

# "Effective" antipoverty group resists cutoff

By Steve Turner

Another Nixon/Ford attempt to restrict progressive community organizing may be about to blow up in the opposite direction.

The locale involved is eastern Massachusetts, but the effects could be national. The case is the embattled budget of Urban Planning Aid, Inc. (UPA), a wide-ranging technical assistance and organizing support group headquartered in Cambridge, Mass.

Funded by the "War on Poverty," UPA upset the government and its business-world friends by taking to heart the announced goal of combat with the "root causes of poverty"—which UPA saw twined in the social and economic relationships of capitalism.

Because UPA went after some of those roots energetically and productively, the organization has been attacked by the likes of *Barrons* weekly (not to mention the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce), sued for cutting the profits of millionaire landlords and repeatedly sentenced to termination of budget by its funding source, the Community Services Administration (CSA).

The battering has been heavy. A 1973 cutoff of funds, for instance, was overturned in court only after UPA had struggled through several payless months. And the latest CSA execution attempt—announced on election day—looked like it would do the whole job. But at the last minute, Boston's school-bussing judge, Arthur Garrity, issued a temporary restraining order.

The ruling took note of procedural irregularities and lack of evidence in the government action, but Garrity's main finding was that CSA's abuse of UPA was chilling to First Amendment rights of free expression. In short, it ain't illegal to put the blame where it belongs—al-

## Cutoff ruled a threat to First Amendment right to free expression.

though most anti-poverty agencies have been too timid or corrupt to discover that fact.

### ►"Property theft."

Of course, it was UPA's deeds that drew hostile attention more than its verbal expression. The most frequently quoted example of the organization's "un-American" language, for instance, is only read because it leads off a real estate research guide so good it has earned national renown. "Property is Theft," says the introduction to *People Before Property*, and continues: "at least it is when real estate ownership by large landlords, and financing by banks and insurance companies destroys communities, maintains substandard living conditions, and forces tenants and small homeowners to pay exorbitant housing costs." The contents of this and other UPA housing publications were so valued by Minnesota tenant organizations, among others, that then-Sen. Walter Mondale was persuaded to write CSA in support of UPA's 1976 refunding.

*People Before Property* is only one of a series of trenchant, "community-useable" publications (the term is UPA's) in national demand as research guides or models for local adaptation.

UPA's reputation is also strong at home. Hundreds of testimonials from community and workplace organizations in eastern Massachusetts show that the organization's efforts have helped low-income groups to resist, and sometimes block, the extortions that beset the search for shelter and income. UPA is a recognized community resource in matters as diverse as tenants rights, workplace health and safety, rent control, prison

reform, transportation planning, corporate research and community access to cable TV and other media.

The counter-testimonial is also telling. Landlords in particular, enraged by UPA's effective support of tenant organizing and rent control programs, have sought the organization's destruction for years. One has attacked directly: Max Kargman, Massachusetts' largest developer of tax-sheltered, federally-subsidized housing, has sued UPA and Tenants First Coalition (TFC), a group of tenant unions that grew on UPA revelations of fraud, profiteering and cost-cutting underneath rising rents in Federal Housing Administration programs.

When TFC smacked Kargman's First Realty Corporation with a series of rent strikes and other protests, Kargman filed charges of conspiracy to deprive him and his corporate partners of the benefits of their property. The suit revealed the solid effect of UPA's information in the hands of skilled organizers: 1,200 tenants were named as defendants along with the two organizations.

Kargman's suit, paralleling the gag threat perceived by Garrity, seeks the grotesque ruling that UPA should not be allowed to give tenants information on their legal rights and landlords' legal wrongs. It also seeks damages. And whether or not intended to succeed totally, it has been effective harassment. UPA and its sparse resources have been dragged through the courts now for almost two years, with no end in sight.

### ►Kill from inside.

All the while, high-level anti-poverty officials have been trying for a kill from the inside. But UPA's scrupulous adherence

to budget-governing rules has defeated these attacks. Repeated, punitive surprise audits, for instance, have always come out clean. At the same time, the reports of all the performance evaluators and hearing examiners below the political appointee level have unvaryingly (if sometimes grudgingly) been positive, and this has qualified the organization for continual refunding.

This undeniably high quality of performance was particularly embarrassing for the big bureaucrats in light of UPA's structure and operating procedures, which are as radical to administrators as rent control is to landlords.

The organization is cooperatively run, has no hierarchy of staff (clerical work is shared), pays salaries lower than the national average—partly because cost of living increases have been denied by CSA since 1973—and adjusts them to meet staff members' family-based economic needs.

The employees of this worker-controlled organization—as many as 25 at full staffing—generate more output for less money (the annual budget is about \$240,000) than any comparably-sized organization on the CSA list—or perhaps in any section of the government.

UPA's efficiency and popularity seem well fitted to the two outstanding image claims of the Carter administration. And UPA administrator Polly Halfkenny is optimistic about the organization's treatment at the hands of the new Carter appointees who will have to handle the court hearing, coming up in a couple of months, that will resolve the CSA-UPA battle one way or another.

If she is correct, and Garrity's First Amendment ruling is sustained, a dose of political freedom may spread through the entire anti-poverty community. ■

Steve Turner is a writer living in the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts.

## Lincoln

Continued from Page 13.

Lincoln's act. The proclamation was in effect, also, a declaration of total war and of unconditional surrender as the condition of peace. The expropriation of \$4 billion of slave property had become the paramount war aim. The Republican party, the black and white abolitionists, including the women's movement, had transformed a war to contain slavery into a revolutionary struggle against the slave regime. Lincoln was their willing leader.

Early in the war the radical Republicans

pressed Lincoln to permit the confiscation of slave property. In this case, as in others, the difference between Lincoln and his radical colleagues was in their sense of timing. As the great radical Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner said in December 1861, "The President tells me that the question between him and me is one of four weeks or at most six weeks when we shall all be together." When Lincoln sensed that the time was right for "radical" action, he moved swiftly and decisively. All great revolutionary politicians know the crucial importance of timing. They must seize the time. But they must know when the time has come. Lincoln's sense of timing was uncanny. And he never failed to seize it when the time came.

In the summer of 1862, well before the

midpoint in the Civil War, the demands of military strategy converged with Lincoln's own deep hostility to slavery. It was Lincoln's "personal wish" that "all men could be free" but at this early time he could keep the majority of whites in the anti-slavery coalition only on grounds of the paramount military necessity of emancipation.

After the issuance of a preliminary proclamation in September 1862 and a resounding Republican victory in the congressional elections, Lincoln decided that Northern sentiment would agree to the expropriation of slave property as a proper use of presidential war power. With language as dry as dust but ruthless in intent, Lincoln threw down the gauntlet to the slave power.

The emancipation policy affirmed a developing reality: numbers of slaves, abandoning the plantations, had initiated a "mass strike," often preceding the advance of the Union Army. The "strike" fed directly into Lincoln's military strategy. As he observed in mid-1863, black troops were a "resource which, if vigorously applied now, will soon close the contest." And this was so. The 180,000 black soldiers and sailors gave the Union the edge in several key campaigns.

That Lincoln's stand against slavery was a matter of basic principle was shown during the tough Wilderness campaign of 1864, when many Northerners, weary of the struggle cried for peace without emancipation. Lincoln invited the Afro-American leader Frederick Douglass to the White House to discuss measures to prevent a "premature peace." According to Douglass, Lincoln believed that "no solid and lasting peace could come short of absolute submission on the part of the rebels"—that is, their unconditional surrender predicated on the end of slavery.

Lincoln requested Douglass to assemble a band of guerrillas, "after the manner of John Brown," to "go into the rebel states, beyond the lines of our army, and carry the news of emancipation" to the blacks and recruit them into military units. With the success of the army's summer campaign this plan proved unnecessary,

but it did convince Douglass of Lincoln's "deep moral conviction against slavery."

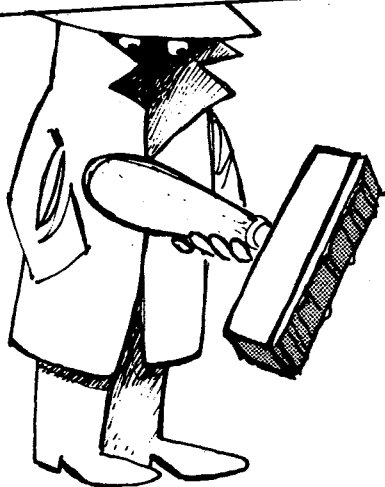
Before 1863 Lincoln had been among the advocates, both black and white, of "Negro colonization" in Africa and Central America. But he seized on the outstanding performance of black troops to strengthen the view that the freedmen had proven themselves worthy of citizenship. Lincoln wrote in mid-1863 that "commanders in the field ... believe the emancipation policy and the use of colored troops, constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion." By 1864 he admonished Northern whites that "these people ... have demonstrated in blood their right to the ballot, which is but the humane protection of the flag they have so fearlessly defended." There was no more talk of colonization. As the war transformed the nation, so it transformed Lincoln's public discourse.

Lincoln reaffirmed his commitment to total war against the slave power in his famous Second Inaugural Address. Too often Americans remember only the "Christlike" Lincoln, offering the hand of reconciliation to his Southern brethren: "With malice toward none and charity for all." That stereotype conceals Lincoln's intent. In the same speech, and in the next breath, he delivered a stern and uncompromising warning to the Confederacy that the North would fight "until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's ... unrequited toil shall be sunk; and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword."

The idea of an egalitarian society of small propertyholders propelled the Republican cause. Yet the Northern victory came to mean something quite different. The implementation of its revolutionary goal of individual liberty in a national marketplace served to liberate the small property holder from the threat of the slave power. But the realization of this revolutionary goal itself provided the preconditions for the emergence of a more

Continued on Page 20.

## Classified



### Jobs Offered

**NOTICE TO CHICAGO READERS:** We have distributors around the USA, but none in Chicago. We need distributors to get IN THESE TIMES in bookstores on the North side, in Hyde Park, and onto Chicago area campuses. Now's your chance to help spread our socialist word in IN THESE TIMES' home town. Payment by commission. Call Torie Osborn, 489-4444.

New Midwest institute seeks unselfish, socially-conscious, non-careerist, MA-PhD MOVEMENT fund-raisers. Prefer economists, political scientists, etc. Semi-scholarly studies on war-peace reconversion, etc. Applicants must READ Gross and Osterman "The New Professionals" pp 33-37, Studs Terkel "Working" pp 525-527, 537-540, Claudia Dreifus "Radical Lifestyles," and address themselves to the contents of this advertisement. Midwest Institute, 1206 N. 6th St., 43201.

### For Sale

In These Times T-shirts for sale: \$5.00, five for \$20.00. Don't delay folks, we're sure they'll disappear fast. Specify S, M, L, XL.

**Senator Plunkitt** is a straight organization man. He believes in party government; he does not indulge in cant and hypocrisy and he is never afraid to say exactly what he thinks. He is a believer in thorough political organization and all-the-year-around work, and he holds to the doctrine that, in making appointments to office, party workers should be preferred if they are fitted to perform the duties of the office. Plunkitt is one of the veteran leaders of the organization; he has always been faithful and reliable, and he has performed valuable services for Tammany Hall.

**SOCIAL CHANGE** books, posters—for feminists, gays, third world, communes, radicals. Free catalog: Times Change Press, Box 187-TT, Albion CA 95410.



## LIFE IN THE U.S.



*A woman governor doesn't automatically mean a feminist program.*

# Gov. Ella Grasso is no feminist

By Marc Gunther

Hartford, Conn. On a snowy Connecticut morning two years ago, soon after Ella T. Grasso took office, a group of mayors arrived for a breakfast meeting at the governor's mansion. The snowstorm had caused some kitchen staff to be late for work, so Gov. Grasso donned an apron and began serving breakfast to the mayors, all of whom were men. The next day, the photographs made every newspaper in the state.

It was not the incident itself, but rather Grasso's response, that disturbed a group of women who brought it up during a meeting with her afterwards. "She didn't even seem to know what we were talking about," one said.

The governor has made a surprising number of similar "mistakes" that have rankled many women who supported her two years ago. Last spring, for example, after feminist groups drafted a "Women's Agenda" as part of International Women's Year, representatives in many states sought meetings with their governors on an agreed-upon day to present the document. In Connecticut they were told by an aide that Grasso was "too busy" to see them. Similarly, Jan. 11 was declared Alice Paul Day by the governors of New Jersey and Pennsylvania to honor the long-time feminist on her 92nd birthday. Before moving to a New Jersey convalescent home several years ago Paul lived in Ridgefield, Conn., but despite a request from women's groups, she received no similar recognition here. And, at the moment, Gov. Grasso is reportedly balking at a request from the state's Jaycees to declare February "Sexual Assault Awareness Month."

Ella Grasso was bound to disappoint many women and make some mistakes, given the high expectations she generated and the unusually close scrutiny she received after becoming the first woman in America to be elected governor in her own right. President Ford, after all, was admired for his lack of pretense when he toasted muffins in the White House kitchen and, under other circumstances, Grasso might have won the kind of praise for her breakfast behavior that she received when she traded in the gubernatorial limousine for a police car and sold the state airplane her predecessor had enjoyed.

In fact, Grasso's symbolic mistakes would probably have been quickly forgotten if they did not, at least in the eyes of many feminists here, betray a lack of sympathy—and sometimes outright discomfort—with the concerns of the women's movement.

It did not always seem that way, at least in the national media. When former Rep. Bella Abzug of New York called 1974 "the year of the woman," *Newsweek* con-

curred and used the phrase along with a photo of Grasso on the cover of a special issue featuring women in politics. And, though Grasso never claimed to be a feminist, it is indisputable that she could not have been elected without the women's movement.

"The women's movement created the climate that made it possible for her to become governor," says Ruth Mantak, chair of the Connecticut Women's Political Caucus. Mantak says, too, that the "fact that Connecticut hasn't fallen apart" has helped other women seeking political office. "We're viewed from other places as fortunate to have a woman governor," she says. "It's still very nice to refer to the governor as 'she'."

The Women's Political Caucus was one of several women's groups to endorse Grasso in 1974. It did so after she told the

caucus (at a meeting recalled by several women interviewed for this story) that she would not allow her strong personal opposition to abortion to interfere with her decisions as governor. Grasso also promised not to attempt to circumvent the abortion rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court—a promise she has now broken.

If feminists have been disappointed by some of the governor's symbolic actions, they have been positively appalled by a number of her policy decisions affecting women. They are angry, most of all, about abortion.

Connecticut's abortion policy is now the subject of a case before the U.S. Supreme Court that attorneys say could affect the access to abortions of millions of poor women in the U.S. (See accompanying article.) The state contends that it can limit payments for abortions under the Medicaid program to cases of medical or psychiatric need. That policy is being challenged as unconstitutional by a group of poor women who have been joined by national women's and abortion rights organizations. Grasso says she supports the state position as a legal way to fight abortion.

On other issues too feminists are less than enthused about Grasso's record. Of the 21 cabinet-level appointments she made upon taking office, only two were women: one served briefly as commissioner on aging and another was given the "woman's job" of consumer protection commissioner. Later, however, Grasso chose four women as deputy commissioners, including the first ever in banking, and she has since named a woman as personnel commissioner and appointed several female judges.

Mantak, a former Republican councilor in a Hartford suburb, calls the governor's record on appointments good despite criticism from some women's groups.

## Medicaid payments for abortion at stake in Connecticut case

If the U.S. Supreme Court decides that the abortion policy of the state of Connecticut is constitutional, it will immediately become much more difficult for millions of poor women across the country to obtain legal abortions. In part, those women will be able to thank Ella Grasso for their troubles.

Gov. Grasso's attorney general and social services commissioner are asking the high court to overrule a three-judge federal panel that declared the state's policy unconstitutional in December 1975. The state officials are seeking to limit state Medicaid payments for abortion to cases of medical or psychiatric need, and to eliminate payment for so-called elective abortions. A ruling on the dispute is expected soon.

The importance of the case is underlined by the fact that the group of women challenging the state policy have been joined by attorneys representing the National Organization for Women, American Public Health Association, Planned Parenthood and 66 medical school deans, professors and individual doctors.

Patricia A. Butler is an attorney with the National Health Law Program in Los Angeles which has joined the case on behalf of a 28-year-old South Dakota woman who has been unable to obtain state payment for an abortion. Butler says the court's ruling will affect the policies and practices of most states with respect to Medicaid payments for abortions. Already 11 states are seeking to withhold such payments along the lines argued by Connecticut. New Jersey has filed a brief supporting

the state's position, and several jurisdictions are already refusing payment for abortions to indigent women.

Already, according to several studies, access to abortions has been severely curtailed for poor women. The Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York estimates that in 1975 between 163,000 and 280,000 Medicaid-eligible women were unable to obtain abortions, largely as a result of Medicaid policies and administrative practices.

Despite the much-vaunted problem of skyrocketing Medicaid costs, the anti-abortion policy is far more expensive than one which permits women free choice. The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare says an average first trimester abortion (which covers about 85 percent of all abortions) costs \$150 compared to the average Medicaid payment of \$556 for delivery in a public hospital. The department also estimates that for each pregnancy among Medicaid-eligible women brought to term, first-year costs to federal, state and local governments for maternity, pediatric care and public assistance amount to about \$2,200. The situation is probably the first ever where poor people are seeking and being denied a less costly benefit in favor of a more expensive one.

Butler and the other attorneys representing the women's and health groups believe the state's position is as weak legally as it is logically. "If there's ever a case that ought to be won, it's this one," Butler says. But she remains only cautiously optimistic. "You just never know what will come out of the Supreme Court."

"Perhaps we in the caucus understand politics better than other people do," she says. "Politics is a very sophisticated process."

A dissenting view is heard from Democratic State Sen. Betty Hudson of Madison, a forthright feminist who has often challenged the governor on women's issues. "Without comparison to other states or previous administrations, the facts say we have far too few women in policymaking positions and the judicial branch," she says.

The legislative programs advocated by feminists have generally received quiet support from the governor. Grasso signed bills in each of the last two years revising the state's laws on sexual assault. She also approved legislation to establish an Office of Child Day Care and to equalize retirement benefits for both sexes. The Connecticut Women's Educational and Legal Fund, a group fighting sex discrimination, says the state now has one of the best structures of law for women in the country.

But the governor herself has rarely been in the forefront of the equal rights battles. Though her aides will say that Grasso supports the Equal Rights Amendment, Alice Chapman, state coordinator of NOW, believes the governor has avoided being publicly identified with the amendment. "I've never heard Ella Grasso herself come out and speak in favor of the ERA," she says.

Nonetheless, Hudson says that Grasso's presence has done an enormous amount of good for women. "Anytime there's a woman in a position that is non-traditional, we begin to change the qualifications for that job," she says. "It's very important for young women—even little girls—to have role models," adds Mantak.

Diane Goldsmith, one of the hosts of a public radio program called "Women in Your Ear," says women are still struggling with traditional notions of leadership and power. "It's extremely important to have a woman in a visible position like the governor," she says. "On the other hand, when the actions she's taken have been detrimental to women, you have a difficult problem." Alice Chapman of NOW puts it more bluntly: "She will do great things for Iowa, where they don't know her."

Grasso describes herself as a "moderate." Last year, when she campaigned for U.S. Sen. Henry Jackson during his hawkish run for the presidency, there were indications that she had vice presidential aspirations. Now there is talk of a possible appointment in the Carter administration, and the governor says she is keeping her options open.

Ella Grasso for vice president? Perhaps. The just demands for equal representation and the significant gains that would result for women would have to be weighed against her disappointing record. Indeed, the question illustrates the way in which the issue of equal representation competes with questions of public policy and class for the attention of liberals and radicals—often at the expense of policy and class concerns. The public discussion of Jimmy Carter's cabinet selections, for example, featured daily "head counts" of women and minorities. Thus, HUD secretary Patricia Roberts Harris represents women and blacks, not IBM and Chase Manhattan, on whose boards she serves and whose ideology, presumably, she shares.

But the head counts—and even the politicization of breakfast—will rightfully continue until equal representation is taken for granted. Sex, in a sexist society, must be politics. In such a society, we are left with politicians like Ella Grasso who, in the words of one of her longtime supporters, is finally "just one of the boys."

Marc Gunther is a reporter living in Manchester, Conn.