

National Editor
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Dear Editor,

Christopher Daly quotes University of Vermont political scientist Garrison Nelson's statement that Bernie Sanders "will be the fifth socialist to serve in the House." Nelson identified the fourth and fifth as Vito Marcantonio and Leo Isaacson, "of the more militant American Labor Party."

The American Labor Party was not socialist, nor were Marcantonio, who was my friend, or Isaacson, whom I knew. Moreover, what then was "more militant" is today's national policy, to a large degree of both major parties.

Marcantonio's first political activity was as Republican Fiorello LaGuardia's first campaign manager when La Guardia ran for the House. Marc was elected as both ALP and Democrat until he became, if I remember correctly, the first person to win the nomination of three ^{major} political parties and was elected without opposition.

Mostly he voted with the Democrats but he enjoyed excellent relations with the leadership of both political parties. I drove him to the White House for innumerable meetings with FDR and I sat in on meetings he had with Joe Martin, GOP House leader. Martin leaked to him for his use what the GOP feared using. Marc left one of his meetings with FDR with that President's agreement to create the Fair Employment Practices Commission if in return Marc would withdraw his HR1, a bill to create that commission.

These were times when Marc was the only Member to defend Eleanor Roosevelt on the floor when the extremists of the right assailed her.

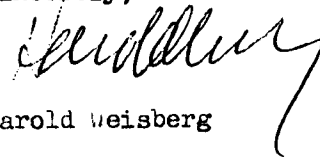
When he was gerrymandered out of office he was succeeded by a man who was openly pro-fascist.

Fresh from law school his first job was as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan.

You young fogies are long on the cliches of journalism and political science but are short on the actualities of our history and political science.

Yesterday's "militant" does not become centrist because he changes. It is because our society and national concepts change and what in the past was regarded as militant, no matter how solidly it was within our Constitution, like equal rights for blacks and women, does become national policy.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

For Vermont's Sanders, Victory Followed Long Pat First Socialist Elected to House in Decades Gets Attention With Frank Talk of Class Confl

By Christopher R. Daly
Special to The Washington Post

BOSTON, Nov. 10—In an election year when many Americans apparently decided to give the ras-cals another chance, voters in Vermont broke sharply with the status quo and elected a new congressman, Bernie Sanders, who is not only an independent but a socialist.

By a 17-point margin, Sanders routed a freshman Republican, Peter Smith, despite the supposed advantages of incumbency and the personal campaigning of President Bush in the closing weeks.

Sanders, the former mayor of Burlington, Vt., and the runner-up in the 1988 election for Vermont's single House seat, thus will become the first socialist in the House in decades.

Whether his election signals a first wave of populist reaction to Reaganism or stands as an anomaly remains to be seen. In the other key Vermont race last Tuesday, for example, voters chose a Republican, Richard A. Snelling, for governor.

But the 49-year-old Sanders sees his win as the natural expression of the electorate's alienation from Washington.

The voters were saying they believe Congress is out of touch with the needs of ordinary Americans—working people, poor people, the elderly—that they feel Congress is dominated by big money and they want to send somebody down there to fight for them," Sanders said last week.

As for getting elected, Sanders's approach to winning office would sound familiar to successful politicians of any party. He spent 20 years building name recognition, credentials and support as mayor of Burlington, Vermont's largest city.

He ran for Congress in 1988 and fell short. He tried again, boxed out most serious rivals, held his base and worked hard to bring in new supporters.

This time, Sanders also had some help. Most prominent Vermont Democrats decided to endorse Sanders, or at least stay neutral, thus giving Sanders a fairly clear shot at Smith with little interference from Democrat DeLores Sandovral, who finished with 3 percent.

Unwittingly, Smith helped Sanders, too. First, the Republican endorsed some limits on automatic weapons, incurring the wrath of the National Rifle Association and alienating some of his conservative base among hunters.

With polls nevertheless showing a virtual dead heat in September, Smith then bungled the tax and budget issues that bedeviled so many Washington politicians this fall. Smith became the first rank-and-file Republican to endorse the bipartisan budget agreement in late September—endearing himself to President Bush—only to find that most Vermonters were outraged over the proposed tax on home heating oil.

In the late stages of the campaign, Smith tried to tap his White House credit, and Bush flew about Cuban President Fidel Castro.

For Sanders, the victory capped 20 years of political agitation. The son of a Brooklyn paint seller, Sanders ran for statewide office four times in the 1970s before squeaking into the mayor's job in Burlington by just 10 votes. In the next eight years, he won over many of his critics by pushing tax reform, affordable housing and economic development.

As a House freshman, Sanders now faces a delicate, practical problem: defining his relationship to the Democratic caucus and negotiating his committee assignments. Although he insists he is an independent, he has already begun discussions with Speaker Thomas S. Foley (D-Wash.) and other House leaders over his role.

"The discussions were cordial. I expect to be admitted to the [Democratic] caucus. I look forward to that," Sanders said, adding that he pledged to support the Democratic leadership. One issue they did not discuss is whether Sanders would be allowed to accrue seniority. Sanders will be the fifth socialist

to serve in the House, according to research by political scientist rison Nelson of the University of Vermont. Two were members of the Socialist Party: Victor Berg Wisconsin, who served in 191 and 1923-29, and Meyer London New York City, who sat from 1923 with one interruption.

Later, two members of the militant American Labor Party both from New York City, served. They were Vito Marcantonio, from 1939 to 1951, and Isaacson, 1948-49.

More recently, House members have been elected as independents although most have joined the majority Democrats upon election. The last congressman to remain independent, according to Nelson, was Henry Frazier Reams of Ohio who served two terms in the ear 1950s.

Two current House members arrived as independents but later joined the Democrats. One Thomas M. Foglietta of Philadelphia; the other is Joe Moakley of Boston, who chairs the powerful Rules Committee.

the electorate's alienation from Washington.

"The voters were saying they believe Congress is out of touch with the needs of ordinary Americans—working people, poor people, the elderly—that they feel Congress is dominated by big money and they want to send somebody down there to fight for them," Sanders said last week.

Sanders, who is often rumpiled, usually late and always tie-less, found himself thrust into the limelight, besieged with interview requests from local and national news media. Although he is not aligned with any political party, Sanders gets attention with his frank talk of class conflict.

"The basic message is, in Vermont we believe there is something wrong when the wealthiest 1 percent of the population has seen a doubling of real income over the last 10 years while the middle class and the working class have lost ground," he said.

In Sanders's view, Democrats would be winning more offices if they would reassess their traditional role as advocates of the vast numbers of Americans who do not enjoy great wealth.

Asked about his specific political agenda in the House, Sanders points first to a national health-care system like Canada's and to "fairness" in taxes, then calls for deep cuts in defense spending to free up funds for domestic priorities such as housing, education and the environment.

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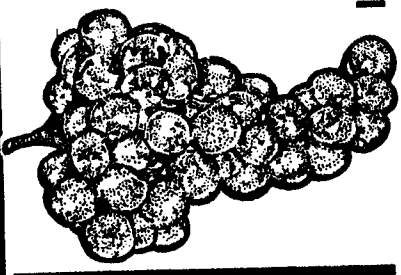
In the late stages of the campaign, Smith tried to tap his White House credit, and Bush flew through a rainstorm on Oct. 23 to attend a Smith fund-raiser. But by then, the president's popularity was sagging, and Smith awkwardly tried to distance himself from Bush even while sitting next to him.

The final straw appears to have been a backlash against a negative advertisement that Smith flung at Sanders in the final week. In a state with a tradition of clean politics, voters apparently resented Smith's attempt to red-bait Sanders with 30-year-old, out-of-context remarks



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California Seedless
**Red Ruby
Grapes**
99¢
lb.



FIBER-2 grams per 2/3 cup
**Brussels
Sprouts**
Fresh
69¢
lb.

