

Resistance

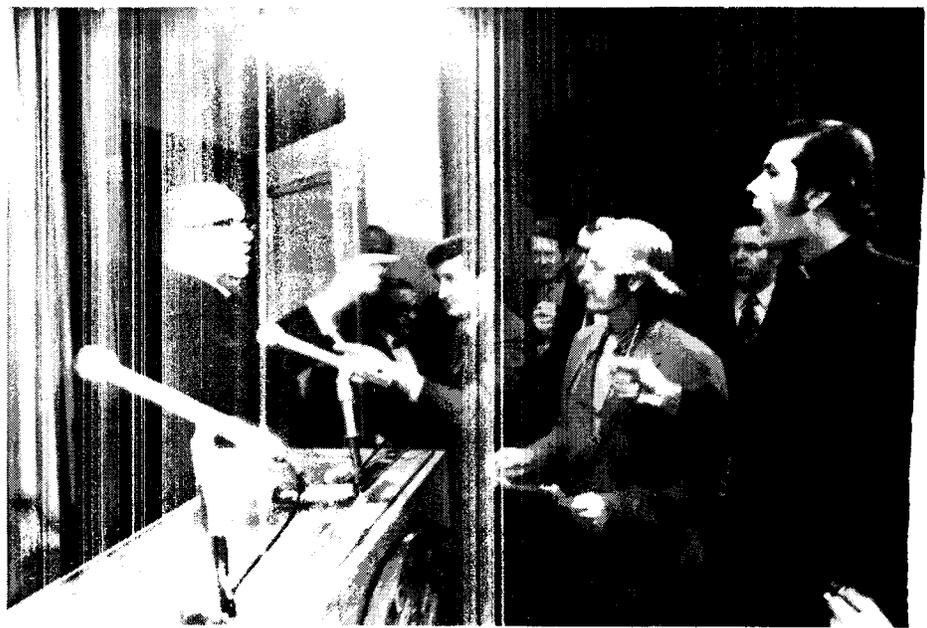
CAP: NEW BREEZE IN THE WINDY CITY

by Derek Shearer

In November 1969, Chicago suffered a temperature inversion. For almost a week a deadly cloud of polluted air hung over the city. According to newspaper accounts, Commonwealth Edison was one of the major contributors to air pollution, and the company became the focus of some public attention. At about this time, Saul Alinsky—the nationally known radical organizer—was walking through Chicago's O'Hare airport and he bumped into Mike Royko—the nationally-known popular columnist. Royko asked Alinsky what he was going to do about the air pollution, and Alinsky is said to have replied, "You write a column Mike, and if you get a response I'll do something." Royko wrote a stinging column and received over 300 letters from angry citizens, which he turned over to Alinsky.

It was an important moment in the history of the Windy City, for it marked the inception of a grass-roots organization that would pose one of the most serious challenges that Mayor Richard Daley would face in his long tenure as America's prototypical Boss. CAP would become a household word in Chicago, and radical populism would become a force with which one of the most powerful political machines in American history would have to contend.

Alinsky gave the letters to trainees who were studying organizing in Chicago at his Industrial Areas Foundation Institute. The students contacted 30 or so of the more promising letter-writers and formed a group of con-



CAP Confronts Mayor Daley

Daley angrily gestures at the Rev. Leonard Dubi, co-chairman of the Citizens' Action Program, when the citizens group demanded public hearings on any issuance of city bonds. Daley said: "I'm shocked at you. What kind of priest are you..."

cerned citizens. This nucleus, using informal contacts with civic associations, the church and Chicago universities, rounded up almost 200 people to attend a public hearing of the Illinois Commerce Commission to protest Edison's request for a rate increase.

It was a heterogeneous group which attended the hearing: white collar people, blue collar workers, scientists, upper class ecology folks, and a few young radicals. They were not received warmly. First, they were told that the elevators were out of order and so they had to trudge up 19 flights of stairs. When they reached the hearing room, most of the group were prevented from entering the meeting. They got angry, and out of their anger grew CAP, the Campaign Against Pollution, and later the Citizens' Action Program.

On January 15, 1970, the veterans of the Edison hearing held a meeting, decided to form an organization, and adopted three demands: 1) Edison must use low sulfur fuel, 2) the ICC must reduce Edison's rate increase, 3) the City Council must pass an air pollution ordinance. The Alinsky trainees proposed that CAP be organized around local, neighborhood chapters with a representative steering committee empowered to make decisions and call for direct action. At this stage, the key organizers were Peter Martinez, from a working class neighborhood in Chicago, and Jack Mack, a

Jesuit priest; they were clear in their own minds that a city-wide organization was needed to compete for power with the Daley machine. The guts of the operation had to be good, local neighborhood organizations," explains Martinez, "but to be successful they had to be tied to struggle at the metropolitan level."

Of course, a good organizational structure is never enough to guarantee political success. One basic tenet of Alinsky-style organizing is that organizers do not become leaders: they find, develop and support indigenous leadership. In this case, they had good material to work with.

[THE RADICAL AND THE PRIEST]

Had central casting been asked to produce two male leads for a movie called "You Can Fight City Hall" they could not have come up with better candidates than Paul Booth and Rev. Leonard Dubi—the two people who served as CAP's co-chairpersons from 1970 to 1973.

Booth had attended the ICC hearing as an interested observer. At the follow-up meeting in January his organizational skills became apparent and he was chosen as temporary chairperson. At 29, Booth is a veteran of SDS and the labor movement. While still an undergraduate at Swarthmore, he helped to draft the famous Port Huron statement. Along with Tom



PHOTOS BY DON CASPER COURTESY OF THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

He then walked out of the meeting while C A P members continued to shout.

Hayden, Rennie Davis, Al Haber, and Lee Webb, he was part of the SDS old guard which initiated the Economic Research and Action Projects (ERAP) in poor communities all around the country.

Booth left SDS around 1966 when more romantic, adventuresome, and militant young people took over the leadership, and he went to work as research director for the Packinghouse Workers (AFL-CIO). He then became a research fellow at the University of Chicago's Adlai Stevenson Institute, where he was studying when CAP got underway. Booth's tactical experience and his background in economics proved important to the successful growth of CAP.

Soon after Booth took the post of temporary chairperson, the *Chicago Tribune* ran a redbaiting article detailing his SDS background. Partly to allay the fears of some of the neighborhood groups which had joined CAP and partly to broaden the base of the leadership (despite his considerable skills, Booth represented no real constituency), Reverend Leonard Dubi, a Catholic priest, was chosen as a co-chairperson.

The 30-year-old Dubi was raised on the Southeast side of Chicago, son of a steelworker and a practical nurse. He is sophisticated and handsome, and looks like a somewhat thinner version of Robert Redford. As co-chairperson, he brought into the organization his own

constituency, the people in the parish of his church, St. Daniel the Prophet, which is located in a blue and white collar district in Southwest Chicago near Midway airport. The neighborhood lies between the largest sewage treatment plant in the world and several major factories—among them Argo Corn Products, one of the largest waste polluters in the area. The neighborhood is called Garfield Ridge and pollution is an everyday problem. Residents complain that the paint peels off their homes within two years, that the trees on their lawns are dying, and that their children can't play outside without choking.

Like other young men at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Dubi was excited by the civil rights movement, the peace movement and the war on poverty. At his first parish assignment he tried to spread his concerns to his flock. "I was the typical liberal dogooder," he said during our interview in his office at the Church rectory. "I preached at my parishioners, instead of listening to their problems and ministering to them. When I moved to St. Daniel's, I resolved to listen to the people of the neighborhood and find out what bothered them."

He quickly learned what troubled those people—bad schools, filthy air, heavy tax burdens.

"I learned that their problems and the problems of the black and the poor were not that different," ex-

plained Dubi. "Both were powerless. Both believed that you can't fight City Hall."

Dubi was contacted by Alinsky trainee Jack Mack about the ICC hearing. He spoke with some of his parishioners, who in turn held meetings over coffee and gathered a group to attend the hearing. When CAP was formed, Garfield Ridge boasted one of the first and most militant chapters.

[A PAGE FROM ALINSKY]

The tactics used by CAP in its battle with Commonwealth Edison came straight from the pages of Alinsky's slim volume, *Rules for Radicals*: imaginative, highly visible actions, which gave CAP members a chance to participate directly in embarrassing Edison and its allies. In late February 1970, for example, 50 or so CAP members, mostly housewives, walked into the First National Bank building where Edison is the prime tenant and began cashing in dollars for pennies, which they taped to news releases which read, "Commonwealth Edison Pinches Pennies on Pollution." They passed the flyers out in the bank, then rode the elevators to the Commonwealth Edison executive offices on the 37th floor. They marched to the president's office and presented his assistant with pamphlets which advised people to wait for the second notice before paying their electric bill, "then send a penny for their pollution program."

Rev. Dubi led his chapter into a meeting with a Chicago alderman which ended in a shouting match. Another chapter confronted Alderman Paul Wigoda and pressured him into arranging a meeting with Mayor Daley for 25 CAP members. The organization showed up at City Hall with its delegation of 25, while almost 1,000 other members waited in the corridors. Daley freaked. He refused to see the CAP representatives, who were ready to demand that Daley intervene in the Edison dispute and that the City Council pass a new and tougher anti-pollution ordinance.

In March, Commonwealth Edison announced that they were beginning to purchase some low sulfur fuel.

On April 27, CAP sought to put Alinsky's idea of "proxy power" into action by packing Edison's annual

meeting with over 1,000 holders of proxy votes gathered from sympathetic owners of Edison stock. Father Dubi led a band up the center aisle, shouting at J. Harris Ward, Commonwealth's president, "You have our demands. We will be back in an hour for your answer."

In the lobby of the Prudential Building, a few feet from the auditorium where the meeting was taking place, Studs Terkel led 800 other CAP demonstrators in chants of, "Let us Breathe." The crowd sang songs, and, at one point, 73-year-old CAP member Martha Rodriguez entertained everyone by doing a dance with her tambourine.

Reporting on the action, the Chicago *Sun-Times* wrote, "The young people had made it seem like a civil rights or anti-war rally; the middle-aged like a union meeting, and the old people like a Golden Agers outing. Nobody in the lobby made it seem like an annual meeting of a big corporation . . . three or four of the old ladies sang the Star Spangled Banner."

A few days later, the City Council, with Alderman Wigoda lobbying heavily for CAP's position with the Mayor, passed a strict new air pollution code. In July, the ICC cut Edison's rate increase and made it contingent on reducing pollution. It was an undisguised victory for the fledgling organization.



"Kitchen Kuties"

Senior citizens' band that performed at a C.A.P. convention.

[PERSONALIZING THE STRUGGLE]

CAP's next targets were the Metropolitan Sanitary District and then U.S. Steel. Using tactics similar to those in the Edison campaign, CAP pressured the District into both instituting an industrial waste surcharge (i.e. making companies pay the cost of cleaning up their pollution) and phasing out polluting processes at the Stickney waste treatment plant in the Garfield Ridge area where Dubi's church is located.

In trying to force better pollution control at U.S. Steel's huge South Works complex, CAP used the Alinsky technique of personalizing the struggle. "We couldn't boycott a \$4.5 billion corporation which doesn't sell directly to the people," Bob Creamer, a CAP staff organizer and researcher, told a reporter, "So we began to look at the board of directors." One director in Chicago was Gordon Metcalf, chairman of Sears, Roebuck & Co. CAP demanded that Metcalf get U.S. Steel Midwest Vice-President Edward Logelin to do something about the pollution. When Metcalf refused, CAP picketed two Sears stores and distributed leaflets explaining its campaign against U.S. Steel.

Then CAP discovered that Logelin had been nominated as one of four candidates to the governing body of the United Presbyterian Church. It also learned that in 1970 the Church's General Assembly had passed a resolution recommending that "all Presbyterians raise environmental issues with employers. . . ." Armed with such righteous facts, Father Dubi and a small group flew to Rochester and held a news conference on the morning before the balloting for new church leaders was to begin. Dubi declared Logelin "unfit" for church leadership because he and his company condoned air pollution. In the subsequent balloting, Logelin was soundly defeated.

At the same time, CAP opened another front in the battle by charging that U.S. Steel's South Works were grossly underassessed for tax purposes in 1969 and in 1970. Booth had assembled young college graduates to research the question, and they discovered that taxpayers were being deprived of \$16.5 million in taxes by

the underassessment. CAP's research made front page news in Chicago. They followed up with direct action at the office of County Assessor P. J. ("Parky") Cullerton. When the school deficit was announced, along with a plan to close the city's schools for an extra twelve days, CAP enlisted the support of the PTA in its fight against U.S. Steel's unfair assessment.

Eventually the pressure began to bear fruit. The president of U.S. Steel met with CAP's leaders to assure them that the company was speeding up the installation of pollution controls. And CAP's exposé led to a \$5 million hike in U.S. Steel's tax bill.

With a few anti-pollution victories under its belt and growing popular support, CAP's steering committee held a leadership retreat in September 1971 at which they decided to change CAP's name from Campaign Against Pollution to the Citizens' Action Program and to make CAP a multi-issue organization. As Paul Booth explained, "We had been seizing opportunities when they arose. Now we decided to build a real metropolitan political organization. The most important issues which affect a neighborhood—property taxes, pollution, mortgage loans, etc.—are determined outside the neighborhood by major economic forces. A city-wide, militant organization was the only way people could begin to deal with these problems."

[THE NAME OF THE GAME]

The leaders of CAP like to view the organization as action-oriented, rather than ideological. Paul Booth describes it as "the most radical form of populism." Father Dubi calls it "people power." Peter Martinez sums it up by saying: "The name of the game is power. What we're about is trying to build a power base to force existing institutions to change."

Three tactical corollaries follow from this strategy: (1) Keep people involved by constantly taking new actions; (2) Don't be afraid to make deals or work with other groups; (3) The cost of running candidates for elections usually outweighs the benefits.

All of this flows from Alinsky's dictum that organizations have to act

or suffocate. When CAP broadened itself into a multi-issue organization, it widened its range of possible action. In the past two years it has convened citizens' hearings on the city budget and a citizens' taxpayers assembly. Dubi and Booth have led CAP groups in actions at the statehouse in Springfield and at numerous meetings of the City Council. When Dubi had demanded public hearings on any issuance of city bonds at one city council meeting, Mayor Daley lost his temper and shouted, "I'm shocked at you. What kind of priest are you. . . ?" He then walked out of the meeting.

During the meat boycott, CAP was not content simply to urge housewives not to purchase meats. The group picked a target—Donald Perkins, chairman of the board of Jewel Food Stores, a Chicago-wide supermarket chain. Perkins is also chairman of Nixon's Food Industry Advisory Council. CAP demanded that Perkins personally account for rising food prices by meeting them in a public hearing at checkout counter number three in one of his Chicago stores. It also asked for an income tax refund to cover money lost by soaring food prices.

On the appointed day, a band of CAP housewives entered the Jewel store and packed their shopping carts with \$30-\$50 worth of meat each and took it to the checkout counter. After the clerk had rung up the bill, they refused to pay until Donald Perkins appeared or until the manager called him on the phone in Washington. At the same time, outside the store CAP members peacefully picketed. One demonstrator waved a sign reading "Honk your horn for lower meat prices" at passing cars and trucks, and the street was soon filled with a cacophony of honking vehicles.

Through all this, the group has maintained a willingness to work with elected officials (when they side with CAP on an issue). Equally important has been its success in building friendly relations with the Chicago press. CAP is not unlike Nader and his raiders in this respect. Its small but effective research staff, headed by a young college graduate named Henry Scheff, will carefully research an issue such as property taxes, then arrange with an investigative reporter on the Chicago

Daily News or the Chicago *Sun-Times* to break the story simultaneously.

Last year Scheff discovered that Cook County's five racetracks were grossly underassessed. The Chicago *Daily News* broke the story on its front page, giving CAP joint credit for the exposé in the first paragraph of the story. Because of the exposé, assessments on the tracks for the following year were increased an average of 21 percent.

Having found a goldmine in the assessing practices of County Assessor "Parky" Cullerton's office, a CAP study next revealed that middle class homes in two Chicago neighborhoods—Beverly and the South Shore—were drastically overassessed. CAP immediately demanded rebates for home owners in these areas.

The group uses its research as a political tool, and seeks to link, say, questionable assessing practices with other city programs in need of funds. For example, CAP contended that if the Illinois Center Plaza property—a business development downtown—were immediately assessed, the Chi-

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chicago board of education would have enough money to keep its adult evening program open through the end of the year.

CAP calls itself a nonpartisan organization. To date, it has resisted the temptation to run candidates for office. There was some sentiment within the organization for having Paul Booth make the race for tax assessor. With his charisma and public speaking ability, Father Dubi seems to have real electoral potential. But Booth and Dubi, as well as other CAP leaders and staffers reject this path. Like Ralph Nader, they feel that they are more effective keeping pressure on already elected officials to get the policies they want: the paramount need, they believe, is to develop a politically active citizenry.

This position is based on practical considerations as well as principle. In Chicago, Richard Daley still rules the city council with an iron hand. Even so, CAP has found it can play an important role influencing election results. Last November, for example, it threw its support behind reform gubernatorial candidate Dan Walker, who successfully bucked the Daley machine. Once again, CAP organized around an issue—the proposed Crosstown Expressway. The eight lane, 22 mile long highway would have destroyed over 3,000 units of housing and displaced over 10,000 people in Chicago. CAP received a commitment from Walker that he would oppose the Crosstown, if he were elected. Incumbent Governor Richard Ogilvie refused to oppose the project.

CAP conducted a massive voter education drive against the Crosstown. It printed and distributed over half a million pieces of literature comparing Walker's stand on the Crosstown with Ogilvie's. It had members out on election day in every precinct in the city, distributing literature. Walker's heavy margin of victory in the Crosstown corridor helped him to win the election.

[NEW DIRECTIONS]

At the CAP convention last March, the organization's leaders for the past three years decided to step down. Pete Martinez, the Alinsky-trained staff director, returned to teach at the Industrial Areas Founda-

tion Institute, and Paul Booth and Reverend Dubi were replaced by a single elected president. This move reflects the faith of CAP's founders that the organization is a viable, going concern and that particular individuals are no longer essential to its success. It is also in line with their belief that many average Americans have a potential for political leadership which goes untapped by conventional political parties, corporations, and trade unions. A case in point is Mary Lou Wolff, the newly elected president of CAP.

She is a 45-year-old Catholic housewife with nine children ranging in age from 6 to 21. She first got involved with CAP over the anti-Crosstown fight.

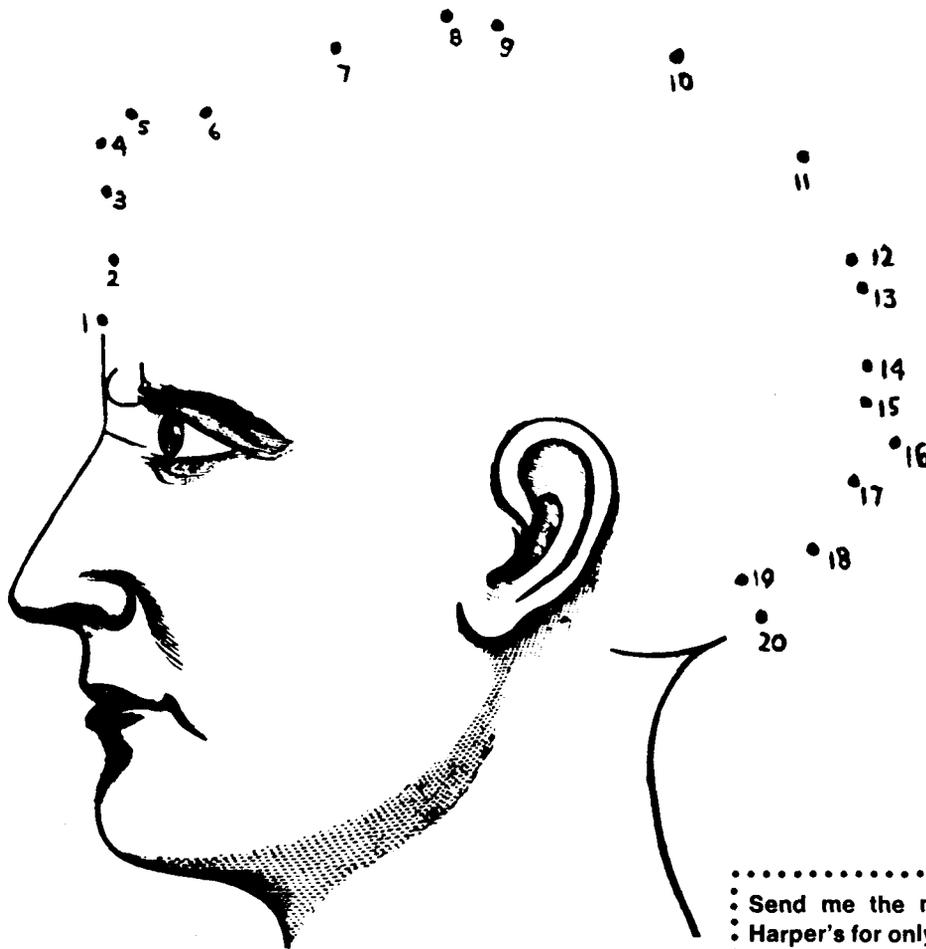
"I'm not too theoretical," Mary Lou Wolff said during an interview over coffee in her house. "Most people I know aren't. What impresses me about CAP is that it takes action—action which people can relate to and participate in.

"Here in our neighborhood we convinced a group of church women who'd never done anything political to join in the fight against the Crosstown. I think it was a liberating experience for them."

CAP is not the vanguard of the revolution: it does not pretend to be. CAP is a militant, democratic citizens' organization which has had substantial impact on the people and politics of Chicago. It is not the only group working in Chicago against the Daley machine, but it is the only grass-roots organization which is attempting on a day to day basis to counter the carefully organized Daley machine, with its patronage army of 34,000 precinct captains, its support from the Midwest's largest corporations, and its tacit alliances with most of the state's labor unions.

Paul Booth believes that "CAP is proof of the existence of real possibilities for building a mass based, militant political movement in the U.S." He argues that if an organization like CAP can be built in a city as tightly controlled as Chicago, the opportunities for similar organizations in other cities must be even better. If he is right, and if other such groups experience anything like the success of CAP, it could be possible—just possible—to transform the nature of American politics. ■

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Abroad

Che's Revenge:

TROUBLE FOR BOLIVIA'S JUNTA

by James Kohl



In mid-May of this year, thugs employed by the Bolivian Ministry of the Interior beat to death Colonel Andrés Selich Chop in downtown La Paz. Selich, former commander of the U.S.-trained Ranger regiment, is best remembered as the "Hero of the Americas," an anti-communist zealot whose troops surrounded and defeated Che Guevara in 1968. There is, however, one part of the Guevara episode that Selich prefers to forget: the moment when Che, awaiting imminent execution, spat in his face. Subsequently, Selich parlayed his role in the capture and execution

James Kohl spent 2 years in Bolivia, and is co-author of Urban Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America, to be published by M.I.T. Press in February.

of Guevara into a successful military/political career. Instrumental in the rightist coup of August, 1971, Selich became Minister of Interior, where he refined Bolivia's instruments of political repression—notably torture—and became involved in numerous political plots.

Relieved from his cabinet position in December 1971, he became Bolivia's ambassador to Paraguay, until it was discovered that he was behind another unsuccessful coup attempt. He was stripped of his official positions and exiled. But he disappeared sometime in 1972 and was rumored to be heading back to Bolivia. Discovered early this year, he was taken to the Ministry of the Interior, where he experienced the torture techniques

which he himself had helped to develop before his fall from grace. He did not survive them: the official announcement said he had been killed by falling down a flight of stairs.

Ironically, the murder of Selich (who was wearing a ring taken from the dead Guevara) and government bungling of a cover-up, has definitively exposed the extent to which the present Bolivian government will go in repressing opposition. Other, more important developments, have escaped exposure.

The August 1971 coup, led by Colonel Hugo Banzer Suarez and other military and civilian rightists, has brought to power an unstable coalition government. Internationally the coup is a success for both the Nixon Admin-