so great. What it said was that manufacturers are looking more favorably upon Vermont than they used to for two reasons, the lessening of the union movement in Vermont and the fact that our wages are low. When you talk about the business climate let's not forget about the people who work for a living. By the logic of creating a "better business climate" we might want to lower our minimum wage to \$1 an hour. Think of all the companies that would come to Vermont then. I don't accept that logic.<sup>7</sup>

Sanders knows that economic development is essential for Vermont, and does not see himself as anti-business per se. But he does not consider any development to be good development, and he challenge the traditional means of improving business climate.

Sanders was willing to call for what some deemed anti-business positions. The tax reform program which increase taxation on the largest corporations and wealthiest individuals is in clear opposition to any pro-big business position. Another anti-big business issue Sanders took up was minimum wage. Sanders proposed an immediate increase in minimum wage in Vermont to the base rate of \$4.00, to increase by 20 cents for the following two years. Sanders noted that minimum wage workers had seen their salary eroded by 15%

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<sup>7</sup> North Star p.23

over the past seven years.<sup>8</sup> Kunin's press secretary Sherman called the idea a "quick fix, unrealistic solution"; Smith's press secretary, Franny Bastian claimed that, "you don't raise the standard by raising the floor, you do it by raising the ceiling". Again the candidates took positions which were typical of their parties. The democratic response was to agree in principle but claim that the problem is too complex to be solved. The Republican response was a nutshell version of trickled-down theory. Sanders respond to this criticism by pointing out that workers are part of the business community and deserve a liveable wage. Sanders refused to be pigeoned holed into a dicotomy between business and "the community". The need for business activity is self-evident. Yet Sanders did not draw the same conclusions as his opponents from this fact. Supporting business to Sanders meant supporting workers and small businesses.

During the campaign Sanders relied on his record on economic development as mayor to establish the validity of his proposals for the state. Sanders claimed that there are 4,500 new jobs in Burlington seen he took office. He also cited the revitalization of the Old North End and incubator project on Pine Street as evidence of his pro-development position, as well as taking pride in bringing the Vermont Reds to the city and helping secure a chain store for the downtown.<sup>9</sup> Sanders believed that his work for economic development in Burlington can serve as a model for the state. For

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8 Burlington Free Press July 24, 1986

9 Burlington Free Press Oct. 18, 1986

example, Sanders proposed employing a local ownership project on the state level modeled on Burlington efforts.

Sanders' economic development proposals do indicate a tension between the imperatives of capitalist economy and his ideals as a socialist. Raising minimum wage, for example, impacts small business to a greater extent than large firms which can afford to pay better wages. Moreover, the argument for locally controlled business is somewhat contradictory. While Sanders claims that locally controlled business tends to stabilize an economy, it also does not necessarily preclude massive exploitation of one local group by another. Is it better that wealthy Vermonters rather than wealthy New Yorkers will reap the profits from the workers of Vermont? Yet even in terms of educating people, local ownership is a less innovative position than his tax reform program, but still to the left of the Democratic and Republican parties. Local ownership and worker control are an integral part of Sanders' agenda for Vermont, and they challenge the assumptions of the political establishment that a good business environment means catering to the needs of big business.

#### C. Utilities and Telephone

Sanders took pride in doing careful research about the issues effecting Vermont. He considered "mundane" issues such as utilities and telephone rates to be major issues in the campaign. These mundane issues turned out to provide support for his overarching position against the corporations and the very wealthy. In his

exploration of the Public Service Board, which sets the profit rates for the private telephone and electric companies, Sanders discovered that the Public Service Board had been protecting the profits of the companies rather than maintaining lower rates for the public. In his position paper, Sanders described the situation. In 1986 Vermonters paid over \$40 million in telephone bills to provide the telephone company an after taxes profit of 14.75% for the private owners of New England Telephone Company. Sanders proposed to cut this in half. This could be achieved by: 1) lowering the allowed rate of profit from 14.75% to 12.9%; 2) lowering NET's revenue requirements from 50% to 34% based on the recent reduction of NET's federal tax liability; and 3) by converting \$60 million of NET's capitalization from stock to bonds. The most significant savings under this plan results from converting stock to debt, i.e. bonds. Currently the total capitalization of the telephone company is appropriately \$300 million of which 150 million is equity which represents the money invested by stockholders. Appropriately 115 million or 38% of the capitalization is through debt. The cost of financing this debt is appropriately 9%. In contrast, with a rate of profit approved by the Public Service Board of 14.75% the cost for the taxpayer for equity financing is \$40 million a year. Simply stated, the ratepayer pays 30 cents for each dollar of stockholder investment compared with 9 cents for each dollar of debt or bonds issued by the phone company. Sanders proposed that New England Telephone Company convert \$60 million of equity financing to debt. This would reduce equity to roughly 30% of NET's capitalization.



Sanders realized that some would argue that 30% equity and 70% debt ratio is unstable; yet he points out that the average debt to equity for companies on the New York Stock Exchange is lower than 30%. Publicly owned utilities are financed with 100% debt. Sanders also proposed applying this methodology for reducing electric rates of the private telephone companies in Vermont.

Sanders claimed that the real obstacle to implementing this plan is the anti-consumer bias of the Kunitz Administrations Public Service Board. Specifically, he claimed that the board was intent on protecting the profits of the private companies. This is a somewhat unique approach to this problem. In an article in Against the Current, Sanders describes the human side of this exploitation:

Electricity is expensive. Telephones are becoming a luxury in many areas in Vermont. The thieves that run the telephone company are taking the profits that they make from the basic service they provide people and investing it and beaming it off Mars for all kinds of new sophisticated, technological progress and yet we find thousand of Vermonters...who can no longer afford a telephone. In the city of Burlington, in the state of Vermont, we are leading the fight in taking on the Vermont Public Service Board. We demand that instead of trying to protect the profits of the private utilities they represent the needs of the ratepayer. (p.64 Against the Current)

Sanders' position on electricity and telephone rates pits the vast majority of people against a few wealthy stockholders. Like the tax reform program, it draws the line in a confrontational and radical way, while maintaining an air of common sense. Why should the ratepayer pay 14.9% for financing when they can pay 9% for debt financing? It is simply good sense that the Board should set a

lower rate of profit and increase debt financing which is considerably less expensive.

The fight against the Vermont Public Service Board harkens back to Sanders early successes as mayor in managing the city's finances. The result of his first year as mayor was a savings of between 400,000 and 600,000 dollars, according to the Burlington Free Press' estimations.<sup>10</sup> His call for efficient and fair financing of basic services such as telephone and electricity is a popular, anti-corruption position. In this respect, Sanders resembles the socialists involved in municipal governments at the turn of the century. I will elaborate this parallel at greater length in the conclusion of this chapter. At this point I would like to note that Sanders argues for efficient and honest government from a socialist perspective. That is, the corruption stems from the exploitation of ratepayers by the wealthy stockholders, as opposed to claiming that corruption came from the lower ranks of government. Electricity and telephone rates is a serious problem for Vermonters, and Sanders points an accusing finger at the Vermont Public Service Board and the protected stockholders.

#### D. Housing

Sanders' position on housing also reflects his basic concern with the cost of living, and with the lowering of the standard of living during Reagan's administration. Sanders cites a number of indications of a worsening housing crisis in Vermont. For example,

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10 Burlington Free Press 9/7/82, Tuesday

average rents doubled between 1980 and 1985. Moreover, while the purchase of an average priced home requires an income of about \$30,000, the median income of Vermonter in 1985 was \$21,500. Despite an increasing need for government intervention in the housing market, federally funded housing assistance programs have been eliminated or sharply curtailed during Reagan's administration. Kunin, in Sanders' estimation, has provided very little leadership in addressing the housing crisis. Specifically, he cites the limited funding of the Partnership for Housing program and the proposed Land Conservation and Housing Fund. While Kunin recognizes the problem, she has not come up with near adequate answers. Sanders also claims that the Governor's landlord-tenant bill is weak at best. Smith has not been particularly vocal on the issue of affordable housing, and Sanders claims that we should expect that Smith adheres to a free market approach.

Sanders bases his housing proposals on the achievements in Burlington. He notes that the Burlington Community Land Trust is a nationally recognized model for creating perpetual affordable housing. Sanders also notes that the city has participated in the Act 250 process to protect tenants being threatened by condominium conversion and to request that developments creating low paying jobs are linked to affordable housing. Employers would face a direct responsibility for housing their low paid employees.

Sanders rejects the logic that the market will provide adequate affordable housing; moreover, he does not see regulation as a means to remedy the industry. Sanders ties the inability of governments

to respond the housing crisis to a general misdirection of priorities:

What socialism means to me is that you hold out and say to people, 'Yeah, we can only do this in housing right now. But one reason we can go forward faster is that the United States government is spending \$300 billion on the military rather than putting money into housing and all kinds of programs we need.' <sup>11</sup>

Sanders places housing in a broader framework of government priorities and the insanity of military spending. In this framework, domestic issues such as housing are pushed aside in favor of a military build up to aimed toward insuring United States domination over the "free world". The issue of housing then acquires a socialist perspective.

Sanders is not a socialist theoretician. Tying the lack of government support for housing programs to the massive increases in military spending is only part of a socialist analysis. What is specific about the housing industry which has propelled its prices out of the range of so many Americans? To begin with, unlike other industries, the housing industry must employ American labour. Houses, unlike smaller commodities, cannot be shipped to the third world for labour inputs. Moreover, the housing industry has highly unionized and predominately male; therefore the wages are high even in American terms. Finally the process of housing production has never been completely assimilated into capitalism; much of the work remains on the site and done by skilled craftspersons. My point here is to illustrate that Sanders' analysis is only the beginning

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<sup>11</sup> Against the Current p.63

of a socialist analysis. Sanders's work is propaganda in the best sense of the word, meaning to propagate or instigate ideas. His analysis of the housing crisis locates conflict between the imperatives of the military budget and the domestic needs. As in his analysis of economic development, taxation and electricity rates, Sanders draws the line between those who are exploiting and those who are exploited.

#### E. Farming

Sanders, growing up in Brooklyn and now mayor of Vermont's largest city, is obviously not an expert in agriculture. Yet he took great effort to address the problems facing Vermont farmers in the campaign. Sanders considers farming and the 30,000 jobs associated with it, as an essential component of Vermont's economy:

What you're talking about is the soul of the state. Tourism is fine, it's O.K. But I don't stay up nights becoming tremendously excited about seeing our young men and women becoming chambermaids and waiters and waitresses. In Vermont this year we're losing 10% of our family farms. That is a terrible tragedy and I'm very critical of Governor Kunin for not standing and making a fight for the family farm. (North Star p.24)

Sanders spells out four areas for aid to farmers: 1) low interest VIDA loans to farmers, and representation of farmers on that board; 2) creating other sources of loans for farmers; 3) lowering electric rates, as well as eliminating the summer/winter rate system; 4) lower property taxes. These measures parallel Sanders' more general proposals. Ideologically, Sanders' support for family farming

expanded his image in a more populist direction. Sanders hoped to represent all poor and working people, not just the more urban areas. Farmers and urban workers, in Sanders estimation, had common enemies. For example both suffered from the profit-hungry telephone and electric companies. In the election, Sanders received a his highest levels of support from farming communities. Apparently, Sanders was able to shed his urban image, and gain support from many rural people.

F. Poverty

Vermont has a reputation as a wealthy, vacation state; yet a brief glance at the statistics indicates that the reputation is inaccurate. According to the 1980 census, more than 1 in 8 Vermonters had incomes below the poverty line. Vermont is the second poorest of the six New England states; Maine had the higher overall poverty rate. The issues discussed above--the property tax burden, high electricity and telephone rates, and expensive housing-- cause considerable hardship for many Vermonters.

Sanders realized that poverty cannot be solved by the state government, but he does intend to place these people's needs first. Sanders placed poor people at the foreground of his campaign; by decoupling the federal and state tax systems, lowering property taxes and increasing taxes on corporations and the wealthy, raising minimum wages, increased social spending, lowering electricity and telephone rates, and helping create affordable housing, Sanders proposed a direct attack on poverty. Unlike the traditional liberal

approach, Sanders did not see himself as merely helping the poor. Instead Sanders considered poor and working people to be his constituency. As a socialist, Sanders considers class to be the analytical category for history, and the working class as the agent of history. Practically, this means that Sanders commitment to poor people stems not from pity or compassion, but from the belief that the working people will come to run society. Sanders conflates the terms working and poor people into one category. He sees poverty as a condition arising out of exploitative relations of production. For Sanders fighting poverty is an impossible task outside of fighting capitalism. Working people are poor because a few derive great profits from their labor. These basic tenet underscores Sanders position on poverty and on the specific instances of poverty. Sanders considered a redistribution of wealth to be the overarching issue of his campaign. (Free Press August 27)

G: Women

In Sanders own words, when you talk about poverty you're talking about a women's issue. As I have discussed earlier, because Sanders was running against a woman governor, it was particularly important for him to formulate a strong and active stand for women's rights. Sanders' primary contention was that while Kunin's record in appointing women to state position was good, her record in terms of programs for poor and working women was inadequate.<sup>12</sup> In order to establish his record on women's issues for the voters, Sanders

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12 Burlington Free Press Sept 5 12, 1986

relied on his work as mayor. In particular, he cited the work of the Burlington Women's Council in creating a Women in Construction Trades Ordinance and the Women's Economic Opportunity Program (WEOP). WEOP places women in the non-traditional jobs while the ordinance is designed to breakdown the barriers to these jobs for women. Sanders also claimed that the city had been instrumental in establishing the Burlington Children's Space, an affordable day care facility located in the center of the city; the city has also financially supported a Women Helping Battered Women's Shelter, and has participated in federal programs such as Project Self-Sufficiency which aids welfare mothers find and maintain employment. Sanders, like Kunin and Smith, was a supporter of the state-wide ERA. Sanders claim was that he would fight for poor and working class women's issues, while his opponents were more interested in lip service and tokenism.

Sanders' position on women's issues were not his strongest suit. He denounced the obvious-- poverty and inequalities between men's and women's pay, but did not seem to understand the specifics of the issues. He pushed the issue of childcare, but as a service to working mothers rather than as a restructuring of domestic work. He supported the work of the Burlington Women's Council, but only with prodding. Moreover, his administration had not been without accusations of sexism. The Equal Pay for Equal Work study had not been enacted fully, nor had Sanders appointed women to top positions. More generally, feminists objected to Sanders' dogmatic style and his assumption of credit for the work the Women's Council



did. Feminists picked up on a real ambivalence in Sanders' analysis of the woman question. Women were specially oppressed, but not different oppressed. In practice this translated into a focus on women as victims. Women were underpaid, lived in worse housing conditions, received worse medical care and insurance benefits, were discriminated against in education, and were subjected to violence by both male friends and strangers. These facts beg for an explanation which goes farther than simply claiming that women are specially oppressed. While Sanders sees the problem, he does not seem to grapple with it and women's issues were not a major part of his campaign.

H: War

While Sanders produced positions and programs around the daily problems of the people of Vermont, he also tried to connect these concerns to larger national and global problems. Sanders believes that the issue of war and peace is the greatest problem facing Burlington and the state of Vermont. Firstly, he cites the threat of nuclear war and the possibility that we are not going to survive into the next decade.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, he ties the lack of funding for housing, education, and so on to the increases in the military. In the campaign, Sanders located the source of city and state financial problems to the cut backs in revenue sharing which are part and parcel of Reagan's support for a massive military budget.

Sanders sees the forum of governor as a particularly powerful

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13 Burlington Free Press June 18, 1986

position from which to bring attention to the issue of military spending:

If even two governors had the guts to call special sessions of their legislatures, to demand the legislature convene to talk about the impact of the U.S. funded war in Nicaragua on their economy and the life of the people, and a few hundred thousand people came to those meetings, the war could be ended. Washington would look and say "my god, what's going on?" Suppose a governor got up and said, "what we are losing right now because of the hundreds of millions of dollars being spent to destroy the people of Nicaragua, we are losing x numbers of millions of dollars for housing and education and environmental protection, the response would be enormous, and the lies would be exposed. <sup>14</sup>

As Mayor, Sanders called a special session of the city council concerning the funding of the Contras which was attended by several hundred people. He also helped initiated a sister city program which sent 600 tons of material aid to Nicaragua. On the state level, he hoped to do similiar actions -- material aid and education -- on a magnified scale.

In interview, Sanders elaborated on why he considered the role of governor, as opposed to the role of a congressperson, as particularly useful for fighting war:

And it seems to me that a Governor can play a much stronger role in developing a peace movement, an anti-war movement than a Congressperson can. The Governor is at home saying that the issue of Nicaragua is the issue of property taxes is the issue of the environmental protection is the issue of education. It's all one issue. I go to the towns, and I'm telling you that the reason your property taxes are going up is because you lost revenue

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<sup>14</sup> Against the Current p.65 4/5 1986

sharing. You lost revenue sharing because they spent money on star wars. They're spending money on Star Wars because of Ronald Reagan's friends in the military. You can make that very real connection. So if you asked me for example who plays a more valuable role in the peace movement members of Congress or governors, governors play a much more powerful role.<sup>15</sup>

Sanders went on to describe the balance between local and global issues he tried to establish in Burlington. If he was not careful, people began to question whether he was doing his job as mayor. He tried to convince people that city and state issues are connected to national issues, in this case the expanding military budget.

Sanders, unlike conventional politicians, sees his role in opposing the military build-up and intervention in Central America as inflammatory rather than legislative. That is, he hopes to help build the peace movement rather than simply responding to its demands. Sanders sees the position of governor as more effective than that of congressperson, because he can help build a movement from his more local position. The congressperson, located in Washington, can play only a peripheral role in local movements.

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<sup>15</sup> Against the Current p. 65

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS

Our argument at the outset was that Sanders developed a working class analysis which infused his practice at city hall and his agenda for the state. What evidence is there that this is true? First, contrary to the claims of Bookchin and others, Sanders is not working with a nineteenth century version of class. From the campaign material, it appears that Sanders working definition of the working class is basically those who are not a member of the ruling class. Sanders places the composition of the ruling class, rather than the working class, at stake. Using this tactic Sanders was able to bring together the working poor and those on public assistance, the family farmers and urban dwellers in need of property tax relief, and other unlikely bedfellows. Theoretically, there remains a pressing question; what is the role of the factory workers and the unions, the housewives and single mothers? It is clear from his support of the GE workers that Sanders has a high regard for workers and the right to a job. He has made it clear explicitly that he is not interested in political work which excludes workers. At the same time he is committed to making the political sphere at least as important as the factory floor. Moreover, his working definition of class has more to do with access to power than with exploitation of labor. Sanders demands that his constituents take power relations into their own hands. In a local

debate on education in Rutland, Sanders advised those who were unhappy with the local school system to fight the local establishment; "You want to change the local government? Then take on your local ruling class. The state has to play a role in this but so does the local community itself".<sup>1</sup> This comment is typical of Sanders approach and more general philosophy. Sanders encouraged people to become politically active, and he expressed that sentiment using socialist categories.

Sanders recognizes battling the ruling class in the 1980's is essentially an ideological struggle. While a general strike theoretically holds the same appeal, in practice the call to a general strike rings hollow against the apathy and self hatred of workers. One can educate people about socialism, but the most important task is empowerment, or getting people to feel they can control their government and their economy:

If a young person feels that he or she in a democratic society is entitled to make decisions for the future, if they understand that, then we're 90% of the way home. The rest will come. My concern is that people feel from a very young age, that the purpose of education is to get a degree, some pain in the ass thing you've got to do, so that you can get a degree and get a job that somebody else will define for you. Follow what I'm saying? So the first thing that you tell people is that they own society. It is their society and they can do with it as they want.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Rutland Daily Herald Oct. 2 1986

2 Interview see appendix

Sanders recognizes the difficulty with this task:

When we take on the system, it's not taking on the governor, or the president or even the corporations. You're taking on an entire all pervasive ideology and mentality which lies to people all the time, and which makes people not even understand what politics is about. O.K. Every time there's a television show, and it doesn't even have to be ideologically oriented, or a beer commercial, or a cat food commercial, that's in opposition to us.

In theoretical terms, this is the problem of hegemony or the systematic control of the terms of political discussion and of culture. Sanders made city hall a place to fight prevailing culture and ideology. His work represents a new vision of city government; if the government can be a bastion of conservatism it can also be a bastion for the left.

In his campaign for Governor, Sanders was able to show the people of Vermont that there exists a way to lower the property tax while increasing social spending, encouraging economic development without chasing smokestacks, of lowering utility rates simply by cutting the unearned profits of a few shareholders, maintaining public housing subsidies in perpetuity while keeping the advantages of homeownership, of helping the family farm, fighting poverty and women's oppression. At the same time, he tied these issues to a national agenda which included ending military intervention in Central America and cutting the military budget. While these proposals are not unusual in the radical community, it is rare to see them discussed in mainstream newspapers and televisions. Is there any other vehicle through which progressives have been able to

put these positions forward to the general masses? While we discuss the limitations of electoral politics, it is important to keep the limitations of non-electoral politics in mind as well.

There were many problems with the campaign, some of which could have been avoided while others seem to have been inevitable. Sanders was a third party candidate without a third party, and the partial support of existing progressive organizations was no substitute. The financial limitations is probably inevitable and this will mean that the left would do be to fight at the city level rather than the state or national. Moreover, it means that we should support measures which increase the powers of city governments. However, the process questions are not the whole story. Sanders demonstrates that an expanded class analysis can be radical in the 1980's. Working with the banality of city and state bureaucracies, Sanders forged new possibilities which caught the imaginations of thousands of Vermonters.

Sanders' work in Burlington demonstrates that the city can act in the interests of the working class if one concedes that this means negotiating with middle and ruling classes. What is radical about Sanders is not only the policy proposals which boldly and specifically delineate between the interests of various classes, but the fact that he had the courage to go before the people of Vermont with these proposals. His defeat is due to financial constraints, organizational weakness, and a pervasive ideology which prejudices Americans against socialism and any threat to the status quo. The support he won suggests that this road is not closed. It also

suggests that we rework the category of working class, not in the class, but in the field. Only by directly encountering the American people and in dialogue with them can the left hope to create an class agenda for the future.



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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD SANDERS BY CATHERINE HILL IN JULY 1986

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INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD SANDERS BY CATHERINE HILL IN JULY 1986

- C: How would you describe your image in the governorship campaign? George described it as a fighter. Is that how you saw it?
- S: If there was a slogan that came out of the campaign it was shake up the system. If I remember correctly that was from the first press conference I had. Running on the track record of what we had established in Burlington, I wanted to show somebody who was willing to do unorthodox things and take on the system. Someone who would fight for the people who had not gotten the representation they deserved.
- C: How do you think socialist ideology entered into the campaign?
- S: It's weird. I think we are the only state in the United States where the word socialism is not automatically thought of as a negative. I think that's primarily because we've been alive here seven years and accomplished certain things. Socialism has a lot of different messages to different people. I think the issue of socialist ideology and what that meant or means is not terribly important. I think the positive of it is that it indicates to people that I am not a conventional politician. If they are not happy with the status quo then that is a positive thing. The negative of it obviously is that there are people who equate it with totalitarianism and the Soviet Union. And that's the negative. But I would say that it indicated in the campaign an unorthodox and a willingness to take on the system. Someone who was not part of the establishment.
- C: In your mind are there issues which lend themselves more easily to socialist analysis than others?
- S: Would you like to expand on that?
- C: Sure, the issue of abortion falls into the framework of individual rights very easily. Things like economic equality don't fit in so easily.
- S: Yes, that's correct. To me, you don't need socialist analysis necessarily. We live in a society where the ignorance regarding government and the world is just unbelievable enormous. So what a socialist analysis or ideology basically is, is a, economic understanding of what power is about. Your right, abortion is not an economic

issue, it falls within other frameworks. For socialism, I would say you're talking about a class analysis. I don't understand when people say we live in a classist society. We live in a class society, it's not an attitude problem, it's an economic and power problem. When I look at foreign policy, who makes the foreign policy of the United States? For what reasons? What are their interests? In terms of politics. What is the relationship between politics and economics? Can you understand politics without understanding who won the system? Who politicians work for, and how much money it takes to get elected? Most important, is the limitation on political leaders if you don't control the economy. Those are the areas that one thinks of when you think of education.

C: I take it becoming governor would expand your abilities to do that kind of education.

S: Sure I don't accept the neat definitions of what politicians are supposed to do. In Congress they're going to vote on Contra Aid, and deal with foreign policy. That is what they are supposed to do. 365 guys deal with that stuff. Governors supposedly do not deal with that issue. Occasionally they may make a statement or two, but they're not supposed to. In fact, the issue of war and peace to me is not an issue that becomes neatly differentiated between what you're doing in Congress and what you're doing as Governor, or for what matter, what you're doing as mayor. When we don't have enough money to protect the lake because their spending money in the war in Nicaragua, it becomes a governor's issue. When we have people who are homeless in Vermont because we've lost federal funding for public housing it becomes a governor's issue. What's interesting is that while you elect your representatives to go to Washington to represent you, you keep your governor at home. And it seems to me that a Governor can play a much stronger role in developing a peace movement, an anti-war movement than a Congressperson can. The Governor is at home saying that the issue of Nicaragua is the issue of property taxes is the issue of the environmental protection is the issue of education. It's all one issue. I go to the towns, and I'm telling you that the reason your property taxes are going up is because you lost revenue sharing. You lost revenue sharing because they spent money on Star Wars. They're spending money on Star Wars because of Ronald Reagan's friends in the military. You can make that very real connection. So if you asked me for example who plays a more valuable role in the peace movement members of Congress or governors, governors play a much more powerful role. They can pass a resolution. Or better yet they could go down to Washington in mass and inform the Congress of the United States that they're hurting because

they're spending 300 billion dollars on the military, which is causing tremendous impact all over the United States of America. We have to change the definitions of how political people and public officials see themselves. So if you want to know why a governor can play a stronger role, that's part of it.

- C: And the advantage of being mayor is you are even closer to your own constituency.
- S: Yeah, we try to do that. It's a question of balancing. If you're mayor, you're balancing fifty different things, and if it appears that all I do is be concerned about Nicaragua, then people say why are you wasting your time here? Why am I paying you a salary to be mayor of the city of Burlington? There are a few thousand other things you need to be doing. My job is to show people how Nicaragua is relevant to Burlington. But I also have to deal with Burlington issues. Like everything else, we're understaffed and underfunded and we're not as organized as we should be. But, for example, we're in the process of organizing an observation in remembrance of the destruction of democracy in Chile and the death of Salvador Allende. O.K. " don't think most mayors in America are going to be doing that. And obviously as part of that we're going to be showing films, having a panel discussion, getting some stuff on television. That's something I think a mayor, and a governor as well, should be doing.
- C: I have a question about how one gauges the effectiveness of education about socialism. When do you know you're succeeded?
- S: We haven't succeeded. We haven't even scratched the surface. There is nothing to support us. Nothing in the schools, virtually nothing. We're going to try to have more of an impact on the school system this year than we ever had before. As you know we have a separate school board here so the mayor doesn't have much to say about that. But I will try to interject myself more strongly this year than I ever have before. We have a couple good progressive people now who are on the school board. So I think we will have more strength within the school board. The fight we have to fight is a difficult and somewhat overwhelming fight. Sometimes I become upset with how little we do. But when I look at other communities, by comparison I don't get depressed. When we take on the system, it's not taking on the governor, or the president or even the corporations. You're taking on an entire all pervasive ideology and mentality which lies to people all the time, and which makes people not even understand what politics is about. O.K. Everytime there's a television

show, and it doesn't even have to be ideologically oriented, or a beer commercial, or a cat food commercial, that's in opposition to us. Do you follow what I'm saying? There's a system to it.

C: I think it's called hegemony or something like that.

S: I don't know what smarter people than me call it, but when you go into the schools that is where you start. It's important for young people to understand the history of Nicaragua and what's going on there. But do you know what is even more important? For them to understand that they're suppose to understand, that is what is important for them to understand. That is the first thing.

C: To what extent can you initiate educational programs about what socialism is, or at least what red baiting in the U.S. has meant and that kind of issue. Do you see a possibility to get involved in that kind of way as mayor?

S: To me the issue is not so much teaching people, but making people, young people here, become. If a young person feels that he or she is a democratic society is entitled to make decisions for the future, if they understand that, then we're 90% of the way home. The rest will come. My concern is that people feel from a very young age, that the purpose of education is to get a degree, some pain in the ass thing you've got to do, so that you can get a degree and get a job that somebody else will define for you. Follow what I'm saying? So the first thing that you tell people is that they own society. It is their society and they can do with it as they want. And that education will help them shape society. About 98% of the people do not comprehend that. Young people as well. Once they understand that, they can in fact make decisions. I think the rest will follow somewhat naturally. We are going to try to have some impact on the curriculum., but that is less important to me than educating kids that this is their country and they don't have to be cogs in a machine.

C: That kind of education, that kind of change takes place when you are in office. What other kinds of things can you do from office that you couldn't do if you were a dogcatcher. In the North Star interview, you said governors, mayors and dogcatchers should be fighting for peace. What are the specific powers of each?

S: OK, as mayor of the city--a dogcatcher can set up a taskforce to study the cost of health care, but most people would probably not pay attention to it. Unless it happened to be the cost of health care for dogs. But a mayor can, and people will listen. So something that is separate from

my job as mayor, most mayors do not form task forces to deal with the cost of health care. I have. I do that as mayor of the city. As mayor of the city I have had the city assessor place the medical center on the tax rolls, probably for the first time in America that has occurred. That raises the issue of whether or not that is a charitable institution or whether it is a money making institution. And what kind of health care we should have. That's an example. The sister city program with Nicaragua is another. Because the mayor is the titular head of the city, you have the ability to get involved in a lot of areas that the ordinary citizen does not. You can get things done more effectively and easily than an ordinary citizen can. An ordinary citizen can put together a health care taskforce but it won't get the attention that it would have had the mayor done it.

- C: So it's both the fact that you have the media's attention and the resources--city hall and so on.
- S: That's right. it's not just that I have the media's attention. I also have the staff and the resources to help me do it.
- C: How has the Progressive Coalition been a resources for you? What would you like to see the Progressive Coalition be in the future?
- S: O.K. Let's contrast the Progressive Coalition with the Democratic and Republican parties. First of all, there is no such thing in the State of Vermont as a Democratic or Republican party, mostly they are labels that people fix to themselves when they want to become governor, senator or something like that. There is a little structure, but in Vermont the democratic party is very, very weak. If you had a million dollars in your pocket right now -- actually two million would be better -- and walked into the state's democratic headquarters saying that you wanted to be governor or U.S. senator you would be immediately, tomorrow, a very serious candidate and would command a large amount of media attention. You would be one of the leaders of the democratic party, in five minutes. Two million dollars would do that for you. There is not a structure that says excuse me we don't even know what your principles are or you've never been to a meeting. That would be irrelevant. Just saying you're a democrat would be sufficient.
- C: Are there major differences between the Republican and Democrat parties in your mind?
- S: The main difference between the Democrats and the

Republicans in this city is that the Democrats are in insurance and the Republicans are in banking. No there are not.

C: In the campaign for governor, do you feel that you took more votes from Kunin or Smith?

S: People broke away from both the Democratic and Republican parties to vote for me. You know who didn't vote for me is the liberals; they voted for Kunin. My support, and the numbers support this, came from working people. It takes money to be a liberal, and they did not support me. In Burlington you can see it very clearly, my support comes from the working class wards.

C: And your financial support?

S: There wasn't very much of it and you no doubt know. If my memory is correct, Kunin and Smith spent about a half a million each. I spent around 60,000.

C: Yeah that's right 500,000 and 400,000.

S: And Leahy spent alot more, a million and a half, I think. So you're looking at several million dollars spent. Stop and think for a moment. how much money would it take to put out a paper once a week all over the state to educate and involved people in the issues, instead of spending the money in thirty second ads in the last week of the campaign. Christ, for five hundred dollars we put out a paper all over the city of Burlington. so multiply that, 25,000. For 25,000 a year, you would probably need more because of volunteer labor, but for a fraction of money you could actually get a newspaper out to educate people, or a television program to educate people. So the contrast between the Democratic and Republican parties, and the Coalition is educating people on the issues rather than just coming round at election time. We have just started a newsletter, and I believe we will be doing more non-election oriented work. We will be trying to get people involved in politics who are not usually involved. These are some of the goals of the Progressive Coalition.

C: Given the financial constraints we've talked about, and I've discussed them at greater length with George, it seems that these constraints will always exist for a candidate such as yourself who is representing poor and working class people. Isn't that an argument against involvement in elections and state office?

S: Sure, it's like going into a running race with one leg. You're at a real disadvantage. no one with any brains



doesn't understand that having a lot of money is a very significant part of electoral politics. And the higher the office the more significant it is. Jesse Jackson is having a very difficult time simple because he does not have the money. So people say well, he has no money so he's not a serious candidate so I won't give him any money. And it becomes a vicious circle.

C: Ad the people he's trying to represent don't have any money.

S: Of course they don't have any money. And most of them don't vote truth be known. Poor people don't vote. So you're up against a tremendous disadvantage. Here in Vermont we hold our own. Actually we ended up outspending our opponent for mayor this time, 35,000 more money than I would have dreamed on spending. And I spent 60,000 for governor; Kunin spent 500,000. If I had spent 250,000 -- had been outspent only 2:1, I probably would have beaten her.

C: And you were outspent more like 10:1. O.K. So why don't you join the democratic party, get funding and then come out as a socialist once you're in office?

S: It doesn't work that way. That's the temptation, but it's a fool's temptation. The goal there is to outsmart them. But it doesn't work that way and they outsmart you. You don't come out with any integrity. That whole issue has been debated for a hundred years in this country, whether you should work within the democratic party or not. The assumption is that you're going to sucker the system. People who always vote democratic will vote for you: they don't know the difference between you and somebody else. You walk into a party that presumably has a lot of people and that in terms of money people who contribute will continue to contribute. I don't see it. Believe me, I am familiar with every side of the arguments. The more radical, and the position of integrity, is to declare who you are and not fool people. And assume they are smart enough to see your name and vote for you outside the democratic party. We had 15% of the people who were willing to vote outside the democratic and republican parties, and more who were tempted to do it I think. If you're talking about change you can't fool people. You can't say, "vote for me, I'm a democrat it's O.K. nothing will really change. But I'm really going to change the system. You are or you're not. I think when you salk inside that house of the democratic party, and you have all the conservative democrats shaking your hand saying we're all democrats, aren't we. Well I am a democrat but I'm not a democrat. You are or you're not. You don't change the

system from within the democratic party.

- C: One last question. If you look at the state as being an instrument of the ruling class, or at least controlled indirectly by an owning class, why be involved in it. Don't you just make socialism just look like capitalism again?
- S: Sure you might. I respect people from any walk of life who do their best to deal with the serious problems in the world. If one looks at what my administration had accomplished in the last six years in order to make the world a little bit better place, educating people a little bit, improving the lives of a certain number of people, I would say that we've had some impact. Not to overestimate what we've done. I don't believe there is one particular way to organize. But if some idiot thinks socialist international party as the solution to the world's problems, I think he's a little bit naive. That's not the way it happens. The work that we do is based on the work that people did a hundred years ago. And hopefully, people after us will follow after us. I believe that local government is an relatively unexplored avenue for the left, and one that we can't afford to ignore.

APPENDIX 2

THE VISION - THE ROLE OF STATE GOVERNMENT

## APPENDIX 2

### THE VISION - THE ROLE OF STATE GOVERNMENT

#### Child Care

Provide \$1 million in seed money to be used for start-up funding of new child care centers or school-age projects and an additional amount of funding set aside to increase integrated support services from the State in areas such as special education and special needs;

Broaden the SRS fee scale to include all low and moderate income families according to HUD guidelines, i.e., approximately \$23,000 for a family of four;

Increase the reimbursement rate by 10% immediately and commission a study done primarily by child care providers themselves to determine an equitable reimbursement rate;

Provide money for training child care providers (in 1987 money available is approximately one-third the amount expended in 1980) and develop a state-wide resource and referral network;

Require public employers who receive public funds to provide child care or child care benefits to their employees, and offer tax credits or other incentives to private employers who provide child care or benefit packages which include child care.

#### Commercial Credit

Propose and support legislation which ends discrimination against women in areas of commercial credit in order for women to obtain business loans to start or expand their own businesses. Current laws only apply to retail credit and mortgage loans.

#### Housing Discrimination

Support an amendment to the State Fair Housing Law to include discrimination because of sexual preference as a prohibited act.

Propose and support amendments to the State Fair Housing Law to provide for state enforcement of this law and provide funding for this enforcement to be done

Health Care

Enforce and support recent court decisions to protect the abortion rights of low income women.

Insurance

Promote regulations which would require that health insurance cover all medical expenses for women and disallow excursions for abortions or pregnancy or policies that cost women more if these services are included.

Discourage temporary and part-time employment that does not provide health insurance and other benefits for women employees - the benefits should be prorated - not excluded - from such employment.

APPENDIX 3  
SANDERS FOR GOVERNOR

# SANDERS *for* GOVERNOR

182 Main Street, Burlington, VT 05401  
(802) 862-8118

## Question 1

The basic issue of this campaign is whether state government represents and protects the interests of the vast majority of the people - working people, the elderly, the handicapped, the poor, women, farmers, children, environmentalists - people who today are not getting the representation to which they are entitled. In the United States today, and within our own state, there are small numbers of people who, because of their wealth and power, are able to control both the economic and political life of this nation and state. This is not simply rhetoric, within our own nation and state, the richest people are getting richer, the poorest are becoming poorer and the middle class is finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their standard of living.

The basic theme of representing the needs and concerns of average Vermonters is reflected in the myriad of different issues facing Vermonters. These issues include the need for tax reform, for lower property taxes, for lower telephone and electric rates, for a higher minimum wage, for more affordable housing, for access to decent and affordable health care, and for expanded and improved human services for the poorest and the most vulnerable members of our society.

## Question 2

As Governor my three highest priorities will be as follows:

1. Tax Reform - to implement my comprehensive tax reform and tax relief program which will provide the following:
  - a. Reduce property taxes for homeowners and renters by providing a 20% cut in residential property taxes and expand the "Renter Rebate" program to provide a rebate equivalent to 20% of the property taxes tenants pay indirectly through their rent.
  - b. Stop property tax increases by providing a 20% increase (\$18 million) in State Aid to Education under a reformed state aid formula and by providing \$12 million in State Revenue Sharing for cities and towns to replace Federal Revenue Sharing.
  - c. Improve state programs by providing an immediate 10% increase in funding for human services and

appropriating \$2 million to help our family farms in Vermont.

This program would be financed through progressive taxation as follows:

- a. Increase the state income tax rate for persons with incomes over \$50,000 a year to recover 1/3 of the combined federal and state income tax cuts over the past five years.
  - b. Increase the state corporate income tax rate to recover the cut in state taxes due to the federal tax cuts in corporate taxes.
  - c. Establish a state-wide tax on vacation homes whereby the local community would receive the taxes it would levy on such properties and the state would receive the excess taxes up to the average tax rate for all of Vermont. (I have provided a \$75 credit for Vermonters to avoid taxing deer camps, etc.)
  - d. Increase the Property Title Transfer tax by 1/2%.
2. Significantly lower telephone rates and electric rates of private utilities in Vermont by implementing the following steps:
- a. Lower the allowed rate of profit for the cost of equity of these utilities to the FERC recommended level of 12.9%. (For example, the current NET rate of profit is 14.75% and the CVPS rate is 16% which is the third highest allowed in the nation under rate orders over the last sixteen months.);
  - b. Require that the utilities pass through to customers the reduction in the federal corporate tax rate from 50% to 34% effective January 1, 1987; and
  - c. Require these utilities to refinance their debt to equity ratio to a maximum 30% equity and 70% debt. (For example, both NET and CVPS have more than 50% equity for capitalization, on the average the cost of equity is between 27¢ and 30¢ on a dollar compared to an average of 9¢ to 10¢ on the dollar for debt financing of capitalization.)
3. Insure that every Vermonter has access to decent and affordable health care. This would be accomplished by substantially expanding the Medicaid program, revamping and strengthening the Certificate of Need process, the rate setting process and the regulating of health insurance in Vermont. A long term goal in this context would be the development of a state health system similar to the Quebec system.

A fourth priority which I consider to be extremely important would be to raise the minimum wage immediately to \$4.00 an



hour and to further increase the minimum wage to \$4.40 over the next two years to restore the lost purchasing power of the minimum wage over the last five and ten years respectively.

Question 3

Clearly, the Governor must provide strong leadership in setting a legislative agenda and must be able to work cooperatively to see that agenda enacted. I am confident that as Governor, I will be able to work effectively with the Legislature to see these priorities adopted. My confidence in this regard is based on the success we had in Montpelier this last session in enacting the most significant property tax reform legislation in the history of Vermont. I believe that the Legislature can and would implement these priorities with the strong leadership of the Governor because these priorities address the basic needs and concerns of their constituents. I believe that our success with the Burlington Board of Aldermen in recent years also indicates my ability to work with a legislative body controlled by Democrats and Republicans.

Question 4

I seriously believe the Governor's greatest strength is a public relations program that is probably the most effective in modern Vermont history. Never before has there been a more media-conscious Governor, and never before has there been a larger gap between reality and illusion. Conversely, her greatest weakness is the lack of substance behind the media illusion.

Let us look briefly at the record. The Governor claims credit for retiring a record deficit. What really happened? The deficit was actually retired due to the plan prepared and adopted under the Snelling Administration and through a growth in revenues due to the strong economy over the last eighteen months.

She claimed she helped farmers. In fact, however, the Agriculture Department is in a shambles and the legislation to expand eligibility for the land use program was passed by the Legislature despite her original opposition. Today, she claims credit for the legislation.

In the area of property tax relief, the property tax rebate program was expanded from a \$5 million to a \$7 million program while property taxes rose over \$50 million during her administration.

In the area of human services we see a Department of Mental Health in disarray and a Right to Treatment lawsuit reflecting the abysmal condition of human service programs in general.

The much heralded project Reach Up is, in fact, a rehash of the WIN (Work Incentive Program) and provides all of \$25,000 funding for this fiscal year which is, coincidentally, the same amount of the promotional budget.

Similarly, in the area of environmental protection, despite the much publicized Water Quality legislation, the Kunin

Administration record on solid waste disposal and waste water treatment is a record of publicity and pronouncements and little achievement.

Question 6

A. Appointments - I applaud the Governor's commitment to appointing women. I have made a similar commitment to appointing women to office. Beyond the issue of gender, I am not impressed with the Governor's appointments and feel that the quality of the appointments in the Sanders Administration compares very favorably to the quality of appointments in the Kunin Administration.

B. Effectiveness Working With The Legislature - The fact that the last two sessions of the Legislature were substantially dominated by the relatively less significant issues of the pay of construction workers on the Rousses Point bridge and the raising of the drinking age indicates to me a lack of leadership by the Governor in working with the Legislature. In fact, last spring when we lobbied successfully for Burlington's charter changes, I encountered a great deal of hostility and anger toward the Governor on the part of many legislators due to her lack of leadership, her inconsistency in support of legislation she proposed, and her habit of claiming credit for legislation after its passage despite her lack of support and even, in some instances, opposition to such legislation prior to its passage.

C. Business and Development Issues - I believe that the City of Burlington's record in the area of economic development is significantly better than the Kunin Administration's record.

D. Environmental Issues - As stated above, I believe this is an area where the Governor has accomplished a great deal in terms of media and not much substantively. It is not enough to simply pass legislation, Vermont needs real solutions, and especially funding, to deal with the issues of solid waste and waste water treatment.

E. I give the Governor credit for expanding kindergartens, early education and state aid to education. However, the basic underlying issue of the funding of education requires breaking our dependency on the property tax and substantially increasing state aid to education on the basis of a fair and equitable formula.

F. Women's Issues - I give credit to the Governor for implementing the State's pay equity program. Again, however, I feel my record in Burlington demonstrates greater accomplishment in addressing the real problems and issues facing women and their children in Vermont.

G. Serving the Needs of Low and Moderate Income Constituents

In my opinion this is the area in which the Governor has failed

most miserably. In terms of the issues of property taxes, electric and telephone rates, the minimum wage, housing, health care and human services, the record is unacceptable.

Question 7

The aspect in which the Governor and I most significantly disagree is reflected in terms of my priorities under Question 2 above. I do not believe the Governor has substantively addressed these priorities. Beyond the issue of these priorities, I feel the most significant aspect in which I differ from the Governor would be in the area of administration and implementation. I am proud of the substantive record of my administration in Burlington and believe that it compares very favorably to that of the Governor's.

Question 8

I strongly support the Equal Rights Amendment and am a member of "Men for the ERA". However, I believe that the passage of the ERA will only signify the beginning of the struggle to achieve economic equality and social justice for women. We must do far more. Poverty is essentially a women's issue. Single parent families headed by women represent an overwhelmingly disproportionate percentage of low income people. True equality for women requires that we address this issue.

Question 9

I believe and have long advocated that the Vermont tax system should be decoupled from the federal system in two respects. First, Vermont must set its own tax policies and not allow through coupling, tax policy to be determined in Washington. Second, I do not support the direct flat rate of federal taxes which is currently employed by the state. Under my Tax Reform and Tax Relief program, I have proposed that Vermont's tax system be made steeply progressive by increasing the percentage of federal taxes as income increases. I would maintain the coupling of Vermont and federal taxes only to the extent that Vermont's tax form should be simple and easy to complete and administer by linking it to the federal tax form.

Question 10

Yes, I believe we must break our dependency on the property tax as the principal means for funding local services and education. I do not support the concept of a state-wide property tax for two reasons. First, it is a property tax. The solution to the property tax crisis in this State is not more or different property taxes, but rather, less property taxes. Second, if there is a virtue to the property tax it is the fact that it is locally controlled. Inevitably, a state-wide tax takes control from communities and voters and vests it in Montpelier. I would very reluctantly support a state-wide property tax proposal if it emerged as the only viable way to address the crisis in property taxes, funding of education and local services.

Question 11

No, I do not believe that the various departments of the Human Services Agency are adequately funded. Under my Tax Reform and Tax Relief program, I have proposed an immediate 10% increase in funding. I am also concerned that the Kunin Administration has increased personnel and funding for administration, but not direct services. Please refer to the attached papers regarding a variety of proposals I have made in the area of human services.

Question 12

No, I do not support mandatory sentencing guidelines or terms. I believe our prisons should not be overcrowded and conditions should be decent and humane. However, I believe we need to shift our emphasis and priority from responses to intervention and prevention.

Question 13

Clearly the Department of Agriculture needs to be overhauled and the programs and functions of the Department significantly improved. I feel that one of the greatest shortcomings of the Kunin Administration has been the deterioration in the quality and activity of the programs of this Department in the last two years. Please refer to my attached position paper regarding farm policy for my positions generally on the issue of agriculture in Vermont.

Question 14

The most significant aspect of the problem of education funding in Vermont is indicated by several statistics. The State of Vermont is second in the nation in our reliance on the property tax as the source for local tax revenues. Currently, the property tax constitutes 99.1% of all local tax revenues in Vermont. The second significant statistic is that the fact that Vermont ranks 45th in the nation in state aid to education. Currently state aid represents 35% of education expenditures in Vermont compared to the national average of over 50%. These statistics clearly indicate the nature of the problem of education funding in Vermont. We rely too heavily on a regressive and unfair form of taxation, the property tax, and we fall significantly short in state aid to education.

Under my Tax Reform and Tax Relief program, I have proposed to address this problem through an immediate 20% increase in State Aid to Education and a 20% reduction in homeowners property taxes. I have proposed that the per pupil level of aid in floor towns should be raised to \$500 per student to insure a minimum level of state support for each child's education. I have also called for reform of the disastrous Morse-Guilliani formula for state aid and believe that the distribution formula should be based on the per capita income in cities and towns in Vermont rather than the Grand List

which is an inappropriate measure of the ability of a community to finance education. (This is clearly reflected by the fact that over 1/2 of the cities and towns in the Northeast Kingdom and Addison County are considered floor towns based on their Grand List wealth.)

Question 15

Unfortunately, much of the acid rain problem in Vermont is a reflection of emissions from other states. Addressing this problem will clearly require national legislation. As Governor, I will work aggressively to promote such legislation. In terms of Vermont, clearly we need to address this issue in terms of emissions from within Vermont. This is one of many reasons why I oppose the construction of the Vicon trash burning plant in Rutland and vetoed the construction of the trash plant proposed for Burlington.

Question 16

There are really two dimensions to this problem. The first is how do we clean up existing toxic dump sites. (I am proud of Burlington's record with regard to our landfill. Despite the claims by Governor Kunin, the City had executed all contracts and was in the process of installing a leachate control system for the Burlington Landfill prior to the State's lawsuit.) I believe we must provide funding in Vermont to clean up our toxic waste sites. We can accomplish this through bonding and legislation similar to the national legislation which requires that the creators and users of toxic sites share in the costs of the clean up.

The second, but equally important, aspect of this question is how do we avoid such problems for the future. I am very disturbed by the record of the Kunin Administration over the last few years in licensing a variety of unsanitary landfills throughout the State. I strongly believe that all future landfills must be sanitary to prevent toxic wastes and leachate from migrating into the water supply. Clearly we cannot simply eliminate toxic waste and thus we must develop sanitary sites for their disposal. As Governor, I would adopt the proposal recently generated by Burlington's Department of Public Works for a state-wide solution to solid waste disposal based on a state sponsored system of regional sanitary landfills and recycling to substantially reduce the waste stream.

Question 17

I believe that my views with respect to President Reagan's domestic and international policies are well known. I believe they have been disastrous on both a domestic and international scale. The two most salient features of Reagan's domestic policies have been the dismantling of the federal Domestic Assistance Programs which provided funding to state and local government to meet domestic needs. The second major aspect of Reagan's domestic policies has been a consistent policy

# SANDERS *for* GOVERNOR

182 Main Street, Burlington, VT 05401

(802) 862-8118

## Women and Paid Work

- \* Women's Economic Opportunity Program - established this project to place women in non-traditional skilled trades employment through resource and referral services, training programs and support groups;
- \* Project Self-Sufficiency - initiated this HUD national demonstration project to help low income, single parent families by providing support services including job training and placement, education, personal and career counseling, childcare and housing assistance;
- \* Women in the Construction Trades Ordinance - requires that at least 10% of a contractor's work force must be women in order to qualify for City contracts;
- \* Reclassification Compensation Study - to reclassify city positions and eliminate de facto pay discrimination against women;
- \* Recruitment Program - to attract women to serve as officers in the Burlington Police Department (1981-0, 1986-7);
- \* Appointments - appointed women to over 50% of the positions which are direct appointments of the Mayor (14 in all, 1981-0, 1986-8);

## Women and Housing

- \* Housing Discrimination Ordinance - to prohibit discrimination in rental housing against women, women with children, and on the basis of sexual preference in the City of Burlington;
- \* Housing Initiatives - established the Burlington Community Land Trust which enables families to purchase homes at affordable prices and begins to address the housing speculation problem in Burlington; piloted the Affordable Housing Demonstration project with an area developer to build the most cost-effective housing through innovations in construction practices as well as local codes and procedures. This will result in 46 affordable townhouses in Burlington's New North End; assisted in the development of Howe Meadows which will provide 38 additional affordable homes and has provided 9 sites to the Land Trust and one each to the Burlington Youth Employment Program and the Burlington Voc Ed Program and Habitat for Humanity; assisted in the development of South Meadows which will provide 160 units of family housing, one-quarter of them subsidized for 20 years and will offer many of the benefits of home ownership through its cooperative component; established the Home Improvement Program which

of providing greater benefits from the wealthy and reducing benefits for the disadvantaged. The most obvious manifestation of this policy is in the area of tax reform and reduced funding for human services.

With regard to Reagan's international policies, the two most salient features have been 1) the escalation of the arms race and military spending at the direct expense of domestic programs and 2) a disturbing escalation of the military activity and role of the United States and heightening of international tensions and prospects for war. These international policies have obviously had an adverse impact on Vermont and the country as a whole. The diversion of funds from domestic programs to finance Reagan's militarism and the escalation of the arms race has resulted in serious cutbacks and underfunding in services in all aspects of domestic programs.

#### Question 18

As I have stated many times, I believe the Governor can, should and must play an active role in influencing national and international policies. I feel proud of our record in Burlington in this regard. Under my term as Mayor, I believe we have increased the awareness and concerns of the people of Burlington with regard to both national and international policies and their impact on the quality of life in Burlington.

The second aspect of this leadership role is the beneficial effect of governmental leaders providing a forum and focus for opposition to these policies. By speaking out on these issues, and thereby providing a forum and raising awareness, I believe it is possible to mobilize political support to influence and change these policies. Clearly, if we are to maintain our quality of life, if we are to end the absurd arms race, if we are to avoid a nuclear armageddon, political leaders, at all levels of government, must speak out and mobilize opposition to these policies. As Governor I would continue the efforts I have begun as Mayor to oppose and change these policies.

has renovated approximately 300 homes since its inception; and established the Affordable Housing Task Force which has examined a range of problems and solutions in the provision of affordable housing.

#### Childcare

- \* Burlington Children's Space - constructed and established a quality, affordable childcare center which offers part-time care, infant care and care for children with special needs, all on a sliding fee scale;
- \* After-School Programs - initiated school-age childcare/enrichment programs at two City elementary schools (hope to expand next year) and established recreational after-school activities programs throughout Burlington;
- \* Funding - for a variety of other programs to address the issue of childcare including the Children's Program at Women Helping Battered Women, the Parent Aide/Family Education Project at the VNA, and scholarship funds for low income parents;

#### Women and Health

- \* Health Clinics - free health clinics for women and children through the Burlington Women's Council;
- \* Labor/Management Health Care Committee - revised the City's health care package following the dramatic increase in the cost of health insurance to further refine the use of the Employee Benefit Plan without shifting costs to the employee.

#### Mental Health

- \* Funding - For a variety of programs that address mental health issues including the COTS streetworker program, the Howard Mental Health caseworker, and
- \* As Mayor I have not had the opportunity to be that involved in the mental health system of the State. However, I do have a position paper that I have written on mental health issues which I would be happy to share with you.

#### Violence Against Women

- \* Women Helping Battered Women - provided start-up funding for the purchase of a building to be used as a shelter for battered women and their children;
- \* Rape Crisis Center - provides funding each year as requested;
- \* Burlington Women's Council - provided self defense training for women, seniors and handicapped persons and initiated Project Whistlestop to deter crimes against women;
- \* Burlington Police Department - re-established the Rape Investigation Unit in the Burlington Police Department;
- \* Legislation - proposed and lobbied for legislation to allow for videotaped examinations, expansion of evidentiary privilege,



upgrading of lewd and lascivious conduct to sexual assault of a minor, extension of the statute of limitations to six years, the establishment of rape crisis investigation units in major police departments around the state, and an extension of the rape shield law to the deposition process;

#### Women and Education

- \* The Women's Economic Opportunity Program - as mentioned above, places women in non-traditional skilled trades employment through resource and referral services, training programs and support groups;
- \* Project Self-Sufficiency - again, provides support services including job training and placement, education, and personal and career counseling;

In my role as Mayor, I have not been able to take an active part in shaping the educational system in Vermont. Since you ask for past initiatives I won't go into here what my recommendations would be in this area. However, I have included a list of some of the priorities of my administration and I'd appreciate your reviewing that.

#### Older Women

- \* Operation Snowshovel - matches volunteers of all ages with their elderly or handicapped neighbors to provide a snowshoveling service in Burlington;
- \* Burlington Dialogue - through a one year grant matched volunteers with senior citizens to provide daily telephone contact, to reduce their sense of isolation, and to provide information and referral in the event problems occur;

#### Lesbian Rights

- \* Lesbian and Gay Rights Day - passed a resolution at the Board of Aldermen level proclaiming this day and supporting the civil rights of all people regardless of sexual orientation and condemning discrimination on the basis of sexual preference;

#### Equal Rights Amendment

- \* Strong support - as evidenced by every major piece of literature in my campaign.

The Equal Rights Amendment is a conservative statement and its passage will only signify the beginning of a struggle to achieve equality and economic justice.

#### Military Spending

- \* Outspoken opposition - against the insane national priorities which allow billions of dollars to be spent on weaponry while many of our oldest and youngest citizens are going

hungry, are poor, are without shelter and our young people are unable to afford higher education. The misplaced priorities of the Reagan administration has resulted in an unacceptable deterioration and reduction in the quality, extent and scope of human services at a time when many families and children are experiencing greater needs for such services. I believe the fundamental problem underlying most of these issues is the need for immediate and radical tax reform. We must, through a progressive tax structure based on ability to pay, substantially improve the funding and delivery of human services in Vermont.