

Sanders: Disenfranchised will have a friend in city hall

By LAURA KING

BURLINGTON (AP) — Six Burlington merchants listened with stony faces as their new mayor, Bernard Sanders, turned the topic of his inaugural address to capitalism.

"Giant banks and multinational corporations...determine whether we give billions of dollars in foreign aid to repressive military governments," said Sanders, 39, who was sworn in Monday as the mayor of Vermont's largest city.

"Oh boy," muttered the owner of a women's clothing store. "Oh boy."

Sanders, a founder of Vermont's leftist Liberty Union Party, rode to a stunning 10-vote victory on March 3 over five-term Democratic incumbent Mayor Gordon Paquette, whose forces had dominated Burlington politics for more than a decade.

The Brooklyn native calls himself a socialist but ran for mayor as an independent, assembling a loose coalition of students, the poor, college professors, policemen, disgruntled neighborhood groups and labor unions.

Sanders takes a strong leftist line on national and international politics. But he has taken pains in the month since his election to reassure jittery community leaders that he is willing to listen to all on local issues.

On Monday he wore a three-piece suit, complete with a fresh pink carnation in his lapel, instead of his customary rumpled work clothes.

"I do not have any great sadistic desire to destroy the business community," he said.

"I won't turn Church Street into a cow pasture," Sanders said, referring to Burlington's main commercial district.

But he stood firm in his opposition to a major hospital expansion project, calling it "outrageously expensive." He called for an end to "cronyism" in city government, saying that Burlington's disenfranchised groups — the young, the poor, the elderly — were "going to be at home in this city hall."

With supporters hanging out of City Hall balconies, Sanders repeated his criticism of a multimillion dollar lakefront construction plan. To continuous rounds of applause, the mayor said that "the rich with their condominiums" should not have exclusive access to the Burlington's Lake Champlain waterfront.

The euphoria of victory has worn off, and Sanders now faces the same problems that helped drive his predecessor down to defeat. The city's financial picture is bleak, as voters turned down a major tax increase in March. City workers are com-

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plaining of low wages, and federal money used for some city services is drying up.

The Board of Aldermen could block radical change, as Sanders is well aware. One longtime associate and friend of Paquette, Alderwoman Joyce Desautels, rolled her eyes when Sanders asked for the board's cooperation in his address.

Sanders is not without friends on the board, however. Also sworn in Monday were Terill Bouricous, 25, a member of the radical Citizens Party; and Sadie White, 80, a longtime opponent of the Paquette machine, who once called the former mayor "a lying skunk."

Even Sanders' close supporters acknowledge that the road ahead could be rocky. "Change scares people," said fair housing advocate Seth Lipschutz.

Less concerned was Levi Sanders, 11, who, like his father, is an avid basketball player.

"Yeah, it was good. I'd give it a 9½," he said of his father's speech.

He looked restlessly around the council chamber, where reporters, associates and well-wishers were swarming around the new mayor.

"It was okay," he repeated. "But I'd rather we were out shooting hoops."

Stafford wins an award

MONTPELIER (AP) — U.S. Sen. Robert Stafford, R-Vt., is scheduled to receive the United Cerebral Palsy 1961 Governmental Activities Award in Washington this week.

The Vermont Republican was chosen for the award because of his efforts on behalf of adults and children with cerebral palsy as a member of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, according to officials.

Stafford has sponsored bills providing the handicapped with equal access to transportation and education.



Bernard Sanders delivers his inaugural address during after he took oath of office as new mayor of Burlington.

AP