

WHERE WE STAND

We believe that to uphold the well being of our working class communities it is necessary to abolish the system of capitalism.

We recognize the state as a violent and oppressive institution meant to uphold the inequalities of society.

We are opposed to hierarchy which we view as oppression. It is a coercive attempt to consolidate power in the hands of the few.

We believe in the liberation of all people and support the struggles against racism, sexism, heterosexism, and the abolition of all social and class oppression. These struggles have multiple fronts and must be fought within ourselves, our organization, and society as a whole.

We work to promote a social revolution, not a political one. We promote taking individual and collective action towards a social revolution.

We are internationalists. The struggles we face in our communities are not unique. We therefore see the importance in unification with other participants of these struggles in the larger global movement.

We are proud to be part of an international Anarchist – Communist tradition; one that has an incredible history of struggle within working class communities and that is built fundamentally from our interests. We fight for the immediate needs of our class while proposing the overthrow of capitalism and its state, in favor of a free and equal society where all power belongs to the people.

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Tenants' Union

Fight your landlord and win



Ideas
From:

BUFFALO CLASS ACTION

To Each According to Need!

Tenants' Union: Fight Your Landlord and Win
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to continue business. Occupation of company offices and disrupting the visits of new tenants are a couple of possibilities that may force our landlords to listen our demands.

Rent Strike: The greatest source of our power with landlords is actually one of the easiest for us to use. A collective refusal to pay rent until demands are met should bring even the most abusive landlords to the table. If an individual were to refuse to pay rent, the landlord would have an easy time fighting back. But when all of their tenants refuse to pay rent, they quickly find themselves outmatched.

Solidarity: An injury to one is an injury to all. When we begin to fight our landlords, we have to know that we aren't doing so alone, and this is the purpose of our union. Having a Tenant Union would mean that none of us struggle in isolation. Just because one group of tenants has won a fight against their landlord doesn't mean that they are no longer part of the struggle. They will provide resources, experience, and volunteers to the effort of organizing other renters throughout the city.

Landlords Need Us, We Don't Need Them

In the struggle against our landlords, there is one important realization. Our landlords don't do anything for us that we aren't capable of doing for ourselves. We are more than capable of organizing ourselves to make repairs and maintain the buildings where we live. There are cooperative housing associations throughout the world that show us proof of our ability to live without landlords. So, if we can organize ourselves to maintain our housing needs, what do landlords do? That is exactly the point. Landlords exist purely to take rent from us.

As we develop true power as renters, we will realize that the real battle is for a system of housing that recognizes our right to decent, affordable place to live no matter what. This means getting rid of a world of for-profit housing. No one should exploit a system of vulgar inequality to create massive profits from our need to survive. We know that these inequalities will only exist as long as we permit them. So let's begin the struggle for just housing today!



“If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning.”

- Frederick Douglass

Decent housing should be an absolute right for all people. But, we continue to live in a world that homelessness, evictions of the poor, and degrading housing conditions are all too common. At the same time, we see abandoned housing left to rot. This should convince us that our housing problems come not from a lack of resources, but from a poor distribution of those resources. As is the problem with so many facets of our lives, housing is organized for private profit and not for people's common needs. The only way for us to change these problems is to organize together and demand it. But, who do we organize and how? And, who is the enemy?

Who is the landlord?

For most working class people, owning our home isn't a possibility and we're often forced into a housing market with large landlords. Just as often, the tenants and the landlords have conflicting sets of interests. While we're simply trying to hold onto a basic necessity of life, landlords hope to gain a profit from us. Sadly, the interests of the

landlords are usually dominant, thanks to a system of legal and government support rarely enjoyed by tenants.

Supposedly, we have a choice. We can live wherever we'd like – if we can afford it. So the “choice” offered to those of us that live in or near poverty is between a variety of bad housing situations and homelessness. This is obviously not a choice, but a threat. Where can you go to leave an unfair housing market? Our life experiences repeatedly tell us: “You will take whatever horrible standards your income can afford, or you will have nothing.”

Not all working class people are renters and many in poor cities, have managed to buy their own home. While at times, we may rent out a room or floor of our house, we generally have more in common with tenants than the large landlords. Homeowners are very often tenants themselves of the largest of landlords – the banks. Even if the mortgage has been paid, working class homeowners occupy a very small and isolated part of the housing market, where much larger landlords have real control. These homeowners may be in a more comfortable immediate position. But, they're also in a very precarious situation and could easily lose their home in any number of ways.

On the other hand large landlords own apartment buildings or dozens of houses throughout the city. They use our basic need for housing as a tool to create profits, often massive, for themselves. Their interest is to make the greatest possible profit for themselves. That means keeping repairs to a minimum and charging as much rent as they believe they can.

Having little power individually, renters are often on the losing end of this conflict. Homelessness, evictions, and poor living standards are clear signs of our current weak position.

Tenant Power

The beauty of our situation, is that collectively we have far greater power than our landlords. Our rent is the source of their wealth.

For them to continue their life of luxury without work they need us to continue living in their apartments, continue paying their rent, and keep accepting the living conditions that they choose for us. Our landlords are absolutely reliant upon us. They rely on the hope that we will never understand our true strength.

The power of the working class has the same limits in the struggle for decent and affordable housing as it does in the workplace – it's collective. When we struggle alone in isolation the landlord has nearly absolute power. Our power is only real power when we get together with others in similar situations and organize for justice.

Tenants Union

Just as we would organize in our workplace against exploitative bosses, we propose the organization of a Citywide Tenants' Union to organize our power to assert that decent, affordable housing is a right for all people. A City Wide Tenants' Union should commit itself to organize all tenants of the large landlords in our city to aggressively demand our necessary rights to good quality housing. The tools of a serious Tenants' Union are incredibly powerful:

Public Pressure: Through rallies, media events, and public meetings we can hurt the image of our landlords. A bad public image can hurt their ability to find new renters and force public demand for investigations of the conditions in their properties.

Eviction Blockades: In the case that any of the members of the tenants' union are being unjustly evicted or evicted in retaliation for their organizing efforts, other members of the union should organize a blockade of that member's house or apartment. With the tenants' union, the normally disempowering experience of being evicted becomes a show of the power of solidarity. The act that we usually suffer in isolation becomes a moment of true community as serious attention is brought to the eviction.

Direct Action: In the case that our organized public pressure doesn't solve the problems that we are having with our landlords, we could target them more aggressively by actively disrupting their ability