

# Liberty Unionite Sanders Out To Combat America's 'Socialism of the Rich'

By FREDERICK W. STETSON

As everyone knows, the rich are profiting from tax loopholes and other advantages, while the poor and middle classes struggle to make ends meet and pay their disproportionately high tax bills.

If this isn't a universally accepted view, there is at least one political candidate who believes



Sanders

it's an accurate assessment of the situation — and he says he'd like to do something about it.

"We're going to reverse that around," says Bernard Sanders, the Liberty Union Party candidate for the U.S. Senate. He proposes closing the loopholes, while taxing the rich heavily and reducing taxes for low- and middle-income earners.

Sanders believes the current tax structure is imbalanced, in favor of the wealthy. "What we have now, is socialism for the rich and free enterprise for the poor," he says, repeating a popular Liberty Union refrain.

But Sanders, a 32-year-old resident of Burlington, is more than just a slogan-bearing third party politician. While there may be many who disagree with his views, he has led consumer causes and fights in several fields.

Last spring, the Public Service Board rejected a New England Telephone and Telegraph Co. proposed 38 per cent rate increase. The Brattleboro Daily Reformer called the proposed increase "staggering" and commended Sanders for his efforts to block it.

"The Liberty Union, and its former gubernatorial candidate, Bernard Sanders, are to be specifically congratulated for the persistence of their opposition," the southern Vermont newspaper editorialized.

The Liberty Union also figured in the PSB's latest rejection of an NET increase proposal, with the party's candidate for attorney general,

Nancy Kaufman, arguing against the increase.

Sanders' contribution to the Vermont political scene also takes another form. At public forums, he often confronts Republican and Democratic candidates with tough questions that gain respect from audiences.

When he campaigned unsuccessfully for governor in 1972, it was not uncommon for him to receive more applause at political gatherings than his opponents, Democrat Gov. Salmon and Republican Luther F. Hackett of South Burlington.

This is likely to occur again, especially after the September primaries, when the number of candidates for the U.S. Senate will be reduced to one Republican, one Democrat and Sanders.

The Liberty Union candidate speaks with somewhat of a Brooklyn accent, which he acquired as he grew up in New York. He comes across as a good-natured, but serious individual. At first glance he might be dismissed as an impassioned "hippie," but he's basically an unpretentious, sensitive and sincere person.

Although he's a 1964 graduate of the University of Chicago, he lists his occupations as "carpenter" and social worker. He's worked with disturbed children, and as the food stamp "outreach director" for the Bread and Law Task Force.

Sanders also has written articles for various publications. A question and answer interview



with Sen. George Aiken, R-Vt., was published in Vermont Life magazine and subsequently quoted by at least two other publications.

In this political year, Sanders expects to improve upon Liberty Union records of the past, and to garner a "hell of a lot of votes" from low-income people and laborers. So far the Liberty Union candidates have not received more than 5 per cent of the total vote cast in several elections since 1970.

However, Sanders believes the party candidates will easily exceed 5 per cent this year, and all of the candidates are "running to win." The party expects to raise about \$5,000 for its political efforts, which is considerably more than the amount raised in past years.

Big business, or even Vermont businessmen, probably won't be among the heavy contributors to the Liberty Union. Most candidates, Sanders included, are emphasizing their belief that there is an excessive concentration of private and corporate wealth in America.

Sanders says this concentration is itemized in a report by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations. The Rockefeller family alone, through its interests in major banks, insurance companies and oil companies, controls assets worth \$200 million, he says.

In Vermont, according to Sanders, the 20 major stockholders of the Central Vermont Public Service Corp. are wealthy out-of-state residents. Sanders maintains that the large electrical utility should be owned by public cooperatives.

The way to effect this transfer of ownership, he says, is for the PSB to deny further electric rate increases to the utility, forcing it into bankruptcy. The public, presumably the state, could then purchase the company on bankruptcy terms, Sanders says.

Once the transfer of ownership has been completed, he adds, each electric customer would become a stockholder in the utility, and each would own one share of stock.

As it is now, only 2 per cent of the people in the United States own 80 per cent of all available corporate stock, according to Sanders' figures.

Sanders favors heavy taxation of both assets and income gained by the wealthy. "Nobody should earn more than \$1 million," he says. Removal of wealth means removal of power, according to Sanders, and these steps would create a climate for ownership and

management by workers.

"Rockefeller and his friends are not smarter or born smarter," Sanders says. "People have to begin to stand up and fight back — they are not just cogs in the machine. They have to have much more confidence in themselves. . . It gets to you if all you can do is turn a nut and a bolt. . ."

Good Morning!

Cloudy, chance of showers. (Details, map, Page 2)

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