

TENANTS TALK

SEMI-REGULAR CHICAGO TENANTS NEWSPAPER

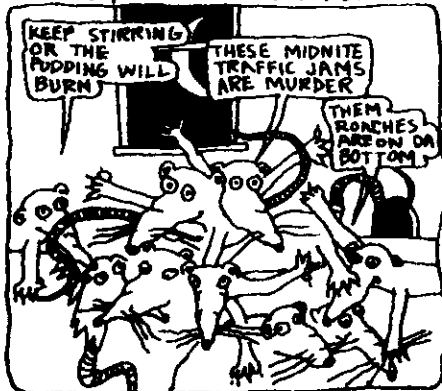
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RIISING UP ANGRY DEC.11/DEC.31 Page 16

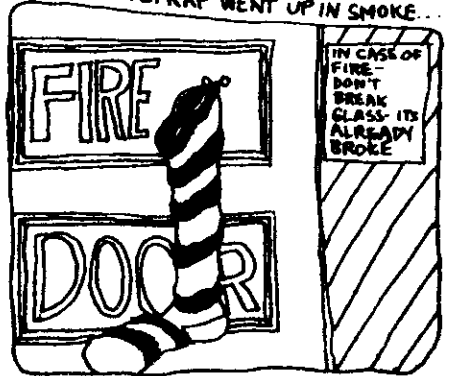
TWAS DA NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS
AND ALL THROUGH THE FLATS
CREATURES WERE STIRRING
MICE, ROACHES AND RATS....



THE CHILDREN WERE SLEEPING
ALL UNDER THEIR BEDS,
SO IF THE PLASTER FALLS DOWN
IT WONT HIT NO HEADS....



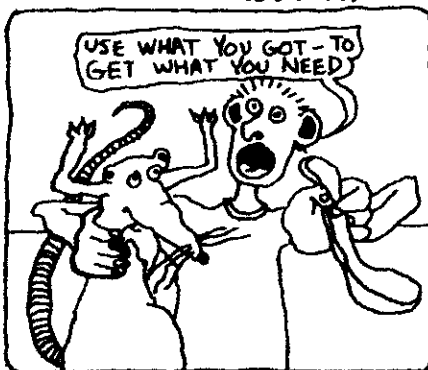
THE STOCKING ON THE FIRE
ESCAPE DOOR WAS NO JOKE-
WE COULD GRAB THEM IF
DIS FIRETRAP WENT UP IN SMOKE...



WE AWAKE IN THE MORNING
AND GOT QUITE A SHOCK,
CAUSE A 15 POUND RAT
WAS STUCK IN THE SOCK



THE KIDS LET IT OUT
AND STUFFED IT WITH FEED
THEY SAID, "USE WHAT YOU GOT.
TO GET WHAT YOU NEED."



SIX SHORT DAYS LATER
THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR
HERE COMES OUR SLUM-LORD
TO FILL US WITH CHEER.



WHEN HE CAME IN THE DOOR
THE KIDS BROUGHT OUT HIS GIFT
THIS MAN STARTED DROOLING
IT WAS SO HEAVY TO LIFT



HE TORE OFF THE WRAPPINGS
THIS DUDE HAD NO FEAR...
THEN OUT JUMPS THE PRESENT
AND BIT OFF HIS EAR....



SINCE HE LEFT US THAT DAY
NO WORD HAS HE SENT
AND SINCE HE AINT FIXED DA BUILDING
WE'RE WITHOLDING THE RENT



This cartoon was printed in 1972 in a newspaper called Rising Up Angry. The paper was ran by a revolutionary youth organization of the same name from 1969 and 1975 in Chicago. We think the cartoon still applies today. What do you think?

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★



WHO OWNS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

If you are a tenant in Chicago, especially on the West Side and South Side, you have likely heard promise after promise about "investment" and "renovation" from politicians, developers, and bankers alike. These sorts of initiatives are very good press, but where are the results? Rental properties on the west side are still infested with rats and cockroaches, full of mold, and constantly leaking. This money is definitely not going into the apartment buildings owned by slumlords like WPD, Janko, or Lakeside management.

But what about rent? The average rent per month for a one bedroom apartment in West Garfield Park is nearly \$1,500. In a large multifamily building, that adds up. Across all the buildings in the neighborhood? That's millions of dollars of hard earned money coming from West-Siders' wallets. Does the state of the neighborhood reflect this money? Is the average apartment worth half of your monthly paycheck? The answer is clearly no. The **forced investment** you are making when you pay rent is clearly not worth it for you or anyone else renting in these neighborhoods.

Where is this money going? Rent money goes directly to the landlords. It is their decision whether or not to maintain your building and invest in your neighborhood. The problem for you is that these landlords don't live in your neighborhood. They would do anything in their power to never step

foot in your neighborhood. They do not care what your building looks like or what school your children go to. Your neighborhood is owned by slumlords who **do not give a shit about the people** living there.

Let's look at the choice that these landlords face when they collect your rent money. After you, all of your neighbors, and every single tenant renting from your particular slumlord send in the money they worked for, the slumlord has to decide whether to:

- Use that money to fix up your building, keep the pests out, and hire competent staff, or
- To use that money to buy another building a block away with another 30 or so rent paying tenants.

For the landlord, the answer is simple. Buy another building and he gets more of the money flowing out of the West Side and into Lincoln Park, the suburbs, New York City, or whatever gated community he happens to live in. The money he spends on his next building sometimes never even comes to Chicago at all. A couple million changes hands on paper in LA and suddenly a whole building full of families gets a letter from "new management" telling them rent is going up.

Yes, landlords own your neighborhood. They own most of the city. But what does this ownership mean? For the average person, the things we own are the things we use. We buy them so we can use them. Landlords, on the other hand, buy things so that you can use them.

Landlords do not want these buildings, they only want more money. Let's imagine a world where a law says that nobody can collect rent from your building. What would your landlord do? The building is still there, but there is no money to be extracted. The landlord, of course, would try to sell right away. But who would buy it? Another landlord? In fact, the other landlords wouldn't touch the building with a ten foot pole because **they do not want the building. They only want your rent.**

The truth of the matter can be summed up simply: When we buy something it is because we want to use it. For landlords it is the opposite. Landlords buy buildings because they do not want to use them. If this sounds crazy, it's because it is! The result of this is this backwards state of things where buildings crumble and neighborhoods deteriorate. **Things are upside down.** The slumlords who actually own your neighborhood have no interest in using the buildings there. The slumlords let the neighborhood deteriorate. But it gets worse! If the slumlords and their wealthy investors do decide to "put money back into the neighborhood" by building parks and fancy stores, it will be to attract more wealthy tenants and **push you out.** Don't forget where that money came from! Given enough time, it will be **your rent money** which will be used to force you and your neighbors out of the neighborhood.

The solution is to turn things right side up. The people whose home is on the West Side, who use the buildings—who live in them, should be the ones in control of the neighborhood. The ones who care about the neighborhood should be the ones who own it. The ones who live in the apartments must be the ones who make the decisions, together as a union. No more waiting on investors and politicians to hand out loans with strings attached. No more homeownership schemes which only give hope to a select few. This is your neighborhood. You already live there—take it!

Start building tenant power in your building today by calling the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance at (773) 770-5650. ★

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★

ANNOUNCING

UMTU

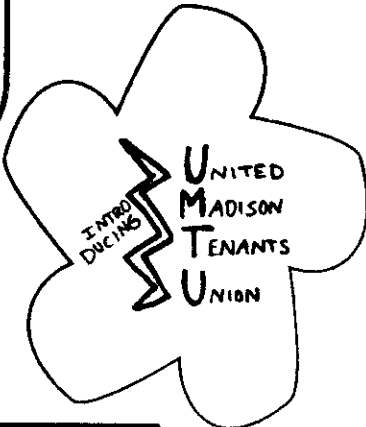
CHICAGO

ADHOC

TENANTS

UNION

UMTU
Let's come
together & help
each other
stop the evil
from Pezzola &
WPD



UMTU
Let US STAND
Let US Fight!
Let US Win!

From the hearts of
Chicago's Madison Terrace
United Madison Tenants Union
United We Stand!
Divided We Fall!

UNITED WE STAND
Chicago's Newest Union
United Madison Tenants Union
DIVIDED WE FALL

A group of tenants at the apartment complex known as Madison Terrace has officially unionized and become the United Madison Tenants Union (UMTU). The union is using the winter months to train its leaders, so come spring they can lead their neighbors in battle against WPD Management and their landlord David Pezzola. UMTU are the first WPD tenants to rise up against the slum management firm, but they won't be the last...who will be next?

If you are a WPD tenant join the movement and call us now!

YOUNG QUESTIONEERS

The All-Chicago Tenant Alliance (ACTA) is working with the Young Questioneers, part of the School of Many Questions, to offer free monthly programming for youth ages 5-16. This group of teachers, activists, and artists are working to create monthly exercises exploring People's movements from around the globe. The activities will be delivered right to your home on request!

The program has been developed out of the experiences of the individuals who now create the exercises. As teachers, many of these individuals felt frustrated by the limits of traditional education. Beyond the curriculum, there are many ways that these teachers felt restricted in truly teaching and learning alongside their students. Lectures, which are the primary way in which students are intended to retain information, do not work for the majority of children. The Young Questioneers want children to not only understand the information, but be curious about what they're learning about. Many people grow up to dread reading and learning due to the ways it has been pushed onto them as a child. The Young Questioneers wish to change this dynamic.

As organizers, the Young Questioneers were made aware of the widespread need for free youth activities in the areas where ACTA works: Humboldt Park, Garfield Park, Austin, and Lawndale. During ACTA's "AC For Free" program in the summer of 2024, they interacted with dozens of families who had this complaint. Summer activities for children are often costly, filled up, or inaccessible to families. Learning this, ACTA and the School of Many Questions took to the task of creating something to fulfill this need.

Launching at the tail-end of autumn, the Young Questioneers soon learned that the winter months brought different challenges. Kids are in school and after-school programs. It's harder for parents to drive their kids across the city, and like most people, families want to stay inside in the harsh Chicago cold. Additionally, families don't know who the Young Questioneers are! So with a goal of hosting (still free) in-person sessions and camps in the summer, they decided that from January to May, the focus would be to meet families, create exercises, and learn more about what gets children excited about learning.

Each month the activities will focus on a country and a theme. Inspired by the brave groups and people in history who have worked to make the world a better place, these exercises aim to

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explore questions alongside the youth who participate. Art, stories, games, and music, are just a few examples of activities that will be available to children. All materials and supplies will be provided. The activities are created with certain age groups in mind. This month the country focused on is Burkina Faso, a small West African country in the Sahel region. The School of Many Questions has had the honor of working alongside teachers at a free school in Burkina Faso, and has been heavily inspired by the work that they do.

The theme of this month is collective perseverance, something we all struggle with at times. The themes for the activities are a result of the Young Questioners learning what problems children have difficulty with— from discipline and cleanliness to curiosity and dedication. There are many people and groups the Young Questioners are excited to learn from. If you have any ideas about what themes or countries you'd like the Young Questioners to focus on, please contact us!

Finally, the Young Questioners hope to receive feedback on the activities created. Whether this is in the form of a phone call, an in-person visit, or a survey, this is a vital part of the work that the Young Questioners hope to do. Input will help inspire activities that are challenging but still within the realm of what young people will find valuable. This insight is extremely important in regards to developing effective learning materials.

If you have any questions or are interested in signing up, all you need to do is call or text 773-770-5650 or email us at questions@schoolofmanyquestions.com. The Young Questioners will need your name, the ages of your children, and your address so they can deliver the activities as soon as they're ready. ★



SUBSIDIZED HOUSING, PUBLIC HOUSING, SOCIAL HOUSING

The Chicago Housing Authority is meant to serve tenants in two distinct ways. The first way is through administering the US Government's Section-8 program throughout the Chicago area. The second way is by owning and operating apartments and renting them to tenants. The first way is called subsidized housing and the second way is called public housing.

Subsidized housing. The vast majority of assistance CHA gives tenants is done by subsidizing their rent; 47,000 households in the city receive Section-8 vouchers from CHA that pay portions of their rent or all of it. In this case, CHA doesn't own the houses themselves. Instead, they form partnerships with private, capitalist landlords who agree to let poor people live in their property. Section-8 landlords are compelled to do this for two reasons.

The first reason is because they still receive the average market rate amount of rent so they can make a profit. Although the tenant may only be paying \$300 (this price is determined by their income), CHA makes up the balance between that and whatever the average rents are

in the given area. The second reason is that, because large portions or the entire portion of rent flows to them directly from the government instead of the tenant, the income is effectively guaranteed. In other words, it's a maximally safe investment.

In short, landlords agree to this arrangement because a) profit and b) guaranteed profit. On the other side of the deal, CHA is attracted to this arrangement because, without the "mercy" of private, capitalist landlords they would not have enough shelter to house the enormous masses of tenants who cannot afford to pay market rents.

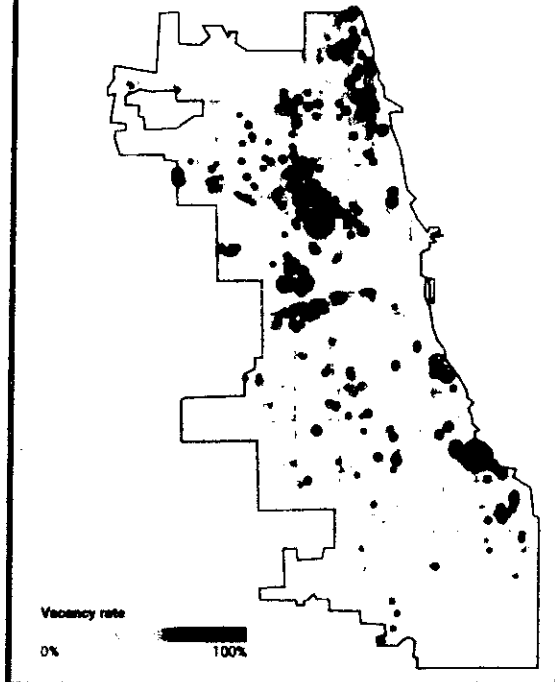
Public Housing. CHA directly owns and operates another 21,000 apartments throughout the city. In other words, they are themselves the landlord of these units. From the point of view of the tenant in public housing, there is no essential difference between their situation and that of a subsidized tenant. The tenant will still be paying a portion of the rent based on their level of income. Whether this money goes to an individual or a government agency makes no difference.

When it comes to the owner of public housing units, there is still no essential difference between CHA—who we might call a "public" landlord—and a private landlord.

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A high vacancy rate in CHA's scattered-site housing

As of August, nearly 18% of CHAs scattered-site units were sitting empty, many without plans for rehabilitation. The high vacancy rate has translated to less housing assistance for low-income families and more issues for neighbors of vacant buildings.



Both types of landlords exist within the capitalist system and are compelled to operate according to its laws. For example, when an old pipe bursts in an apartment causing a flood that results in significant damage that requires all of the tenants to be relocated, the landlord will respond according to what costs the least amount of money, no matter if he is "public" landlord CHA or private landlord C.A. Shae.

Make no mistake. Tenants are experiencing horrific, dangerous conditions in every kind of apartment building. Just because CHA is paying the rent or owns the title to the property does not prevent rat infestations from going unchecked. It does not mean black mold in the walls isn't poisoning children. CHA does not prevent gas leaking from the stoves and intoxicating tenants unknowingly.

CHA has no special authority to improve living conditions for tenants and no special desire to do so in comparison to private landlords, except insofar as the state might take away their allowance if they don't meet standards. But the state has no incentive to be strict with CHA about their standards. Why? Because if they start punishing CHA, Chicago would then be reliant on private developers to provide all the housing, and that's exactly the thing private landlords aren't willing to do that led to the need for CHA in the first place!

This is how CHA and the private landlords have effectively become a cartel with a monopoly on housing in Chicago. One appears as the solution to the other and they even present themselves as mutual enemies. The truth is that they rely and depend on one another all the way to the bank while tenants are driven all the way to the brink.

What is obvious to us in these situations—no matter if the landlord is private or public—is that someone or something else is in charge of what is happening to our houses. We have no say and no control over these decisions and there are no forces that require the landlord to explain themselves or ask us for our opinions or to account for our wishes—never mind that these are our homes.

Here is another example that demonstrates that public housing is just private housing in disguise.

CHA owns 500 houses that are vacant and deteriorating. Additionally they own 130 acres of undeveloped land. **Meanwhile, 200,000 tenants are on their waiting lists for housing.** If the demand for shelter is so high (or the supply is so low), what explains the fact that CHA does not use this surplus property to house tenants?

Obviously, because it costs too much

money to justify the returns on investment. If you need more evidence of this, look at this map that shows where CHA has vacant properties. No surprise, buildings are abandoned and deteriorating most abundantly in poor and working class neighborhoods, Lawndale, Garfield Park, South Shore, Uptown.

CHA is an investment and property management firm. They have a CEO and everything, her salary is \$300,000 per year.

Social housing. Let us finally imagine for a change, tenants controlling their housing together and living in common, with only themselves to decide how to manage their own building. All the characteristics of an apartment building as we know it would be repeated here with one important exception: No landlord. Not a private one nor a public one would stand between the tenants and the conditions of their own lives. Without a landlord, they would be without rent as well. Instead of the landlords and rent, there would be the tenants themselves organized into councils or committees.

The real basis of the councils of tomorrow are the tenant unions of today. That's why it's so important that tenants become self-conscious of their place in the system. Tenants do not have to wait until tomorrow to begin to take control. That can happen right now, on the condition that we are willing to knock on their neighbors' doors, meet together, make plans and organize the collective spirit and enthusiasm for fighting back.

Landlords have turned housing into money. And, unfortunately, so has Chicago's housing "authority". The good news is that all over the US; anywhere housing is owned privately and used as trading chips on the market according to the principle of maximizing profits, tenants are ganging up, forming unions and fighting to bring housing under the control of the people who use it for what it is meant to be used for: living in.

Don't you want to join the war on landlords and take the houses back?

★

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★



AFRICANS ARE STANDING UP

What comes to mind when you think of Africa? Is it the people of the continent fighting to reclaim their wealth from slimy Europeans? While there may have been a time here in Chicago where that image came to mind, today most people picture poverty and pain. This is a shame because there is a great rumbling on the continent, the epicenter being in three countries located in West Africa: Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

Those countries saw a trifecta of military coups over the past three years; first in Mali in 2021, then Burkina Faso in 2022, and finally in Niger in 2023. These coups, or takings of power, were supported by mass movements of the people of those three countries. Movements made up of people who had enough of their countries being raped and pillaged by millionaires who lived far, far away. Proud people who were sick and tired of being forced to tear gold from their land and send it to France and the US, while their families and countrymen could hardly put food on their tables.

The angry shouts of these people became fused with military-political movements that kicked out sorry leaders who had sold out the people of their countries. From this fusion, leaders Assimi Goita in Mali, Ibrahim Traore in Burkina Faso, and Abdourahmane Tchiani in Niger decided to take their countries in a new direction.

Backed by the people of the countries, these three leaders have embarked on a project to restore the dignity of their people by kicking out the French military, taking back their

resources from private companies and nationalizing their gold mines, building new factories, and seeking alliances with countries like China to help them develop their nations with no strings attached.

The three countries have also agreed to work together on development and military projects in order to protect their nations and provide their people with a better life. They are calling this the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). This alliance is a renewal of a project started in the 1960s called Pan-Africanism, which envisions a united Africa that uses their own resources for the people who live there, instead of being forced by rich Europeans and Americans to hand over all their wealth.

While the people of the AES provide us with a powerful example of what it looks like to fight for our dignity, they also face deep challenges. The countries are very poor as a result of hundreds of years of colonialist and imperialist theft, which has left their industries tiny and their land stripped. They also face heavy assaults by armed groups who have historically been supported by Europeans and Americans hungry for the resources of foreign countries. But despite these threats, the people of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso are standing tall and telling their old masters: Enough!

"From Ottawa to Paris, the streets are illuminated. But in Niger, it is the darkness that has served us. When you go to our states, our soils are full of precious metals such as gold, but often there is not even the slightest road accessible to where they exploit gold. This is why we have decided to revolt and take the fate of our own countries into our own hands."

*- Ibrahim Traore,
President of Burkina Faso*

THE SAWYER SITUATION

Logan Square has undergone many changes in recent years. The area is experiencing a major economic boom, with luxury stores, restaurants, and clubs popping up, all while becoming a magnet for young people moving into the city or perhaps graduating from college. This phenomenon of financial growth is called gentrification. It generally causes the people and places which previously gave the neighborhood its character to be pushed out and replaced. But the changing landscape of the neighborhood goes beyond the businesses and stores, housing is being transformed as well.

In December, residents of 2257 N Sawyer were informed by their landlord Bill Houck that he had sold the building. The new management has identified themselves as 33 Realty. This sale was only mentioned to tenants in passing, there was no formal announcement. Some tenants received emails which roughly read: "Hello, we are 33 Realty, you can pay your rent to us through this portal". Weak communication has been a running trend with 33.

In Sawyer tenants' efforts to uncover 33's plans for the building's future, some highly disturbing news was revealed. 33 Realty plans to not offer tenants the chance to renew their leases. Instead they are forcing everyone to leave their homes, so that they can renovate the units in the building and jack up the rent. This information was passed along to the residents by means of automated texts.

Immediately, tenants in the building resolutely formed a union, connecting with one another and forming plans to

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★



consensus: "We don't want to leave!". Reader, let me tell you, the energy in this room was blazing hot! Everyone sees the situation quite clearly for what it is: families, homes, and lives being played with, thrown around so that some late 20-somethings fresh out of Business School can start building their real estate empire. It was also agreed that the renovations are totally unnecessary. The building is in beautiful condition. Most of the tenants have gone above and beyond, investing time and money and love in order to make their house a home. The apartments are the kinds of homes that are only possible when people are not uprooted and forced out of their buildings every two years, as most tenants are accustomed to.

fight back against 33's greed and complete lack of humanity. A press release was written and sent to Block Club Chicago, and several tenants have made signs with slogans such as "33 Let Us Be", "We Don't Want to Leave", and "Being Displaced by New Owners. Merry Christmas". They also orchestrated a mass google review bomb, where several people left slanderous reviews of 33 Realty online, calling to attention the displacement for profit 33 is carrying out, highlighting their shady tactics of removing trash cans from tenants alley (telling tenants to instead store their trash in their apartments), and highlighting their disrespect.

Several tenants who have resided in the building for upwards of 20 years are represented by the Belden Sawyer Tenant Association. One has lived in the building for 28 years, longer than I've even been alive. There is a family in the building who has just recently had a newborn baby.

On January 6, the first official building meeting was called, held inside the lovely home of one resident of Sawyer. Some representatives from ACTA, and one from the Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO) joined them.

Immediately, tenants arrived at a

Once it was established what tenants wanted, ACTA shared what we see as the means through which these demands can be realized: in order to bring the landlord to the negotiating table, the Belden Sawyer Tenants Association will need leverage. Fortunately they already have some. The rental agreement is not an act of charity, the landlord is getting something out of it. What this means is that the tenants have something the landlord wants: rent money. By strategically holding back their rent in what is called a "rent strike," tenants can force the landlord to come to the table. It's a sad truth that without cutting off the landlords' cash flow, they will never even consider treating tenants as equals, much less negotiating in good faith. The only way to get landlords to treat people with dignity is to make it more expensive for them not to.

It seems quite clear that 33 bought this with the hopes that this would be a quick easy flip, but the people will not go quietly. Bad google reviews were scary to these guys. In response to the forming of the union, the press release, and the bad PR being directed at them, 33 asked to arrange a meeting with representatives of the union. However, once union members agreed to meet, in a display of sliminess 33 ghosted them.

One very powerful moment of the night was when our beloved comrade highlighted the potential that this union has to set a precedent for tenant organizing across this entire beautiful city of Chicago. "This is a privileged group of people. That should not be lost in the broader scheme of things". This is a group of people who are in a unique position, one where they can afford to take some risk, and can stomach negotiations that result in reasonable rent increases. This is also just such a lay up, this is a massively winnable fight. Money and time are not on 33 Realty's side. Their lack of seriousness and hands off approach in this attempt to steal peoples homes reeks of inexperience. Not only do I believe that the people will win in this fight, but that this victory will light a fire in the people throughout this city, that others will see the power that collective action has, and feel empowered to unite with their own neighbors, their own communities and step up against the misanthropic, soft-handed, over-sized children that think they own our homes. ★

In attendance at the Belden Sawyer Tenant Association meeting were multiple tenants from the building across the street, 2254 N Sawyer. Both buildings were owned and sold by Mr. Bill Houk. Although the sales took place roughly simultaneously, 2254 was sold to a different company called Base 3. While these LL's seem to have no relation beyond the peculiar timing of both sales, it is very much worth noting that both companies seem likely to receive grant money from the ADU pilot program, a program that incentivizes building owning capitalists to add extra units into their buildings. The program seems to have been formed with the image (not intention) that it would create more affordable housing, and so the irony of using money from this program to not only not provide affordable housing (instead increasing the rate of these already relatively expensive units), but to actively displace people is striking to say the least.

As of today 33 Realty has received pre-approval for a grant through the ADU program, claiming they will add three new units to the thirteen unit building. The biggest problem with this is that 2257 N Sawyer is in fact a 16 unit building and the three promised units already exist!

Even if this is just a clerical error and they do end up adding three new units, the terms of the grant stipulate only one must be an "affordable" unit. If we tally up the score, that's 16 currently affordable units emptied out just for 1 potential affordable unit. Not a great trade if you ask me.

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★

BELDEN SAWYER TENANT ASSOCIATION HOLDS RALLY DEMANDING TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMES, VOWS TO FIGHT



ALIANZA DE INQUILINOS DE TODO CHICAGO



ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE



LOGAN SQUARE, CHICAGO – Over 100 neighbors turned out to the corner of Belden and Sawyer Avenues on Saturday to support the Belden Sawyer Tenant Association, a new tenant union which formed in the beautifully preserved, century-old multifamily building at 2257 N. Sawyer Avenue. The tenants organized the demonstration to call attention to their fight against their new landlord Andrew Millard and property management company 33 Realty.

On Christmas Eve, 33 Realty alerted tenants that they had assumed management of their home, and would not be allowing them to renew their leases. Owner Andrew Millard also announced plans to gut the structure and renovate it in order to hike rents by one hundred percent. Some members of the union who are being displaced have been in the building for over 20 years, many for over 10, most for at least 5 years.

In attendance Saturday was Cook County Commissioner Anthony Quezada, 35th Ward Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, and Senator Graciela Guzmán. Guzmán spoke in support of the tenants, saying that “we all deserve a place to call home...At the end of the day, we have the responsibility to put the magnifying glass on systems that choose to put profit over people, that choose to rip us away from [our] community.”

Members of the tenant union spoke passionately about the shock of being driven out and how the upheaval is

affecting their ability to plan their futures. They were careful to draw attention to the fact that this is a pattern with real estate companies and landlords throughout Chicago, not just in Logan Square.

Annie LaGrassa, a member of the union who has lived in the building for 15 years, said that “it feels incredible to fight back. The union is huge because when I received this notice, like all the other tenants in the buildings I had anxiety and stress...and then when my neighbor knocked on my door and said we’re getting together...the union naturally came from that.”

Several other tenants from the building spoke out about their situations:

Devon Carson, a passionate resident of the building, said that “the lack of common sense housing regulations in our city disproportionately affects our communities of color, immigrant communities, the elderly, LGBTQIA folx, and people with disabilities. As the Belden Sawyer tenant union, we are standing alongside our progressive elected officials and housing rights organizations today to demand rent control, [ending] no fault evictions, and for our state regulators to hold these real estate brokerage license holders accountable for their morally bankrupt conduct.”

Chad Sparkman, a resident on the third floor and new father, said of

Andrew Millard, “this is a man who complains to reporters that he is just a little landlord; he is just starting out, and he just needs to double everyone’s rent so he can afford to pay for the water and mortgage on the building, while at the same time he brags to his investors that he intends to acquire 650 more units in 2024 and 2025.” He continued, “this apartment has given our family a lot. When we moved in in 2021 we didn’t know when we would have a child but we knew that we had room to expand an extra bedroom and a nice area in the living room which would become his play area...If Andrew Millard had bought this building two years ago, it’s easy to imagine we would have waited to have a kid, out of fear that we couldn’t afford to care for him and to pay our landlord at the same time.”

Speaking about the tenant union, resident Tory deMartelly said, “I can’t emphasize enough how important it has been to build this network. Anyone who has even briefly considered it, start knocking on your neighbors’ doors. If nothing else it has been an incredible place to put our ideas together and feel less disempowered.”

Resident David Amato closed the event with a rousing promise of solidarity: “We stand shoulder to shoulder with all tenants fighting for their rights and dignity. We stand united against a common threat: corporate greed and those who treat people’s basic needs as nothing more than financial instruments.” ★

TENANTS TALK KID'S PAGE

Tenants all over Austin and Garfield are having to heat their apartments with their ovens. Like penguins huddling together for warmth, we need to unite to demand landlords
FIX OUR HEAT!



Do you have heating problems in your apartment? Do any of your neighbors? Ask around and draw a penguin for each neighbor without proper heat. Send us a picture of your finished comic at 773-770-5650 allchicagotenantalliance@proton.me

This year we celebrated MLK day on January 20th. Did you know that on January 26th 1966, Dr. King and his wife Coretta moved to the West Side of Chicago to join the Chicago Freedom Movement. They settled into an apartment on the corner of Hamlin and 16th. Dr. King wanted to shift his focus to the struggle of Black people who had fled the Jim Crow South in search of better opportunities and safety during the Great Migration.

Have you learned anything about the Great Migration in school?



What people found in the North was overcrowded neighborhoods, slumlords, and the same racism. Dr. King and the Chicago Freedom Movement helped organize tenant unions and rent strikes. Dr. King, Coretta, and others in the Chicago Freedom Movement even got to work fixing up buildings.

Have you ever fixed something for someone? What's something you wish you had the ability to fix? What do you think you would need to make the repair?