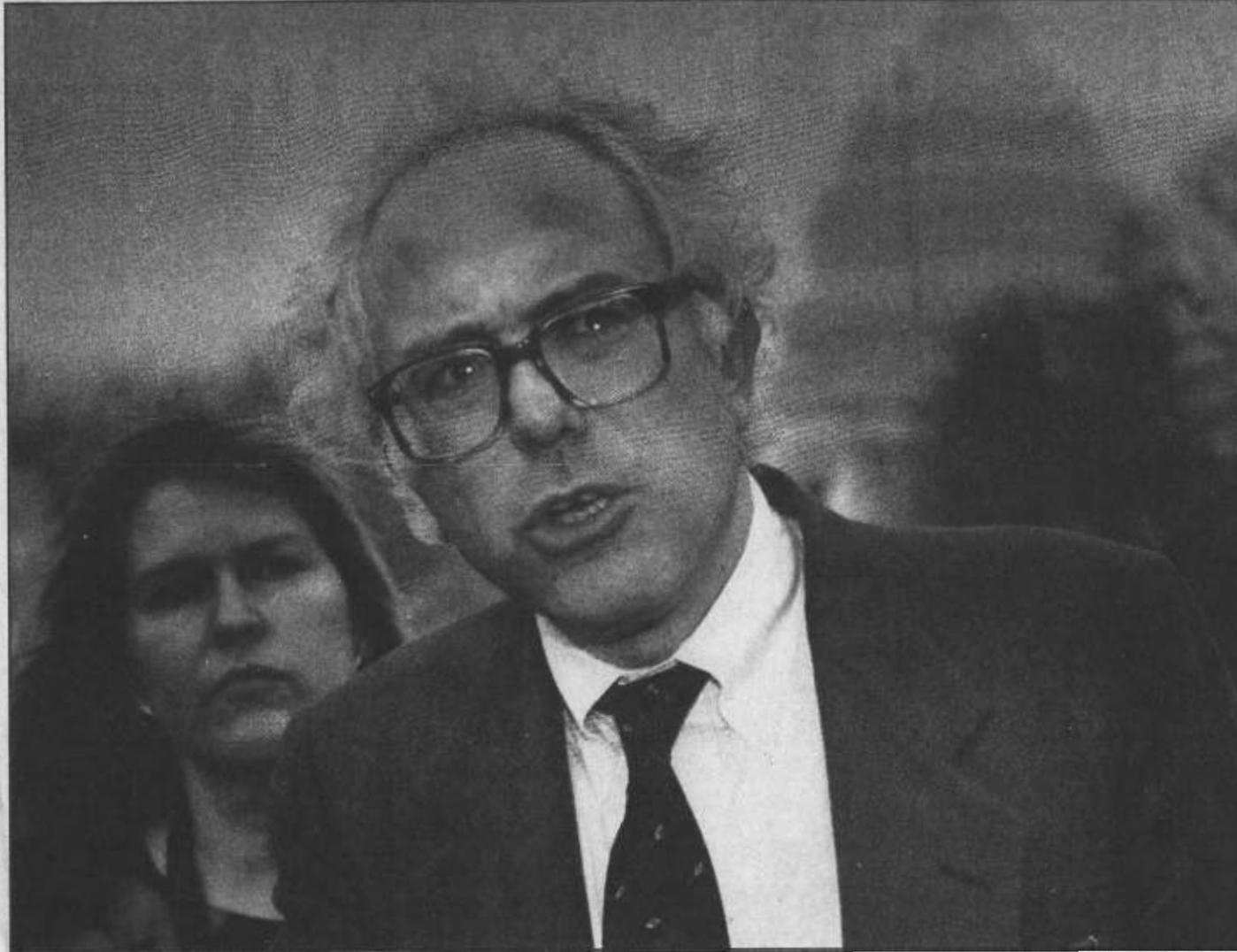


MR. SANDERS GOES TO WASHINGTON



REP. BERNIE SANDERS, VERMONT INDEPENDENT.

GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / MICHELE MCDONALD

The Vermont socialist aims to shake up the Capitol's political scene



By Sally Jacobs
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — It is just after noon and the freshman class of the 102d US Congress has concluded its ethics seminar early and is heading off for lunch. All of them, that is, but Bernie Sanders.

Sanders, Vermont's newly elected and sole congressman, is standing in front of the Cannon House Office Building in a persistent drizzle. Engulfed by a growing group of reporters and passersby, Sanders is conducting an impromptu seminar on one of his favorite topics.

"What do you think of socialism?" he queries a cluster of young people strolling by. "What happens if we were in France? Does that panic you? Would you be afraid to go to France?"

They shake their heads, giggle at this unexpected find. Sanders, warming to his topic, drops his battered leather briefcase to the wet ground and lobs another one.

"Do your parents worry about the cost of health care?" A chorus of yeses. "OK," he nods. "How many of you know how many countries there are in the entire industrialized world that do not have nationalized health care." Silence. "There're two. The United States and what other country? South Africa." A murmur of surprise. "Now, does that make you wonder about something?"

Bernie Sanders, Brooklyn native, socialist, four-term mayor of Burlington, Vt., and the first genuinely Independent candidate elected to Congress since 1950, has arrived in Washington. And this kind of talk is precisely why he's here. For Bernard Sanders' ambition is not just to represent the people of Vermont. Sanders, 48, aspires to nothing less than the revitalization of a disillusioned electorate and the establishment of an alternative to the "stale promises" of the Republican and Democratic

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