

TENANTS TALK

NEWSPAPER OF THE ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE

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

ALIANZA DE INQUILINOS DE TODO CHICAGO



ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE

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"ACTA" MEANS REVOLUTION

The All-Chicago Tenant Alliance's Position on Brandon Johnson's "Protecting Renters Ordinance"

This article is about Brandon Johnson's new Protecting Renters Ordinance, a piece of legislation being touted as a huge leap forward for tenants. We address both aspects of the ordinance, its content and its relationship to organizing, from our perspective in the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance.

Let us make our positions clear.

The All-Chicago Tenant Alliance and our newspaper, Tenants Talk, do not agree with the capitalist system, so naturally we don't agree with the housing system as it currently stands. All debates about housing in capitalism come down to the question of rent. The tenants want the rent to go down, but the landlords say it won't go down as long as building and managing apartments is expensive. Because they own the buildings legally, any management costs that landlords have are passed on to the tenants as rent and fees. The landlords are absolutely correct about all of this.

With the left-wing democrats and

progressives, we agree that this state of affairs needs to change, but the progressive alternative to this state of affairs always ends in government intervention, not in social revolution. The progressives want the government to legally disable the landlords' ability to pass these costs on to us, to legally restrict landlords' ability to raise the rent, to legally require a percentage of units to remain affordable, to raise their taxes, etc.

The progressive solution stops short of calling for the end of this government—not surprising given that progressives do not have a coherent theory of the capitalist system. This confusion or total absence of theory results in two relevant characteristics that contradict one another:

1. *Progressives do not act according to an understanding of the foundations of society nor how it develops.* The consequence of this is that they can not have a scientific attitude toward social change.
2. *Progressives believe that the government is a tool for changing*

the conditions of society. Despite being unable to say how society works, they inevitably believe that the government can be used for change.

The consequence of this is that policy is viewed as the primary instrument of social change and, insofar as progressives can be called organizers, progressives subordinate all efforts to influencing policy in general. This belief takes the form of electoral *dogmatism*. That is, an **unfounded belief** in their ideas about policy and an avoidant attitude toward the evidence that policy continually fails to have its intended effect and, when it does, policy is consistently reversed in unforeseen (unforeseen to them, that is) ways. They can't explain this, nor do they care to explain this because, for the most part, progressive organizing for policy change is a career or a volunteering hobby.

As opposed to this, ACTA **does** have a theory of the total system. We **do** act according to an understanding of the foundations of society, which we know to be the productive (economic) activity of mankind at any given time. We know this

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foundation has to be studied scientifically in an attempt to comprehend how and why things continue or do not continue to occur.

For instance, the relation between the landlord and tenant pertains to the basic productive and reproductive activity of society. *These foundational relations have to be revolutionized.* Our theory begins from these premises and that is why our organizing is focused squarely on the organization of tenants against landlords. We **literally** want to seize housing out of the hands of the landlord minority who own it, hold it in our own hands and defend it with our own hands. *we are the people who live in the houses*

We **do not** believe that the government can be used to fundamentally change society. We believe it is an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class for their political dictatorship. Insofar as government policy does affect the direction of society, the changes are never foundational change and therefore policy acts as a pressure valve to relieve the antagonism between the classes. When it comes to organizing, ACTA subordinates policy issues entirely to the question of foundational, social revolution and places these within our theory of the total system.

The revolutionary organization of tenants implies that the usefulness of owning apartment buildings is going to go down for landlords. That in general, is our objective. The only course that this can take over the long-run is for the smaller landlords to lose their ability to own apartments because they have less ability than big landlords to absorb the rising costs of the revolutionary tenant movement. The inevitable result of this will be for apartment buildings to concentrate in the hands of **progressively fewer, but progressively**

bigger, highly financialized and corporate landlords. This will accelerate the process of monopolization, a process already underway.

The housing monopoly is precisely the basis for the democratic socialization of housing that is needed. Currently, the insane mixture of mom and pop, midsize and large "housing providers" has resulted in an utterly irrational and anarchic mess of a housing system. ACTA, the organization at the head of the revolutionary tenant movement, will intensify the struggle against landlords until only the giant landlords remain. These landlords will convert the operation and construction of housing into one centralized system. It is this system that a mass tenant movement can take possession of and tune up for the greatest social good rather than the greatest rate of profit.

These conditions assume that our movement, the revolutionary tenant movement, grows in proportion in opposition to the entire landlord class. In so many words, while large capitalists monopolize the supply, the revolutionary tenant movement will monopolize the demand. This showdown will inevitably call the government into action and a political crisis will be on hand.

Recently Mayor Brandon Johnson introduced the Protecting Renters Ordinance (PRO), an ordinance that exemplifies the attitude of the progressives: change happens from the top down, starting in the government and moving to the people. Mayor Johnson's PRO has five main pillars. We'll review them all in three aspects, what it proposes to do, the

likelihood of it passing, and what the effects would be.

- RLTO modernization
- Rental registry
- Bureau of Rental Housing Services (RHS)
- Eviction Counsel Program
- Just cause for eviction and relocation assistance

RLTO MODERNIZATION

The centerpiece of modernization is a ban on "junk" fees associated with applying for, moving in and moving out of apartments. But as it is currently written, it demands that landlords provide proof that anything that they charge tenants for must have a documented "real cost."

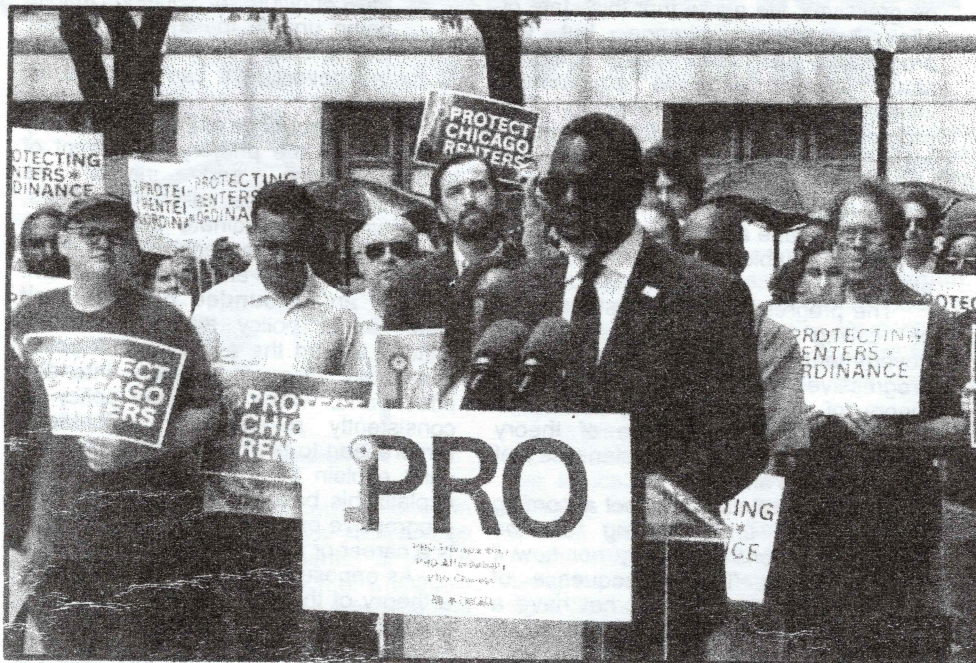
We expect council members who are in the pocket of landlords to take a hard line against these provisions and anticipate that they will be negotiated out of the final language. One of the ordinance's other pillars, the Bureau of Rental Housing Services (see below), would likely be the government body that will monitor and regulate these charges. But we are curious how this bureau is going to argue that the landlords cannot bill a tenant \$50 for a walk through of the apartment on the basis of it costing the landlord his time. But, let's assume the bureau can put a leash on landlords in this way, they cannot put a leash on the landlord's power to recuperate what the anticipated losses will be by simply raising the rent.

However, rent increases can be fought by a tenant union. If PRO can suppress move-in and move-out fees, and if this forces the landlord to seek that lost profit as a monthly rent increase, the tenant with a tenant union is in a better position. **We support this measure** because it leaves the tenant better off and leads them to their true weapon: their own organizations that use the threat of the rent strike.

RENTAL REGISTRY

The creation of a rental registry has so far been opposed purely because of the cost. As written, some of the expenses of maintaining the registry for the city are passed on to the landlords in the form of a registration fee. Taken at face value, this policy will increase the cost of renting for landlords. It is unlikely to pass, but if it does, the cost will get passed on to the tenant through rent increases.

The benefit of this provision, however, is in how it tears the mask off the faces of the ones who raise the rent. It provides the tenant's hostility with a concrete object and this is good. If the tenant is in ACTA, it becomes all the more easier to fight the unmasked villain. It has been claimed that the language of the ordinance states that anyone with a 20% ownership stake in an apartment building would have to be



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identified in the registry. In other words, the millionaires who live in Miami but oppress the tenants in Garfield Park will be identified. There are little negative side effects to this provision, **we hope it becomes law.**

BUREAU OF RENTAL HOUSING SERVICES (RHS)

The mayor's office describes the bureau like this:

- *Tenant Support Services: Establishes a Hotline and Resource Center, connects tenants with emergency rental & relocation assistance, and provides case review and referral to free Eviction Counseling and legal aid.*
- *Outreach and Education: Coordinates tenant and landlord rights education campaigns.*
- *Enforcement, Policy and Advocacy: Provides free proactive compliance guidance for landlords, administers the first Citywide Rental Registry, and enforces RLTO provisions.*

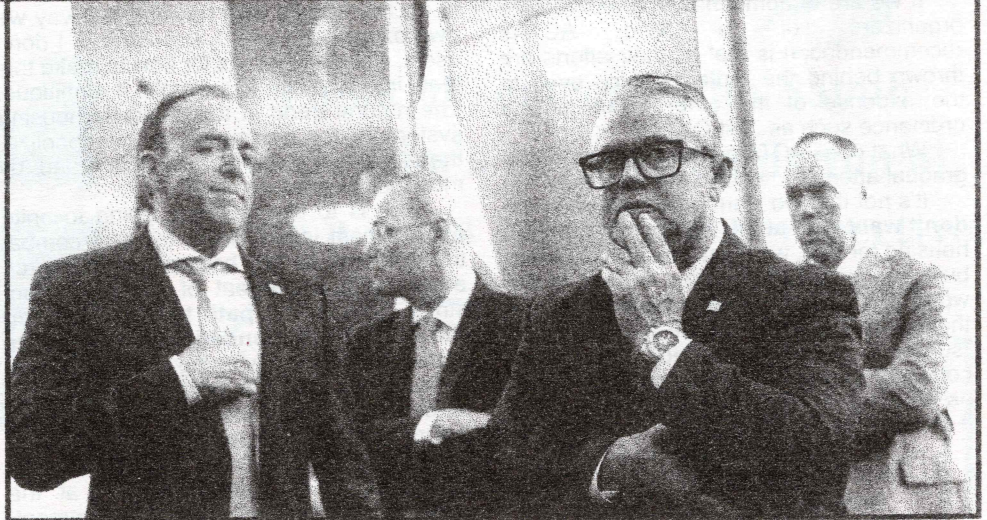
This pillar of the ordinance is most dangerous. It is often said, correctly, that the RLTO is effectively useless for tenants because no one in the city forces landlords to comply with the law. The bureau, on the other hand, aims to replace the self-organization of tenants with an organization of city bureaucrats. Should this pass, this is where the progressive, professional activists will likely be put in high paying positions.

Education about tenant rights can and should be conducted by organizers, in the tenants' own independent organizations in their neighborhoods and apartment buildings. ACTA can and does do this already. Needless to say, we should not organize to teach the landlords and offer them "guidance" about how to do their job. Administration of the Rental registry can be assumed by another state body with little difficulty. **Because this threatens to replace tenant self organization with outside agencies, we do not support it.**

EVICITION COUNSEL PROGRAM

Using the Early Resolution Program in eviction court has the potential to make evictions more expensive in a way that a tenant organization cannot directly do itself. Eviction counsel therefore does not mislead tenants by distracting them from their own self organization but rather compliments it. However, it does require supplementary education about how to leverage eviction court to our advantage, and to promote the idea that eviction court is not difficult to navigate without a lawyer. Both of these things ACTA does and will continue to do.

We support this measure.



JUST CAUSE AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

In Chicago, landlords can:

- Evict tenants for any reason
- Refuse to renew a tenant's lease for any reason
- Raise the rent between leases any amount, for any reason

Because evicting tenants using the legal process costs landlords a lot of money and evicting tenants by issuing non-renewals and rent increases costs them no money, it follows that landlords remove tenants using non-renewals or rent increases vastly more often than they remove tenants using legal evictions. Accordingly, even when a landlord might desire to evict a tenant in the middle of their contract, they tend to wait until the end of their contract. Contrary to appearances, lease non-renewals and rent increases are the true form of eviction. The legal eviction process is a secondary, incidental matter.

Therefore any restrictions on the legally permitted reasons for evicting tenants is of little importance, as long as landlords can issue non-renewals and or raise the rent indiscriminately. The ordinance addresses this in a way, because Just Cause aims to limit the reasons for which a landlord can deny lease renewal, as well as legally requiring the landlord to pay relocation assistance in the case that the tenant does not accept a rental increase, but the details are cloudy about the rules. Historically, the Just Cause coalition has always conceded that the law would still let landlords evict or non-renew for many reasons, just not for no reason. These reasons are: non-payment of rent, breaking lease conditions, when the landlord wants a family member to live in the unit instead of the tenant, if the landlord wants to convert it into a condo, when the landlord says the unit needs "significant repair," demolition, and "other reason." (!) So, basically, for all the reasons that landlords evict tenants already.

In any case, so long as Just Cause extends to rent increases, the landlords' lawyers will argue that this is rent control and it will not survive challenges in court even if it does pass. The ban on rent control is state law. Because it is so precarious, the landlord's aldermen would be wise to offer it as a concession to the progressives in order to get the rental registry removed from the final language of the ordinance.

We do not support this measure.

In summary, PRO stands on one strong pillar, two pillars of decent construction, and two pillars that are no good. The landlord class in general, and the small landlords in particular, are already fighting it aggressively. This does not mean that they will nuke the entire package, but they will be able to modify it dramatically. We predict that some RLTO amendments will pass and we expect the eviction counsel program to pass if the progressives can show the conservatives how it will be paid for. Relocation assistance and the rental registry will definitely be eliminated.

Like small-scale capitalists in other industries, Chicago's small landlords have their own political organization. It is called the Neighborhood Building Owners Alliance (NBOA). This organization exists to pay off politicians using the collective funds of its members who are the mom & pop, small and medium sized landlords. At the end of June, Brandon Johnson officially unveiled the Protecting Renters Ordinance after a promotional buildup in the weeks prior. Coincidentally, after having made no donations to aldermen since November of 2025, in June alone, NBOA slid \$1,000 into the pockets of Anthony Beale (9th), Felix Cardona Jr. (31st), Silvana Tabares (23rd), Stephanie Coleman (16th) and Brendan Reilly (42nd). Only in the capitalist system is this kind of activity not considered bribery, it is actually accepted as the normal way of running the government.

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If we are to admit that progressives are organizers of a kind, ACTA's recommendation is that all their efforts be thrown behind the rental registry, even to the expense of the other pillars of the ordinance such as Just Cause.

What does ACTA propose instead of the gradual attempt to reform the system?

It's not that we want affordable rent, **we don't want rent at all.** It's not that we want housing for free, we want a humble dwelling built and provided to every worker in the world according to a rational plan made by the workers themselves. It should not be "supplied" and "demanded," these are concepts that belong to capitalism. Insofar as housing should "cost" anything to build, it should cost:

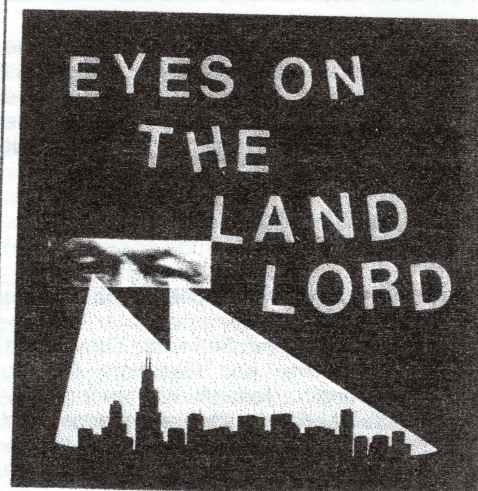
1. What is equal to the builder's living expenses.
2. What is equal to the construction materials.
3. What is equal to the wear and tear on the tools by the construction process.
4. A share of a fund for communal goods; schools, hospitals, disaster insurance.

There should be no additional considerations for those "costs" like profits, mortgage and interest payments. Insofar as anyone should "own" houses, every worker

in society should own housing the way we own oxygen. If I use it, it is mine. If I don't use it, it is not mine. As for how to make this ideal into a reality, it is simple, if ambitious. The natural trend in the capitalist housing system is for the supply to monopolize, therefore we must counter this trend by monopolizing the demand.

That is to say, ACTA is going to unite every tenant into a single force to combat the landlords as they become a single force armed with the threat of the mass rent strike. **This is the path toward lowering the rent at the foundational level: brute economic force.** By doing this, housing in general will lose its utility for landlords, landlords in general will lose their reason for being, tenants everywhere will lose their chains. Finally, the housing question will be asked at the political level, not at the meagre level of our sham government, where policy is bought and sold.

Our vision is not only a long term vision, off in the distant future. It is being realized today with great success. There are rent strikes, right now. There are tenant unions marching their demands to improve their apartments to the doorstep of their landlord, right now. It's all happening, right now. The landlords have their organizations, the progressives have theirs. If you are a tenant, it's time to join **your** organization: ACTA. We have a real theory and the organization to put it into practice. ★



INTRODUCING THE CENTRAL PARK WARRIOR TENANTS!

The tenants of a building at Jackson & Central Park in East Garfield Park have come together to join the fight against Villa Capital, making them the third tenant union under VCP. They've delivered a demand letter to slumlord John Pagone and his goon Byron Dotson, and are meeting weekly to discuss next steps and escalation tactics. At an early meeting a tenant said, "We are survivors of VCP." "You're not just survivors, you're fighting back!" an ACTA member responded. "Then we're the Warriors." And so the Central Park Warrior Tenants was born. Keep your eyes on the fight, these brave warriors aren't backing down! ★

THE EAST GARFIELD PARK TENANT LEAGUE

The Lions of Parkside Terrace Alliance (PTA) and the Lionesses of EGPTL have met to configure the first joint meeting. The first Pride Meeting! At this meeting one of the Lions from PTA brought history and experience that brought vigor to the pride. We look forward to sending the Demand Letter in August to the dastardly Villa Capital - who are already trembling at our first roar. As we heard, the cowardly Byron Dotson is telling the good people of the neighboring building under Villa Capital Management, the Central Park Warrior Tenants, not to take heed of the Lionesses. When the lion sinks their teeth, they only let go to chew. ★

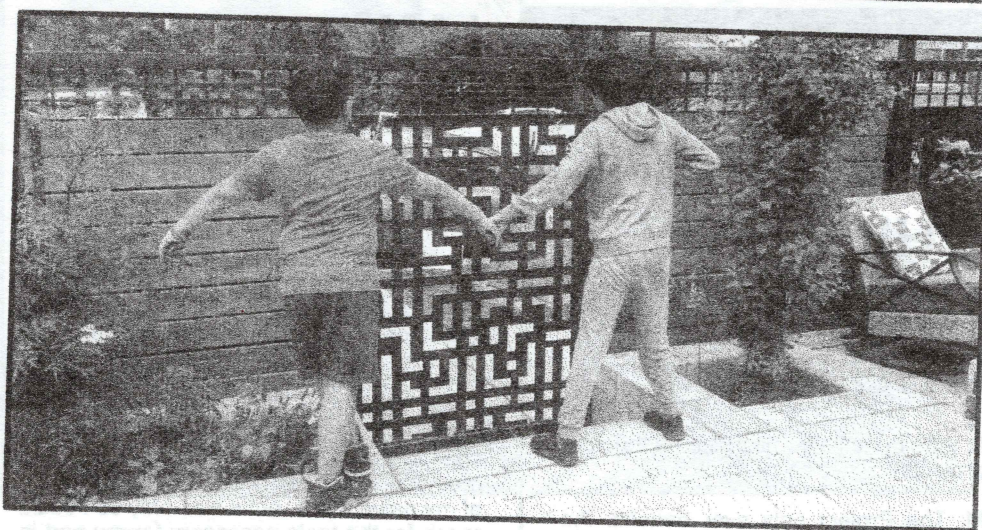


WHY YOUTH SHOULD JOIN ACTA

Hassan: The time has come for young people across Chicago to join the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance! ACTA already has a division that focuses specifically on working with youth - the Young Questioners. Youth are tenants too, and they have just as much of an interest in fighting for people's control over housing as the older generation does. Young people work in the house and at jobs to support their families' ability to have a stable place to live. Some young people are directly involved in ongoing union struggles against landlords, giving speeches, making banners, and creating protest art. Youth are currently doing this to support Fuerzas Activas de la Damen's strike against the landlord Imran Khan. Others are involved in the broader struggle under the banner of ACTA, studying revolutionary theory and making content for Tenants Talk.

Derick: Let me introduce myself. I am a young member of ACTA named Derick, and I've been working with ACTA for a year now. I was in the tenant union Fuerzas Inquilinos Broadway and Cuyler (FIBC), which worked closely with ACTA. Within this time frame, not only have I received the opportunity to meet a group of exceptional people I probably would never have crossed paths with, but I have also rekindled a forgotten interest in writing. I have produced content for ACTA and participated in rallies and protests. There have been times when I've been uncertain about my place in the organization, but this doesn't hinder my desire to learn and develop further within it. I believe if it were not for FIBC, I would not be here working with them today. This article will make our case as to why youth should join ACTA to create social and political change.

Derick: The process of introduction to the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance will not be the same for everyone. For me, I would say it came relatively organically. As someone who was impacted by a landlord who aimed to evict not only my family but numerous other tenants who've lived there for decades, for the mere wish to line his pocket with more money. I will admit, when I first heard of ACTA, I was very wary of trusting these people and their claims of "building tenant unions to fight against landlord dominance." I had little to no interest in partaking in this. But in due time, curiosity got the better of me, and I listened to their thought process and their strategies, and I wanted to see more of what ACTA could do. From the rallies, strikes, and



protests, these were all learning opportunities for me.

I know I've had my fair share of skepticism of ACTA when I first heard about them. Trusting a group of organizers with your landlord problems is a big decision. There's the time commitment of union struggle, and financial and legal risks that come along with deciding to strike. When BSTA, another tenant union who was facing the same landlord at the time, left flyers on our doors, encouraging us to reach out to ACTA. I wasn't convinced in the slightest. An organization claiming to help tenants form unions to fight landlords was unheard of, and quite frankly, incredibly ambitious. I tried to do my own research that same day on ACTA and found nothing on past work or achievements. This lack of credibility made trusting them, in my eyes, difficult. But trust is a risk that must be taken.

It wasn't until they hosted a rally outside my home that I decided to hear them out. When I saw the crowd of people outside, gathered together for the same cause, I was in awe. Shortly after this event came my first protest, not only with ACTA but in general. This day marked my interest in working with ACTA. Seeing them come to the aid of my neighbors time and again, and the willingness to teach them through weekly meetings that I personally sat through a couple of times. This influence by them caused neighbors to come together and form bonds with one another; this unity is truly inspiring. I know that some might be scared or put off by the idea of fighting landlords and their exploitation of tenants, but ACTA and YQ will be there to help every step of the way.

Hassan: I am an organizer in YQ, which is ACTA's youth division. The Young Questioners' goal is to develop young tenants' revolutionary consciousness and bring them into ACTA. We do this by organizing educational activities with youth,

such as reading groups, where we discuss local and international events. But YQ also considers activities such as strikes, rallies, and protests to be educational as well. Some people view rallies only as an activity where people show up to raise their voices about an ongoing injustice to create pressure for change. But YQ sees more than that. Tenants, including young tenants, are the ones that produce ACTA rallies: they make the banners, signage, speeches, and puppets. The audience for these rallies is not only landlords and the corporate media. These rallies are for all tenants in Chicago, who learn from the example set by leading tenants and youth. In this way, tenants who are not in ACTA yet come a step closer to forming unions and joining the wider struggle.

Derick: Before our fight came to an end, I was reached out to by a member of ACTA under the division of YQ. They extended an invitation to work on an activity page for ACTA's newspaper: Tenants Talk. I was a bit hesitant, but I agreed nonetheless. This session was insightful into how work gets done within ACTA. The organization's meetings are punctual and well put together, which is considerate of tenants' time and helps us accomplish our goals. It was not long after that I started doing weekly one-on-one sessions based on the notion of building political consciousness.

Hassan: Tenants Talk, the paper you are reading right now, is fully written and produced by tenants. ACTA works to make this newspaper educational for tenants to read. But it is just as educational to write for it! This article was written collaboratively: by a YQ member, and a young member of ACTA. Writing together helped us reflect on our activity in the organization over time. If you want to join ACTA or give us feedback, please call our phone number, which is on the front cover! We hope that this article has inspired you to fight for our cause.★

TENANT GRAPEVINE

WHAT DO THE PEOPLE HAVE TO SAY?

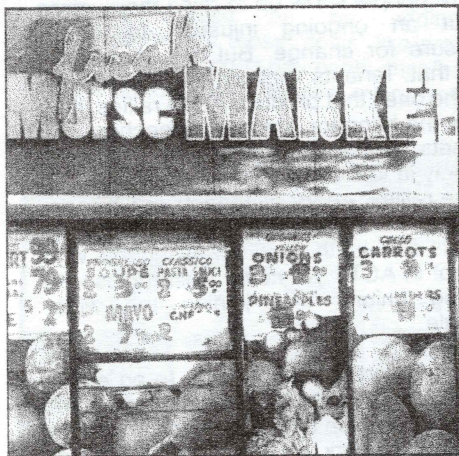
CHICAGO'S HOOKAH CBD

L: Who benefits from large infrastructure projects?

M: The Project only ever benefits the owners.

L: How do we solve that?

M: Have residents actually have a say in the project.



MORSE MARKET

L: "Do you think that owning your home is the only way to have control of it?"

F: "I think so yes"

L: "What does ownership mean for you?"

F: "Financial security and social mobility."

L: "What kind of financial security?"

F: "The ability to sell it someday and no longer have to rent"

I AM A REVOLUTIONARY

I am a revolutionary because I am a member of a revolutionary organization. Before that, I was a kid who believed in the capacity of and the necessity for both society and individual people to change for the better. Some people think that the older you get, the more fixed your worldview becomes, that naive ideas about changing the world are left behind. But this doesn't have to be the case. I have not given up those ideas, in fact they are no longer just ideas. ACTA has transformed my desire for change into principles, strategy, and methods for criticism. I have set aside some of my naive ideas, but it was only so I could reach for the tools necessary for my part in the revolutionary struggle.

My mom came from a farming town. Everything was dusty, even the ideas. Especially when it came to how a woman should be. She didn't want to be condemned to a life of serving men. She went and found work in a nearby city, met my dad, and they moved to Portland, OR, where I was born.

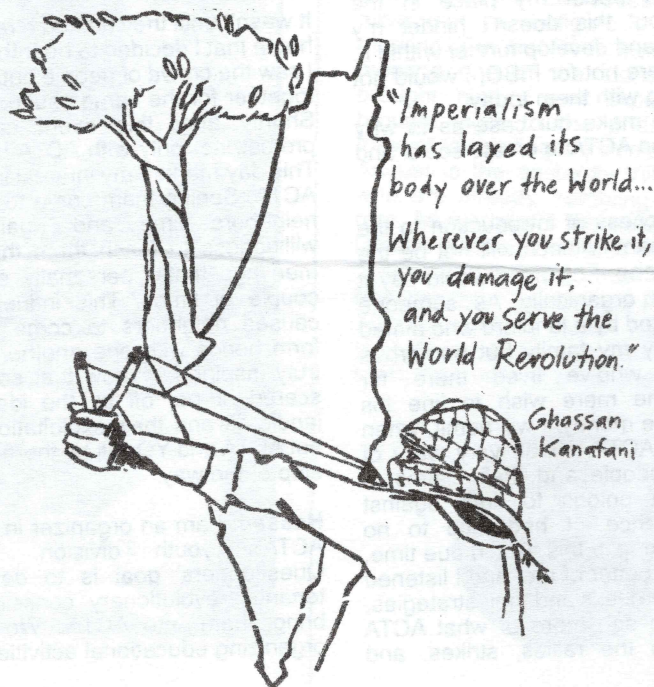
Early on, my mom taught me to think of other people. One time at the grocery store, I got distracted by the bright velvety flowers. I couldn't take my eyes off them. "They're so beautiful," I told my mom. She pushed the cart down the aisle, away from the flowers, "I bet the people who grew them don't think so." She could tell I was confused, "The flowers at the grocery store aren't like the ones people grow in their garden. The people who grow these plant them in long

rows and work all day in the hot sun. A big old bouquet at the grocery store only costs \$5 because the person who grew the flowers got paid like dirt." I hadn't really ever thought about how things we bought at the grocery store made their way there. Later at home, I looked at my doll and wondered how many hands she'd passed through before she made her way to mine.

I spent middle school and high school in a cloud of frustration. The middle school I went to was between a rich white neighborhood that I lived in, and a working class neighborhood that had Black, Mexican, and Vietnamese families. At school, my classmates would say, "These teachers are racist!" I looked around and noticed that the white kids got a second chance, the benefit of the doubt, a prescription for adderall. The kids who weren't white got hit with detention, locker searches, in-school suspensions. The teachers were responsible for that! And it was those same teachers who spoke as if racism was a thing of the past...

I started really hating all the teachers. They looked to me like a bunch of hypocrites and cowards. I made up my mind! I wasn't going to learn anything they wanted to teach me. I didn't consider if that was a good idea or even possible.

As I started high school, Trump was elected. I would walk home from school with my friends past flimsy yard signs protesting Trump. One strong gust of wind and their attempt at solidarity would collapse. I knew there was real struggle going on elsewhere in the world, but it felt so distant. I was becoming more aware that the comfort my family lived in wasn't some coincidence or even the result of my parents' hard work, but rather a product of a whole international



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system of exploitation and oppression called capitalism. I was angry and frustrated, but I still didn't know what to do.

At the end of my senior year, Derek Chauvin murdered George Floyd and the whole world was a witness to his final words. I cried for a long time in my bedroom, then hugged my mom and went to join my city in the streets. We marched through the Albina neighborhood. In the 1970s the city seized the land and bulldozed Black families' homes to expand the hospital. Decades later, I looked around at empty lots. We made our way to the "Justice" Center where the cops were waiting for us. I felt relief at being around other people driven to action, but I wondered what would come from this. Above the clouds of tear gas, a man on the megaphone said what I was thinking, "When's it gonna change?"

During these years, I had lived with a difficult shame. It was becoming hard to ignore. I was consumed by this unshakable feeling that I was supposed to be a boy. Now that I knew the word for what I was—transgender—it made it even scarier. I withdrew from the world. I wanted to be away from everyone who knew me, so I ran away to art school in Chicago. But, isolation was just as painful there. I quickly realized that if I wanted to have meaningful relationships, I would have to change. I started taking hormones and figuring out what it means to be a man.

As I became present in the world again, I took notice of my environment. Art school felt like escapism. Here, all the world's problems were just material for making art, not something to try seriously to solve.

Then in 2023, my last year of college, Palestinian resistance fighters launched the Al-Aqsa Flood operation against the Zionist occupation. I had very little understanding of the history of Palestinian resistance to Zionism. What I knew was that any group of people resisting genocide were the bravest people in the world and that they must be leading the charge of freedom from oppression. Nothing was more important than that. But around me, classes continued as normal. In November, on my way to school I would read about the latest Zionist terror. On the train, I read about the siege on Al-Shifa Hospital, the murder of the medical staff, the Zionist's destruction of medical supplies, and the death of premature babies. I thought about the pain of being unable to protect your family. In class, everyone was talking about their end of semester projects. That familiar anger swelled inside me.

The only place on campus I felt ok was at my library job. A coworker, now a close friend, had been a student organizer at their previous university. They put up posters for a meeting around the school. We began to organize with other students to force the university to stop accepting blood money, profits from the weapons manufacturing industry that have made the genocide

possible. But it was hard for us to focus our eyes and our hands into a singular force. People had different ideas about what our objectives should be and how we should get there.

From early on, we worked with an organization of anti-imperialists. They had a campaign targeting the Art Institute's relationship to the Crowns, an elite Chicago family who make their money from their stake in General Dynamics. I figured if I joined I would better understand what it was that we were up against. I was out on street corners multiple nights a week talking about Palestine to anyone who would stop. I was so grateful to feel like I was really struggling against this system that makes people disposable, that it was hard to notice if what we were doing was working.

During this time, someone in the organization who I really admired introduced me to ACTA. She told me that some ACTA members were running a course on Marx and that I should take it. I didn't really know much about Marx, but a lot of the new people I was around thought he was important. I decided it was time to learn something. It was unlike any class I had ever taken. In school, teachers were

resigned to the way things are. These teachers were committed to class struggle and revolutionary change!

In October, I will turn 25 and I will have been a member of ACTA for two years. Within the past two years I've devoted a lot of time to a group called the Young Questioners. We focus on developing education that advances the class consciousness of working class youth and helps them to find their place in the revolutionary tenant movement. What I have had to learn, and am still learning, is that a revolutionary is someone not only dedicated to class struggle and all the endless work and joy that comes with it, but someone dedicated to the transformation of their own and other's consciousness. A revolutionary is a special kind of teacher and a special kind of student. They work with their comrades to really understand their present circumstances, so they know what to change and how to change it. I am still trying my hardest to become the kind of revolutionary that we need. I know that I can. You can, too. Come pick up your corner of the red banner. Let's continue the struggle, comrade. ★



WHAT IS THE ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE?

The All-Chicago Tenant Alliance (ACTA) is a socialist organization of Chicago tenants. The time is right for workers and tenants across Chicago to stand together and fight for control over our housing and our lives.

In the neighborhoods, control means:

- **Housing Control** – Housing out of the hands of landlords and into the hands of the workers
- **No Poverty Profiteering** – No more politicians or capitalists getting rich off of people's exploitation
- **Neighborhood Self-Determination** – The people determine the future of our own neighborhoods—not corporations, out-of-state investors, or greedy slumlords

To win this, we have built a dedicated, militant group of organizers prepared to bring the fight to your landlord.

How does this work? We want to build power for tenants so we cannot do it without you. We'll come to your building and help put together a Tenant Union, an organization that can demand more from the landlord and back it up. Over the last two years this strategy has been proven. ACTA unions have carried out protests and rent strikes in response to arrogant slumlords. At the end of these struggles, tenants come out ahead—but only because they take power into their own hands.

As landlords and capitalists intensify their exploitation in our city and around the world, working people will be the first to suffer. Be a part of the movement that meets these challenges head on: contact ACTA today. ★

CONTACT ACTA TODAY

FILL OUT OUR
'ORGANIZE
WITH ACTA'
FORM →



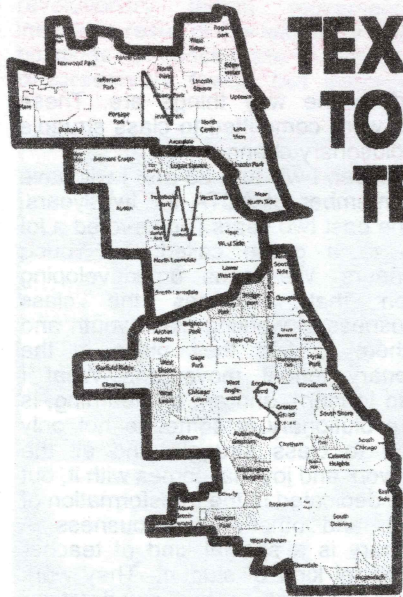
ACTA NEEDS FUNDING TO FIGHT THE WAR AGAINST SLUMLORDS!



Want to support ACTA and Tenants Talk, but don't have time? **You can contribute money instead.**

\$10 a month or a one time donation helps pay for operating expenses and Tenants Talk printing costs.

FUND
THE
FIGHT



TEXT (773) 770-5650 TO JOIN YOUR LOCAL TENANT MEETING

But even these three areas of Chicago are **big**. A tenant who lives in Uptown and one who lives in Rogers Park both fall into the Northside Chapter, but they are hardly neighbors and cannot easily get together. For this reason, an even more local kind of organization is necessary: the **section**. Sections are based on neighborhoods or even on a few blocks or major intersections; wherever a group of neighbors want to get together and take control of their housing together.

As the most local form of organization in ACTA, section meetings are where tenants get educated and collectively solve their housing issues with the help of ACTA's militant organizers. Sections are where tenant unions in buildings can be born and bring the rest of the neighborhood into their fight. Sections will become the center of the tenant power movement in the neighborhood and, through ACTA, it will be connected to the whole chapter which in turn will be connected with the whole city.

ACTA's goal is to fill up our chapters with sections for every neighborhood where tenants are, so that everyone dealing with landlords has an organization that they can easily join and fight back in. But we need your help...

A section has a few basic requirements so that just about anyone can start one.

The first thing you need to do is find one other tenant in your area who is committed to helping you organize. You can't do it alone. This can be a roommate, a neighbor in your apartment building, a friend or coworker who lives down the street—whatever! As long as they live in the same neighborhood as you, you can team up. Both of you have to agree that you will host section meetings at least once, but ideally twice, a month.

The next thing to do is join ACTA as a general member. You can do this in person at one of our meetings, on our website www.chicagotenants.com or by phone at 773-770-5650. General Members have to pay at least \$1 per month in dues, that's it.

The last thing is to contact ACTA and tell us that you want to start a section, this can be done in the same way that you join; at meetings, online or by phone. At this point, an ACTA organizer will begin to work with you to build and grow your section into a fighting arm of the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance! ★

In addition to building tenant unions, in order to function smoothly over such a large area, there are detachments of ACTA organizers who focus on each of Chicago's three sides: the northside, the westside and the southside. These are the three chapters of ACTA. Depending on which part of the city a person lives in, they will come to know ACTA through one of these three **chapters**.

Samih al-Qasim

Enemy of the Sun



I may – if you wish – lose my livelihood
I may sell my shirt and bed.
I may work as a stone cutter,
A street sweeper, a porter.
I may clean your stores
Or rummage your garbage for food.
I may lie down hungry,
O enemy of the sun,
But
I shall not compromise
And to the last pulse in my veins
I shall resist.

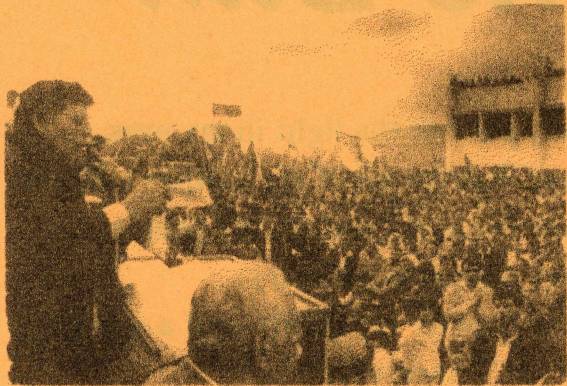
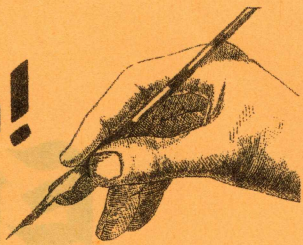
You may take the last strip of my land,
Feed my youth to prison cells.
You may plunder my heritage.
You may burn my books, my poems
Or feed my flesh to the dogs.
You may spread a web of terror
On the roofs of my village,
O enemy of the sun,
But
I shall not compromise
And to the last pulse in my veins
I shall resist.

You may put out the light in my eyes.
You may deprive me of my mother's kisses.
You may curse my father, my people.
You may distort my history,
You may deprive my children of a smile
And of life's necessities.
You may fool my friends with a borrowed face.
You may build walls of hatred around me.
You may glue my eyes to humiliations,
O enemy of the sun,
But

I shall not compromise
And to the last pulse in my veins
I shall resist.
O enemy of the sun
The decorations are raised at the port.
The ejaculations fill the air,
A glow in the hearts,
And in the horizon
A sail is seen
Challenging the wind
And the depths.
It is Ulysses
Returning home
From the sea of loss

It is the return of the sun,
Of my exiled ones
And for her sake, and his
I swear
I shall not compromise
And to the last pulse in my veins
I shall resist,
Resist—and resist.

Write your own poem!



Think of someone who Samih al-Quasim's poem reminds you of. Write a poem from their perspective...

Samih al-Qasim was a Palestinian poet, writer, and journalist. He would recite his poems to large crowds of people in occupied Palestine and was jailed several times by the zionist state due to his political activity.

His poem *Enemy of the Sun* was found in the cell of the George Jackson, a revolutionary born on the West side of Chicago, after he was murdered by prison guards in 1971. The poem, written in Jackson's handwriting, was found among dozens of other revolutionary books. It was published by the Black Panther Party under his name. George Jackson's association with the poem has come to symbolize solidarity and shared struggle.



I may

I shall not

And to the last pulse in my veins

I shall

I shall not

And to the last pulse in my veins

I shall