

# TENANTS TALK

NEWSPAPER OF THE ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE

★ WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON? JOIN THE CITY-WIDE TENANT STRUGGLE! ★

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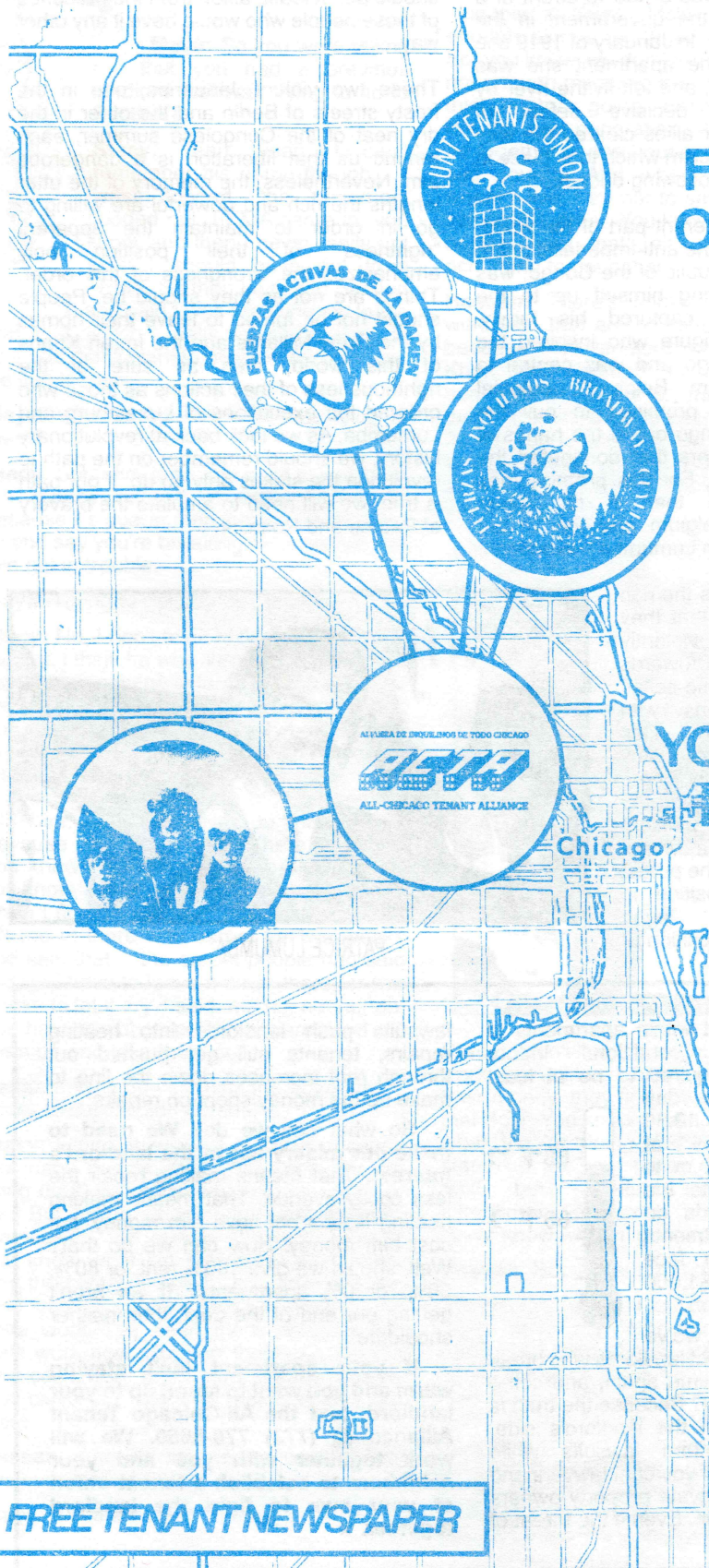
ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE

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COMING FROM THE  
CROWDED TENEMENTS  
FROM THE DARK STREETS  
OF THE EMBATTLED CITIES  
YOU GATHER IN  
MULTITUDES  
TO FIGHT  
AND YOU LEARN TO WIN

WITH NOT  
A PENNY TO SPARE  
YOU BOUGHT YOUR BREAD,  
MOUTHS WENT WITHOUT  
FOR YOUR TRAM FARES.

OUT OF THE  
CRUSHING STRUGGLE  
FOR THE BARE  
NECESSITIES  
FOR A FEW HOURS  
ONCE MORE  
YOU GATHER TO FIGHT  
THE COMMON FIGHT  
AND YOU LEARN TO WIN

**FREE TENANT NEWSPAPER**

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★

## THIS MONTH IN REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY: JANUARY

*So now Red Rosa has passed away.  
Where she lies none can say.  
She told the truth to the poor, that's why  
The rich decided she had to die.*  
— Bertolt Brecht, 1919



ROSA LUXEMBURG

January has seen some of the darkest days in revolutionary history. This month has proven that wherever the people awaken to

the possibilities of revolution, opposite forces spring up just as quickly, ready to put the revolution down at all costs. In Germany, over one hundred years ago, Rosa Luxemburg was at the forefront of a movement to put the government in the hands of the people. In January of 1919 she was pulled from the apartment she was hiding in, executed, and left in the river by her killers. The decisive defeat of Luxemburg and her allies cleared the way for the slide into fascism which took place in Germany over the following decades.

Much later, in a different part of the world, Patrice Lumumba, the anti-imperialist prime minister of the Republic of the Congo, was executed after giving himself up to the enemy who had captured his family. Lumumba was a figure who inspired the people of the Congo and was central to breaking free from Belgium's colonial control. Lumumba promised to pull the Republic of the Congo out of the hands of the imperialist powers that dominated the lives of the people. For this promise they killed him. Since then it has been discovered that Belgium and the United States had a hand in Lumumba's execution.

What is it that sends the rich into such a frenzy that they unflinchingly and violently crush every stirring towards liberation? The so-called "democratic" nations with their rich and powerful elites have never accepted any limits to their authority. There is no conscience judging the outcomes of their constant interventions in the world. They are driven by the purest faith that their position in society is right. Consequently the position of

the poor is right as well. It is right that some people should live in crumbling apartments or be forced to move every year in search of a place to live. To the rich, things are as they should be, at least, aside from the presence of those people who would have it any other way.

These two violent Januaries, one in the frosty streets of Berlin and the other in the dry heat of the Congolese summer, each remind us that liberation is a dangerous aim. Nevertheless, the memory of the utter lengths the rich and powerful are willing to go in order to maintain the apparent "rightness" of their position only emphasizes the wrongness of this order. Things are not as they should be. People should not be forced to leave their homes by the Drew Millards and the Imran Khans of this world, men as sure of the righteousness of their actions as those who ordered the executions of Luxemburg and Lumumba. As we look back at revolutionary history, we should remember on the path to revolution the stakes only go up. If our path is true, we will need to emulate the bravery of Patrice and Rosa. ★



PATRICE LUMUMBA

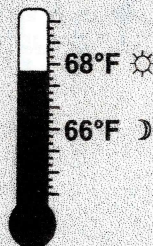
### COLD TENANTS = LANDLORD PROFIT

Chicago winters are no joke. When landlords ignore heating issues, let old heating equipment go unmaintained, or pay for half-ass repairs when they do break down, tenants are the ones left suffering. Whether your heat is on or off, the landlord asks for your rent in full at the top of the month, and if he's giving you a 50% apartment and charging 100% prices, then he's doing his job right: more money in his pocket. **Your misery is the landlord's profit.**

Chicago has tried to keep landlords accountable with the Chicago Heat Ordinance. From September 15th to June 1st, the city requires that landlords supply heat to apartments where tenants don't have control of the heat. Chicago landlords are also required to keep

heating equipment within apartments in "good operating condition." Indoor temperature is required to be at least **68°F during the day** (from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.) and at least **66°F at night** (from 10:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m.) No matter the reason, if landlords do not keep apartments heated, they can face fines of \$500 to \$1,000 per day, per violation.

But the thing is, we've seen individuals fight landlords who break this law time and time again, and come out the losers. Why? Because the truth is that the law is on the landlord's side. Landlords can afford lawsuits while tenants can't. And if you can, lawyers and judges side with private property owners nine times out of ten. Even if the threat of

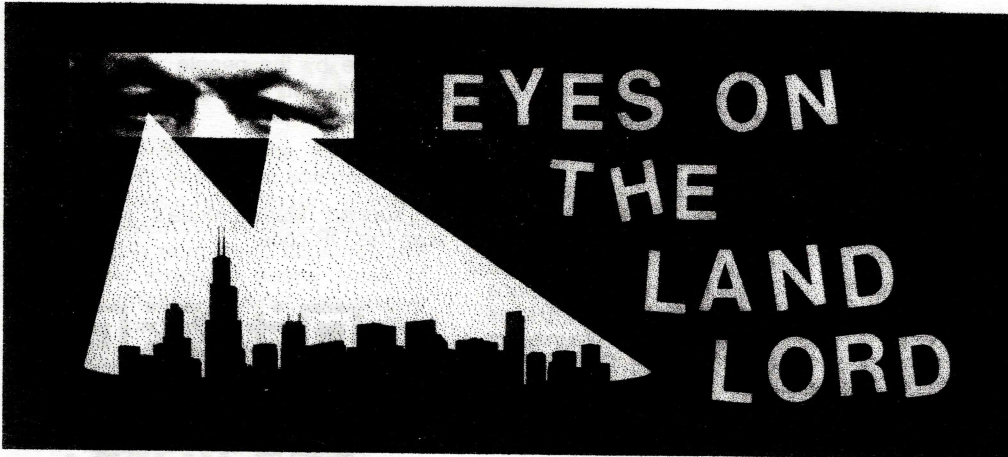


lawsuits push landlords into heating repairs, tenants still get pushed out through rent increases down the line to make up the money spent on repairs.

So what can we do? **We need to make our misery not in the landlord's interest.** That means making repair the less costly avenue. That means making heating issues not save him money, but cost him money. How can we do that? Well, should we give 100% rent for 80%, 50%, or 0% apartments? If we aren't getting our end of the deal, then neither should he!

**If your apartment isn't staying warm and you want to stand up to your landlord, text the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance @ (773) 770-5650. We will work together with you and your neighbors to establish a tenant union of your own to fight the landlord together. ★**

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★



**Keep your eyes open!**  
*Don't let your landlord isolate you from the tenant movement blossoming in Chicago!*

**Be ready!**  
*Decades of landlord control over our neighborhoods won't end without a fight!*

**Stay smart!**  
*Landlords pump their perspectives into every news outlet in Chicago; it's time tenants had a voice of their own!*

**Tenants Talk has eyes on the landlord. Do you?**

## PTA SENDS DELEGATION TO ALDERMAN TALIAFERRO

*Written by a tenant-leader of the Parkside Terrace Alliance*

PTA decided it was time for a face to face with Alderman Taliaferro. We orchestrated to have several members of the PTA attend the weekly alderman's meeting, intent on demanding his help with us getting an individual unit building wide inspection to help shed more light and corrective action against slumlord Gregory B Jones. On December 15, 2025 we marched in over 10 strong armed with large enhanced photos showing what tenants are combating daily. Waiting patiently it was our turn to meet with the alderman. As we walked into his large office as a united front, I boldly introduced myself and the PTA. I explained how we got to this point and why we needed his help in getting this building wide inspection done. PTA presented photos of rats being caught daily, garbage piling up in the hallways and trash chute, common areas neglected due to no janitorial staff, broken pipes,

appliances and more. To our surprise, the alderman was on our side. Came up with a plan to get the Department of Buildings involved and help coordinate this building wide inspection. We were thrilled at his response and action plan. With the holidays we were already prepared to wait. Currently we are awaiting contact from an inspector with a day and a time to conduct as many inspections as possible for 130 and 143 N. Parkside.

## SLUMLORD IMRAN KHAN SUES ORGANIZERS AND TENANTS OF ACTA AND FAD

In January 2025, Chicago's now notorious slumlords Imran Khan and Faria Ibrahim bought four buildings in Rogers Park. They arrived with a textbook gentrification plan: kick out the Hispanic working class tenants who have lived in the building for decades and replace them with richer ones to line their pockets. This plan was set into motion with a mass of letters sent to tenants across the four buildings offering new leases with rent hikes of up to \$800, prompting tenants across the four buildings to begin talking with one another and meeting together to organize a response to Khan's gentrification attempts. They formed a union: Fuerzas Activas de la Damen.

Since the tenants have unionized, Khan has made many attempts to bust the union. He...

- Hired private security to patrol the buildings and intimidate tenants trying to meet together.
- Threatened arrest and eviction during the peak of ICE's terror.
- Sent hired goons to pressure tenants at their doors to leave the union and take side deals.
- Stole tenants' cameras and impounded tenants' cars with parking passes.
- Most pitifully Khan even tried to bribe tenants with free pizza!

Despite his efforts to bust the union, Khan was met with good-faith efforts from

FAD to bargain for fair contracts. Following many failed attempts to bring Khan to the negotiation table, on November 1st, FAD authorized a historic rent strike by unanimous vote. Tenants across 69 units, representing over 40% of all units across the four buildings Khan purchased, agreed to withhold the entirety of their rent until Khan met them at the negotiation table.

Khan's latest response? He filed two retaliatory lawsuits against random members of striking tenant union Fuerzas Activas de la Damen and organizers of the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance in an attempt to scare tenants out of the fight for fair contracts. This latest move represents a step beyond recouping

any supposed "lost" income. Khan and Finfer are trying to set a precedent against all striking tenants; now and in the future. Not only are they attempting to lock FAD and ACTA in a costly, frivolous lawsuit; they're attempting to show their fellow landlords and landlord proxies how to squash tenants from organizing across the city.

All tenants of Chicago should keep their eyes and ears pointed toward FAD, as they are paving a path that many tenants should hope to walk down one day soon!

## SEELEY FALLS TO SLUMLORD IMRAN KHAN'S RELENTLESS GREED

If you've been reading your Tenants Talk, you'll recognize the name Imran Khan. Khan bought four buildings in Rogers Park earlier this year and tried to hike rents by up to \$700 a month. The tenants in these buildings unionized and have gone on strike. Rather than fix the countless issues in his existing portfolio (which range from leaks and rats to massive holes in the walls and broken appliances) Imran Khan has turned his greedy eyes towards other properties in the neighborhood. This time he has gotten his hands on a quiet multifamily building on Seeley Ave. The building was previously owned by Hunter Properties who kept the building in fair condition. Now that Khan is in control that is certain to change. If it's anything like his previous projects, tenants can expect major hikes in rent and a dropoff in services.

When buildings like this change hands, tenants rarely know until the deal is done and there's nothing to be done. In this case however, ACTA saw the sale coming. Contact with the tenants began months ago with the hopes of getting the tenants organized enough to demand extended leases. This strategy is an important but difficult approach tenants can take if they know their building is for sale. It is powerful because the new landlord, who will usually be looking to raise rents and pay off his mortgage, has to respect the terms of existing leases. It is difficult because the situation rarely feels urgent so far in

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★

advance. If you are in this situation, don't be complacent—unionizing when things are calm can save you a lot of difficulty later. In the case of Seeley, tenants did not organize in time to win their demands and the sale occurred. Now the identity of the previously unknown buyer is public, and it may be the worst case scenario. Imran Khan has come to Seeley, and it is up to the residents to stand up to the gentrifier of Rogers Park.

### LANDLORD GREED THREATENS BELOVED SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY HUB, MAMA AFRICA'S

In South Shore, Mama Africa's Marketplace has served as an important gathering place for the community for years. The space has been a center of revolutionary activity, acting as a meeting space, a headquarters for community programs such as "Feed the People", and hosting Pan-African teach-ins.

Despite the popularity of Mama Africa's Marketplace with the community, the tides of gentrification in South Shore are

threatening the existence of the space. The monopoly that the landlords have over the livable space in Chicago means the landlords decide what stays...and what goes. The market makes no exceptions. When the landlord who owns Mama Africa's building received an offer, the people who run the beloved community space were the last to find out. Now, Mama Africa's Marketplace has to choose, move out of the building which has become so central to the community and hope there's another space to move into, or outbid the buyer. This is why they are turning to the community for funding to save Mama Africa's. Even though it will be a difficult campaign, Mama Africa's Marketplace was fortunate to even have this opportunity, most of the time sales like these happen without any chance to put in a counter offer.

As the gentrification of South Shore continues, we will undoubtedly see more and more of the neighborhood in need of support to avoid being washed away with the tide. What is certain is that these crises

will only end when decisions about the buildings and spaces in the neighborhood are made by the people who live inside them and not by landlords looking to maximize their profit.

To support Mama Africa's Marketplace, scan this QR code:



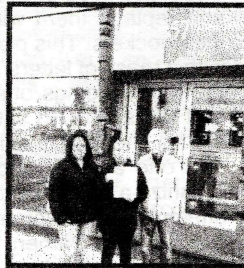
## January

★ ACTA first attends Belden Sawyer Tenant Alliance (BSTA) meetings and speaks at a BSTA press conference outside the building. Shortly after this, they vote to authorize a rent strike, the first in the city in over 40 years.

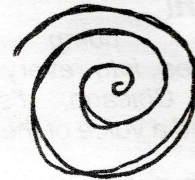
## March

★ ACTA makes first contact with 829 W Cuyler, and the tenants form Fuerzas Inquilinos de Broadway y Cuyler (FIBC).

★ Fuerzas Inquilinos joins the first coordinated rent strike in recent history in solidarity with BSTA.



# 2025: THE YEAR OF



★ ACTA makes first buildings in Rogers Park, Imran Khan, and Fuerzas Inquilinos de Broadway y Cuyler (FAD) become tenant union and d

## May

★ Parkside Terrace Alliance holds its first rally and barbecue.

★ BSTA and ACTA wake Drew Millard up at 10 pm demanding a deal.

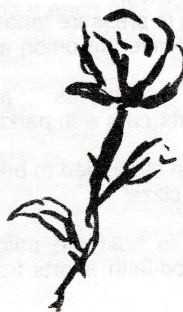
## February

★ ACTA begins working at 143 & 130 N. Parkside, and the tenants form the Parkside Terrace Alliance (PTA).



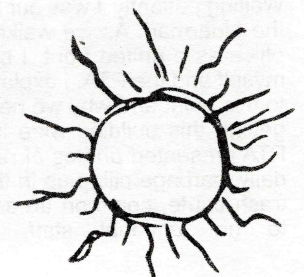
## April

★ Rent Strike Artist Raffle raises \$1810 for ACTA's strike fund.



## June

★ Fuerzas Inquilinos de Broadway y Cuyler hosts a family barbecue.



★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★

## I AM A REVOLUTIONARY

I am a 26-year-old from the suburbs of Chicago. It's hard to imagine someone like me declaring I am a revolutionary. Before I met ACTA, I assumed revolutionaries only existed in history or in far-off countries and that they only emerged during times of reactionary struggle against oppressive governments once it reached a boiling point. I didn't realize that, sure, those instances create revolutionaries, but there are many other ways revolutionaries come to be. I've found that the commonality across all revolutionary actions is that they are built by people and nothing ever happens out of thin air. The struggle is made by people who are exactly like you and me.

As I've moved into my mid-20s, I've viewed myself in this process of becoming... Probably cheesy, yes, but it feels true.

Becoming in the sense of intentionally creating my life, developing my understanding of positionality in the world, and my sense of home and community. I also like to think I'm in the process of becoming a revolutionary.

*"Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? What are we waiting for? What awaits us? It is a question of learning hope."*

I'm sure we've all felt as though we are in this process of becoming and have recognized it from time to time. Here is a glimpse into my not-yet-become revolutionary life.

The first time I looked around and realized we were all being screwed over was when I got my first job at 16. I worked in a nursing home as an activity coordinator. For most of my time there I got to play games, make arts and crafts, and read to the patients. At 18, I became a caregiver and did this for about \$10-15/hr. As a teenager, with friends making minimum

wage, those numbers were a big deal. I always felt like I won the best 'starter' job in the world—but I also put a sincere amount of weight into the work because it gave me a sense of purpose. I took on extra shifts because we were constantly short-staffed and I felt obligated to my coworkers.

I stuck out like a sore thumb among them. I was a bubbly young person with a do-good attitude working there from 16-19, while most of them were in their 30s-50s with real life shit going on. Some had kids to care for, their own parents to tend to, or had to pick up second jobs to make ends meet—all while working a laborious job here that required them to lift heavy things all day, everyday. One of my closest coworkers was a beloved 55-year-old caregiver with bad knees and a "I don't take shit" attitude who had been doing this work for decades. We were unorthodox work friends, and I always tried to help her a little extra since I could tell when her overtime weeks were adding up by the way she struggled to get around. I would make sure to pick up shifts when I could so I could do

## THE RENT STRIKE

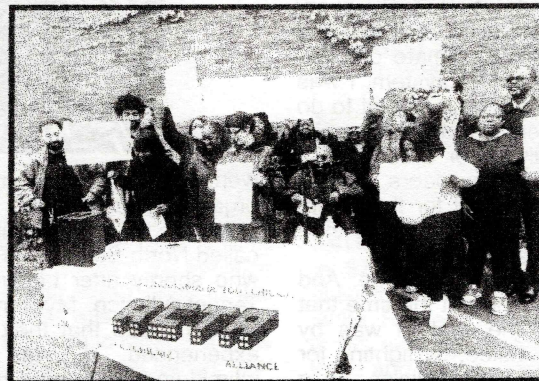
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CAPITAL

### September

★ ACTA raises over \$10,000 at huge Fuerzas Inquilinos de Broadway y Cuyler anti-ICE block party.



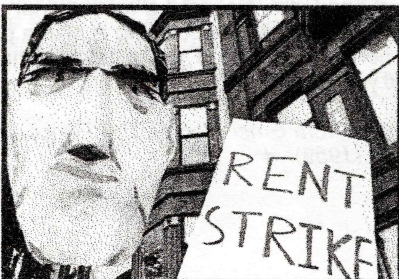
### November

★ Parkside Terrace Alliance continues fighting with a 311 campaign & press conference for repairs.

### August

★ BSTA pickets outside 33 Realty offices for two weeks before finally reaching a deal.

★ PTA accepts deal with Infinity Capital.



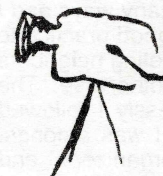
### October

★ FAD announces historic, 60-tenant-strong rent strike at press conference.



### December

★ Worthless slumlord Imran Khan sues ACTA for defamation.



★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★

half of her caseload. She always said she needed the hours because she was saving up to get her second knee replacement done. Seeing this week in and week out, it really sunk in that this was a job for people to pay bills, and yet they couldn't. I know the place had enough to pay everyone better—these patients' families were hemorrhaging thousands of dollars monthly to stay there. This is where I learned work that was deemed 'important' and 'essential' are not treated as such.

My journey of investigating the machinations of capitalism began as I looked behind the facade of meritocracy that my parents instilled in me at a young age. My dad grew up dirt poor in West Virginia, which he used as a receipt of proof that pulling yourself up by your bootstraps is real. *Look he's the guy that somehow made it out of poverty via hard work and nothing else! What a groundbreaking concept for a white man who grew up in the 70s.* This propaganda, of course, worked on a child.

As my young adult brain developed, I was no longer interested in this delusional worldview—particularly after the Black Lives Matter movement and the Trump election unveiled the self-evident racialized oppression steeped into our societal structures all around us. I took every chance I could in school to research the prison industrial complex, climate change, and the for-profit healthcare system. I was angry and sad, but had no clue what to do other than write papers or consume social media about the daily terror around us. I have a feeling many of my peers are still stuck in this state of disgust for the world, but taking no real action. My excuse then was "What could I do anyway?"

Well, this carried me to college. And then grad school. Believing at the time that the best way to fix the system was by reforming it from the inside, by fighting for just and right public health policies. As a broke graduate student, it was easy to romanticize my work ethic to make this happen. I was working up to 3 jobs at a time while in school. Of course, this afforded me my first apartment which was a shit hole. The leaking ceiling, carpet with mold under it, infestation of roaches and mice were all the amenities my roommate and I got with it—free! I was quick to learn my private landlord was the most lame excuse-giving bastard I had ever met. *Silly me... mice and roaches are supposed to be in our apartment because we live in a city!*

So when the time came, I jumped at the opportunity to help out on a rent control campaign with a socialist organization in Philly. This was my first taste of "organizing." It was fun in many ways and I took it seriously which is a good practice to have. The best part was meeting neighbors that I never would have otherwise. The worst part was how mindlessly I followed others in the organization. I was amongst seasoned labor union organizers and eviction defense attorneys, so I believed

that my thoughts would be useless. It compounded as I spent more and more time with Marxists who poked fun at the fact that I didn't know any theory, but wouldn't try to teach me either. I had a sense I agreed with the concepts of Marx, of course, but I had no sense of what any of it meant on a concrete level. The world of theory felt impenetrable and intimidating, and I was too embarrassed about not knowing any of it to ask. I assumed that this must be what the world of organizing is like.

I moved to Chicago and immediately



went looking for a community in housing organizing once more. Eventually I heard about a communist tenant organizing group called North Spaulding Renters Association who shortly after became the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance. My immediate impression of ACTA was that they were serious and experienced. I was impressed and intimidated once more by the people I was surrounded by as they showed me their newspaper and talked about pedagogy and theory. But, it became clear that there wasn't a stifling sense of hierarchy that made someone's knowledge more important nor the enforcement of clear right and wrong answers here. This was different from other spaces I'd been in, and the practice of not knowing and learning collectively is one that ACTA embraces. The concept of criticism as a means of learning from failures helped me understand the ways we learn from one another and highlighted the seriousness of thinking about each task we take on.

Yet, I admit I am still scared of failing. I have this persistent sense of embarrassment, feeling as though I am doing things incorrectly. This feeling throughout my life has often hindered me. Notably, it has stopped me from doing things I find important. But I am glad I've been brave enough to tell those around me in ACTA, "I don't know this" or "I feel like I can't do this" or "I've failed at this"—"but I

want to learn." And this practice is commonplace among the organization, even by those who I view as experienced.

I think this fear of failure is relatable to various degrees for others. But I have found that this is a revolutionary's task: failure. Specifically the task of failing and seeing it as an opportunity. A problem requires work for a solution. Revolutionaries have and will fail a lot, in small ways and bigger ways, and yet must keep building. For what have we to do if not try and fail and get better? I am in the process of becoming a revolutionary because I just recently figured this out. We, as the working class, have absolutely nothing better to do than exactly this. Because there is a chasm between where we are now and liberation.

*"Critical-militant optimism orients itself toward the Not-Yet-Become. It creates the readiness to risk the intervention into what has not yet been achieved."*

The revolutionaries of our time must build up the working class to become revolutionaries too. We will work to become strong enough and brave enough and strategic enough to eventually confront the ruling class in a meaningful and headstrong way. Right now, my slice of this work, and hopefully yours too, is building tenant unions as the structures and fortresses for our revolutionary vision of a militant working class. In apartment buildings and courtyards, during struggle and victory, this is where tenants, people like you and me, recognize that they, too, carry this responsibility—and our wages that go to the ruling class as rent are a powerful weapon to wield.

In times like these, I've come across many people antsy for change. Some might just say that, while others might actually mean it and don't know where to start. I've been both of those types of people at some point in my life. There is no better time than now and no better place to start than where you call home.

*"The work of hope requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming, to which they themselves belong."*

As we each take up the struggle, the problems we face will show the direction to take in the next iteration of the fight. This is the process of becoming a revolutionary. I trust myself and my comrades to take the task ahead of us seriously: to view problems and failures as opportunities to pivot and learn. So, am I a revolutionary? I think the process of becoming is also a part of being—therefore, I am a revolutionary, and you can be too.

*Quotes from Ernst Bloch's The Principle of Hope (1959). ★*

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★

## TENANT GRAPEVINE

**Maya:** So you were telling me that you had a previous landlord that was trying to lie to Section 8.

**Stacy:** Yeah, yeah. I can't remember his name though... I [was] flooded, the basement flooded out. FEMA came in, you know, and then I never really got what I should have got from FEMA. So then he lied to Section 8 and said I was breaking my lease and stuff, which I really wasn't breaking it. Then he didn't want to give me my [money]. He lied to them.

**Maya:** Why do you think he was lying to them?

**Stacy:** Sometimes people want to just keep the money coming in with Section 8, because it's guaranteed money. So they will lie and say you're breaking the lease so you can get in trouble.

**Maya:** Trying to get you out, maybe?

**Stacy:** No, I don't think he was trying to get me out. I think he was literally trying to keep that money coming in for Section 8 because it's guaranteed money in your account... You see what I'm saying? So, whatever. But to lie on me, when I knew I wasn't breaking the lease... and to have to go back and get it. That's what pissed me off, you know, I told him, don't you ever do that to me. Because you knew I'd been here for years. You knew I wouldn't break the lease. But, you know, like I said, he was a bad one. And when I flooded, when I flooded! He left us, left me in there with carpet for two weeks and said that... the carpet people had said that you have to leave it down there for two weeks to let it dry. I said, no, no, no, no, no. You have to cut carpets in squares and roll them up and take them out.

**Hassan:** Why do you think the government wants to cut Section 8 benefits?

**Stacy:** I think they want to cut it because too many people are... You know, they're living on it, you know what I'm saying? For life. But some people that are disabled themselves, like myself, I have to have it. You know what I'm saying?... I don't know why they want to cut it. You said with the food stamps, you're giving it to people who gotta work. I've been there before, but I can't work now. So, sort them out. People who can't work give them stamps, people that can work, get their abled bodies out there.

**Hassan:** And it's the richest country that has ever existed.

**Stacy:** It is the richest country...

**Hassan:** People should be able to have food and shelter.

**Stacy:** All the time. You know you got this big country and you know there's a lot of people in there. Make sure you have enough places for those people to live... So, you know, we don't have that, you know, not enough places to live. You know, where this country's going, we're all going to be like the next generation. We're going to all be together in one house, it's sad... So it's a sad country. And when people ask me where I live, I try not to say Chicago. I just live on the street. You know, I live in a place on the street, that's all I say... And it's the rich trying to get richer.

**Hassan:** There's some tenants that we work with that are on rent strike right now because their landlord, his name's Imran Khan, he decided to raise the rent, hundreds of dollars on these tenants. So these tenants, they've been living there 40, 30, 20 years, and they decided as a group to stop paying rent so that he would give them a fair contract. What would you say to these tenants?



**Stacy:** I don't know. It might work. It may not work. Sometimes when you don't give them their money, they find a way to get you out that door. You know what I'm saying? I love what they're doing, because you should stand up for your rights. It's always your stuff, but sometimes it works, and sometimes you screw yourself. You just never know what might happen... It's risky.

**Hassan:** But you support them.

**Stacy:** Oh, yeah, I support them. Oh, I stand up for my rights and other people's rights, too. You should stand up for your rights, because these landlords, you know, they want your money for the rent, and you want all this money, and they want [to increase] your rent. Because mine's going up... every year, mine's going up. But, I'm on Section 8. If Section 8 gets tired with it and don't want to pay it, then I gotta go... Cause I don't know what's going to happen

with Section 8 and where I might have to live or who I might have to live with, I just pray on it every day. But I love when people stand up for their rights. So they're doing right standing up for their rights and not paying the rent... The best thing to do is take their money away. You know, when they're doing these wrong stuff, like, take the money away.

**Hassan:** Hit them in the pocket. Now they want to listen. Now they want to have a meeting.

**Stacy:** Yeah they do, but you gotta watch out for the landlord too. Cause some of them are dirty. They'll turn your heat off, they'll turn your water off. You have to watch [out for] them.

**Maya:** He doesn't. He just doesn't. He doesn't care.

**Stacy:** No, he doesn't care because he's rich.

**Maya:** Exactly. Do you think landlords provide anything to society? Like if a landlord wasn't there, would things change?

**Stacy:** I don't know what to say on that one... Like if you live in a building and you don't like what you're going through, go take one of those small houses or something. Get an apartment or something until you get another house or something. Because it's taken away from him [the landlord] and that's what you're trying to do... So I don't think they provide anything, mostly for the headache really, you know. You know, if you got a good landlord, sometimes they give you a headache [too].

**Hassan:** Because the people that built the house are different than the landlord. They're different than the landlord. People that fix the house are different.

**Maya:** They're all workers, right?

**Hassan:** They're probably tenants, too. They probably go back to their own apartment.

**Stacy:** Oh, they do.

**Maya:** It's like if I'm your landlord and you have an issue, all I'm doing is like, give me money. Okay, I'm going to hire Hassan to fix your issue. But you could have just done that, right? There's no need.

**Hassan:** They're a person in the middle.

**Maya:** Yeah, there's like a little middleman just taking your money and keeping some of it and not fixing your issue.

**Stacy:** Some just keep all of it. I know some lady, her landlord... Some landlords take long to do things. I don't think you should wait to do things. Nip it in the bud, get it fixed so you don't have to worry about that tenant. And then, you know, she wasn't paying no rent. But you see that's what you get: what you don't fix, you don't get. You know what I'm saying? So I'm not mad that people are holding on to their money. You

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★

know, not giving him his money and stuff. Fix what you suppose to fix.

**Hassan:** They don't fix something and the ceiling collapses. Or they don't fix something and the kid gets lead poisoning.

**Stacy:** Yeah, that's what I'm saying. So, fix it.

**Hassan:** Right.

**Stacy:** You're going to be a landlord, be a landlord. Be a better person, fix it up, what you got to do. That's how you keep your tenants. When you don't do what you're supposed to do, tenants leave. But some people are so afraid...Don't let them intimidate you because that's what they do. They intimidate you. Oh, I'm going to intimidate her. You know, I ain't got to do this. Yeah, you're right. You ain't got to do nothing. But I got to move. Whatever. So don't let people try to intimidate you. Don't let them do that. Always stay in

your ground. Don't let them intimidate you. And make sure that you let them know you will stand up for yourself...It's just like with a you know, like with a dog. If you—the dog is timid. Don't let anybody let treat you like that.

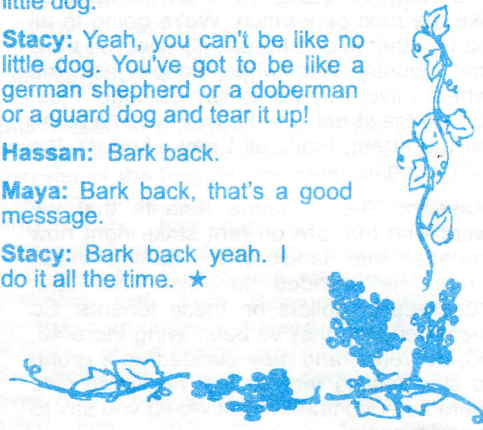
**Maya:** Yeah, you can't be like a little dog.

**Stacy:** Yeah, you can't be like no little dog. You've got to be like a german shepherd or a doberman or a guard dog and tear it up!

**Hassan:** Bark back.

**Maya:** Bark back, that's a good message.

**Stacy:** Bark back yeah. I do it all the time. ★



## ACTA MONTHLY REPORT

### YQ GAINS YOUTH MEMBERSHIP

The dedicated youth wing of ACTA has begun hosting monthly sessions where we spend time with the children of tenants we organize with to explore questions they have about the world and work to integrate them into the production of Tenants Talk, our newspaper. In the past month, we've spent time learning with a teen from the Parkside Terrace Alliance in Austin! We investigated topics such as free will and how to interview for different types of stories, and critiqued the Activity Page in the paper (formerly the Kids page). She's coming back this week, and we will pick up where we left off, furthering her involvement in the areas of the newspaper that interest her. We're excited to continue learning with her, and we hope to include more young people in these sessions moving forward!

### IB INTERVIEWED PAIGC

As part of ACTA's International Bulletin, we interviewed a comrade from the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) to learn about a recent coup in the west African country of Guinea-Bissau. The comrade also described the work of the PAIGC's youth wing as well as how democratic centralism functions within their party. This was quite an exciting exchange, as

the PAIGC is the historic party of Amilcar Cabral, one of the most influential revolutionaries for ACTA.

### ACTA CREATES SCOUTING DIVISION TO SEARCH FOR SLUMLORDS

In the new year ACTA is facing to converging developments. On one hand, we have grown immensely, gaining dedicated and well trained members who are eager to get into the fight. On the other hand several long-term union projects are reaching their culmination and will soon see a decrease in intensity. Both of these developments have converged on the necessity for new work, and as a result ACTA is making a stride towards a new method of scouting.

ACTA's brand new scouting team, made up of both newer members and experienced hands will be heading out into the city over the coming months in search of tenants ready to organize a union. If you live on the North or West side of Chicago, an ACTA member might be knocking on your door soon. ★



## TIP LINE

Landlord hiking you and your neighbors rent?

Landlord kicking you and your neighbors to the curb?

Want to build a union and do something about it?

[Text us at \(773\) 770-5650](tel:(773)770-5650)



## SUPPORT ACTA

The All-Chicago Tenant Alliance is run entirely by volunteers and is supported by dues and donations from supporters across Chicago.



If you have the means, please support our organization with a regular monthly commitment of \$10.

# The Collector of Homes

## CHAPTER 9 – THE END

Inside of The Collector's home, Freddy and Angie saw a familiar sight. Thousands of tiny snowglobes stacked against the wall, each one with a tiny building inside. If anything, the collection had grown since the last time the children had walked down the hallway. Now, however, they were not under the watchful guard of Mondo. The two siblings had a crowd of allies at their back and only a narrow hallway between them and the man who had taken their home. Slowly they advanced upon the door to The Collector's office. Without even a knock, Freddy turned the knob and pushed open the door.

"Mondo, tell me you've gotten rid of all those dirty—" The Collector, who had been pouring over some paperwork, looked up to see Angie, Freddy, Kira, and Archie march into the room. His eyes went wide and an unfamiliar emotion came over the man. If he could have looked in the mirror at just that moment, he might have recognized his expression as one of complete shock and fear. It was an expression he had seen on plenty of others but which never crossed his own unpleasant little face. "Oh! It's you again!" he gasped, pushing his luxurious leather office chair back slowly.

*"That's right, we're here for our homes," Angie announced.*

"Your homes? I don't understand. Everything here is mine. I can show you the paperwork to prove it," The Collector stammered sheepishly. He fumbled with some of the papers on his desk and then pulled one from a monumental stack that threatened to topple at any minute. "Here it is, 2134 Maypole, and a receipt for eight million dollars. See? I bought it fair and square."

"And where did you come up with that kind of money?" Archie asked with a deep chuckle.

"Well, from my other buildings of course," The Collector said with a nervous smile.

"You mean from the people inside, working hard all day to pay for you and your collection?" Archie shouted, making The Collector jump.

"Look, we can work something out. Here! Have your home back. Take it and leave me alone, all of you," The Collector said, leaping from behind his desk. He snatched one of the many glass globes piled against the wall and thrust it into Angie's hands.

Angie looked down at the little building. This was it at last. She almost couldn't believe her eyes. After all the trouble she and her brother had been through, the building was finally in her hands. She could see the familiar red brick and



the unkempt grass in the courtyard. She could even see her mother there at the window, resting her forehead against the glass. Angie felt tears in her eyes.

"Well, go on. Take it and tell the others to leave with you. This is a real act of generosity on my part. I'll even give you some free advice, little girl. As long as it stays inside that glass dome, you can turn that building you're holding into more. Think of it as a beginning. If you run a tight ship soon you'll be able to collect five or ten. Who knows, in a few decades you might even be just like me," The Collector said, fixing his spiked-up hair and regaining his lost composure.

Angie looked up at him and imagined herself in his place, in an elegant house like this one with an iron gate protecting the lawn. She imagined living surrounded by the buildings she had collected, homes she had no intention of ever visiting and only kept because the real, hard working people inside would pay her to live in them. She shuddered and lifted her arms, raising the glass globe above her head. The Collector of Homes watched her in utter disbelief.

"I never want to become like you," Angie growled and smashed the globe down onto the floor, shattering it in one decisive movement.

The crash of the miniature glass model on the floor made the life drain from The Collector's face. Kira was the first to react, letting out an excited whoop and dashing towards the stacks of snowglobes around the wall. Freddy and Archie joined in, calling out to the crowd in the hallway. Soon the crashes multiplied and The Collector watched as his collection was reduced to piles of worthless glass.

All around the city, nothing suddenly became something. In the blink of an eye, buildings reappeared by the thousands. Lots which had been ominously empty filled with warmth and life. Mothers and fathers worried about rent felt a wave of relief. Children who were lost in the street unexpectedly remembered their way home.

"This is terrible!" The Collector of Homes cried with a tortured wail. "All of my homes are gone!"

Freddy looked at the sad man with surprise. The Collector seemed to have aged thirty years in only a few minutes. He looked as if he had actually been working for a living over the last decades.

"That's not true, Mr. Collector. You have this one," Freddy said, feeling strangely sorry for the man.

"One home is no collection," the man sobbed, sinking to his knees.

"No, but it is enough to live in," Freddy told him. For an adult, The Collector seemed awfully confused about how things worked.

On the bus ride home, Freddy and Angie said their goodbyes to Archie and Kira.

"You know, now that it's over, I think I'm going to miss my little den. Maybe we can come up with a nice little place to meet up in our neighborhood," Kira said.

"Hopefully with less rotten eggs this time around," Angie said, laughing. They waved at Kira as she hopped off the bus and headed towards home.

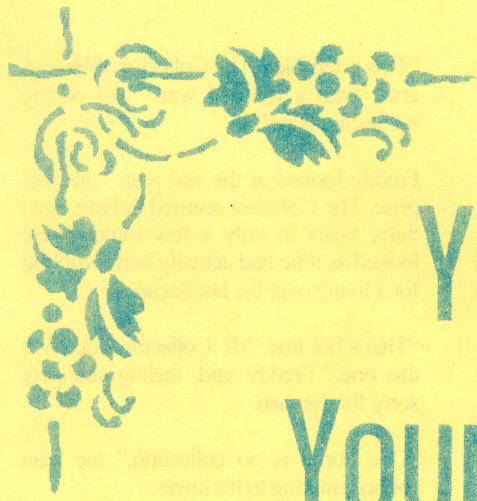
When Archie reached his stop, he turned to the siblings and swept them up into a big hug.

"Don't you two forget what you learned from all of this. You are our future, and you will have to set an example for the world. I hope we will meet again in the struggle," Archie listened to the children's goodbyes, gave a salute and then headed off down the sidewalk as purposefully as ever.

Angie and Freddy found their mother at home waiting for them as if the building had been there the entire time. Nevertheless, something had changed. She seemed more at ease than before. Angie and Freddy hugged tightly, glad to feel the comfort of their apartment after the long adventure. The evening was calm. Mr. Barnes was outside walking his dog, on the fire escape, the three retired men were laughing together as they watched the sunset; on the top floor Mr. and Mrs. Hart put on a record they had listened to in their youth; and way off on the other side of the city, the bus driver whistled her tune as she picked up a group of workers heading home for the night.

**WANT TO READ THE  
ENTIRE STORY?  
SCAN HERE:**





# Youth: Rebuild Your Neighborhood!

The last question we asked for the Tenant Grapevine in 2025 was:  
What should be built for the kids in the neighborhood in 2026?

All sorts of people responded to our question: kids, workers at the local corner stores, fathers, grandmother's... What would you like to see built in the neighborhood?

In the box below, write the address where you think that thing, whatever may be, could go. Save some space to draw later...

Now, ask an adult who has lived in your neighborhood for a long time: What used to be built on that spot? Do they have any special memories about it?

Based on the interview, draw a sketch of the space in the box. Think: What would be the first step to building what you want to see in that space, in reality? What tools and people would you need?

