

An Indian village on Manhattan Island. From an old print in Valentine's Manual for 1858.

1 — 1700

Land of the Lenape

The Lenape lived in what we now know as New York City. At the time of the Dutch colonization, it's estimated that 5000 people lived on this land in about 80 communities. Broadway was built on top of their paths. Raritan, Hackensack, Maspeth, Manhattan, Jamaica and Canarsie are based off of Native American words.

An Indian village on Manhattan Island. From an old print in Valentine's Manual for 1858.

For Sale,

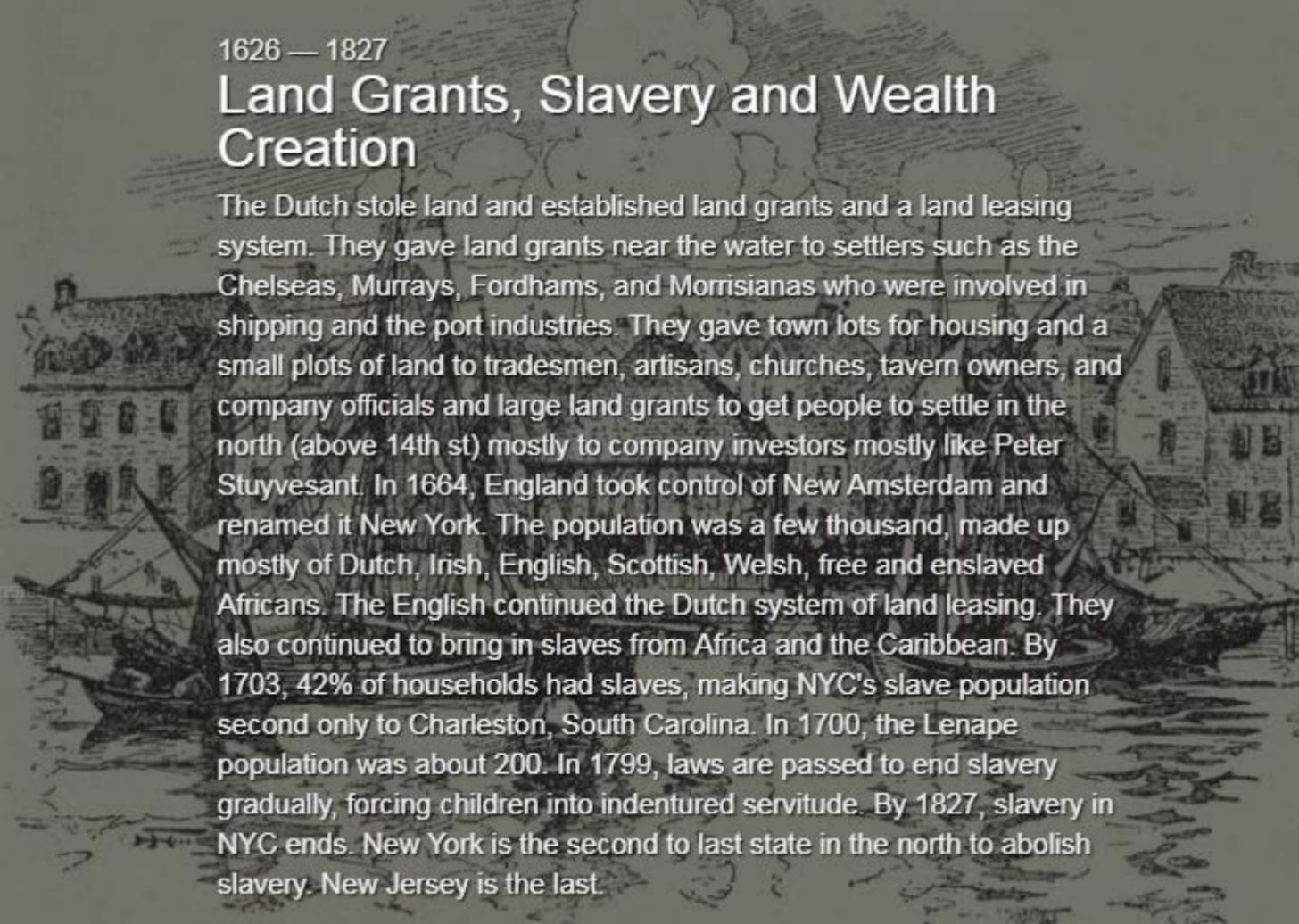
A LIKELY, HEALTHY, YOUNG
NEGRO WENCH,

BETWEEN fifteen and sixteen Years old :
She has been used to the Farming Bu-
siness. Sold for want of Employ.—Enquire at
No. 81, William-street.
New-York, March 30, 1789.

1624 — 1664

Dutch Colonization

In 1609, Henry Hudson sailed a ship for the Dutch East India Company. He wrote of the immense beaver population, and a few years later the Dutch came to establish fur trading colonies. By 1626, Fort Amsterdam, thirty houses, and a counting house had been established. The Dutch West Indian Company was the first to bring African slaves to New Amsterdam. They were forced to clear forests, lay roads, and provide other heavy work, as well as build the wall on Wall Street to protect the Dutch from attacks from the Lenape. In 1645, after 20 years of war, including Kieft's war and the Pavonia Massacre, the Dutch signed a peace treaty with the Native American Nations, buying Manhattan for \$24.



1626 — 1827

Land Grants, Slavery and Wealth Creation

The Dutch stole land and established land grants and a land leasing system. They gave land grants near the water to settlers such as the Chelseas, Murrays, Fordhams, and Morrisianas who were involved in shipping and the port industries. They gave town lots for housing and a small plots of land to tradesmen, artisans, churches, tavern owners, and company officials and large land grants to get people to settle in the north (above 14th st) mostly to company investors mostly like Peter Stuyvesant. In 1664, England took control of New Amsterdam and renamed it New York. The population was a few thousand, made up mostly of Dutch, Irish, English, Scottish, Welsh, free and enslaved Africans. The English continued the Dutch system of land leasing. They also continued to bring in slaves from Africa and the Caribbean. By 1703, 42% of households had slaves, making NYC's slave population second only to Charleston, South Carolina. In 1700, the Lenape population was about 200. In 1799, laws are passed to end slavery gradually, forcing children into indentured servitude. By 1827, slavery in NYC ends. New York is the second to last state in the north to abolish slavery. New Jersey is the last.

1811

Manhattan is Leveled and Manhattan Millionaires

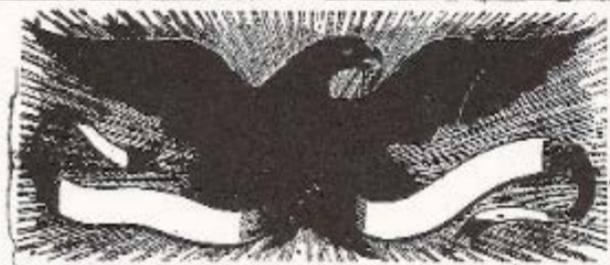
Manhattan was hard to live in because of hills, swamps and difficult terrain. Mayor Clinton leveled it and established the grid system we know today, vastly increasing the value of the land that settlers owned north of 14th street. In the 1770s, NYC's population was about 40,000. By 1860 it is over 1 million. John Jacob Astor was the first millionaire in NYC. He was a fur trader and made his money by buying land in "northern Manhattan" after Manhattan was leveled. Other names that made their money through leasing out land: Van Rensselaers, Beekmans, Bayards, Rutgers, Stuyvesant, Delancey, Warren and Trinity Church.



Greenwich Street Nos. 1 to 24 from Battery to Morris Street in 1825, at this time a fashionable region. Even so "Millionaire" Row. John Johnston lived at No. 16, where five of his children were born. Adam Norrie, James Barron, Robert Latow and others were near us.

ATTENTION! ANTI-RENTERS!

AWAKE! AROUSE!



A Meeting of the friends of Equal Rights will
be held on July 4th Hoag's Corners
in the Town of Nassau at 12 O'clock.

Let the opponents of Patroony rally in their strength. A great
crisis is approaching. Now is the time to strike. The minions of Patroony are at
work. No time is to be lost. Awake! Arouse! and

Strike 'till the last armed foe expires,
Strike for your altars and your fires—
Strike for the green graves of your sires,
God and your happy homes!

**The Meeting will be addressed by PETER
FINKLE and other Speakers.**

1839 — 1859

The First Anti-Rent Movement in NY: Tenant Farmers

Struggles over housing evolved from struggles over land. Tenant farmers were evicted from their land and their livelihoods. More than 300,000 tenant farmers on 2,000,000 acres of large landed estates in the Hudson Valley demanded ownership of the land they occupied, through the Anti-Rent Movement. They formed armed bands to resist evictions, sued landlords, and lobbied the legislature for more than 20 years.



1867 — 1901

NYC's First Tenement Housing Laws

By 1864, approximately two thirds of NYC's 700,000 residents lived in 15,300 tenement buildings. By 1890, 2.5 million people lived in NYC, large numbers of whom came from Eastern and Western Europe. Some were fleeing pogroms, others were fleeing poverty and famine. By this time, Wall Street banks controlled more deposits than anywhere else. The city passes a series of laws regulating room sizes, ventilation, lighting, fire escapes, and toilets. The Tompkins Square Riots (largest in history at the time) of the unemployed 1874, the Draft Riots of 1863, the Astor Place Riot of 1849 and a series of militant strikes by stonecutters, weavers, and workers demonstrated a strong political consciousness of the city's poor and working class to demand their rights. These new laws are attributed to concern about the spread of contagious disease and political uprisings.

17-21

DISCUSSING EAST SIDE RENT STRIKE



1904

NYC's FIRST RENT STRIKE

After a successful boycott of kosher meat, thousands of immigrant Jewish women collectively withheld rent on the Lower East Side because they couldn't afford the rent! There was a housing shortage in part because 20,000 people had been displaced to build the Williamsburg Bridge. Landlords tried to take advantage of the shortage by increasing rent 20-30%. The rent strikes were combined with pickets and marches! The overwhelming majority of landlords rolled back rents and evictions were avoided. Some tenants even won leases.

1907 — 1908

Rent Strikes in Harlem and Brooklyn

Staff of the Socialist Party provided tenants with advice on how to approach their landlords for a rent reduction and how to organize a rent strike. They taught people how to negotiate agreements with landlords for rent payments and repairs. Socialist unions raised money for the strikers and the "hebrew local" of the teamsters union refused to evict tenants as marshals. But landlord retaliation was intense and thousands were evicted.



A black and white photograph of a massive crowd of people, likely at a political demonstration or strike. Many individuals are wearing hats, and several signs with the letters 'IWW' are visible in the middle ground. The scene is dense and captures a moment of significant public gathering.

1917 — 1919

Tenant Power is Socialist Power

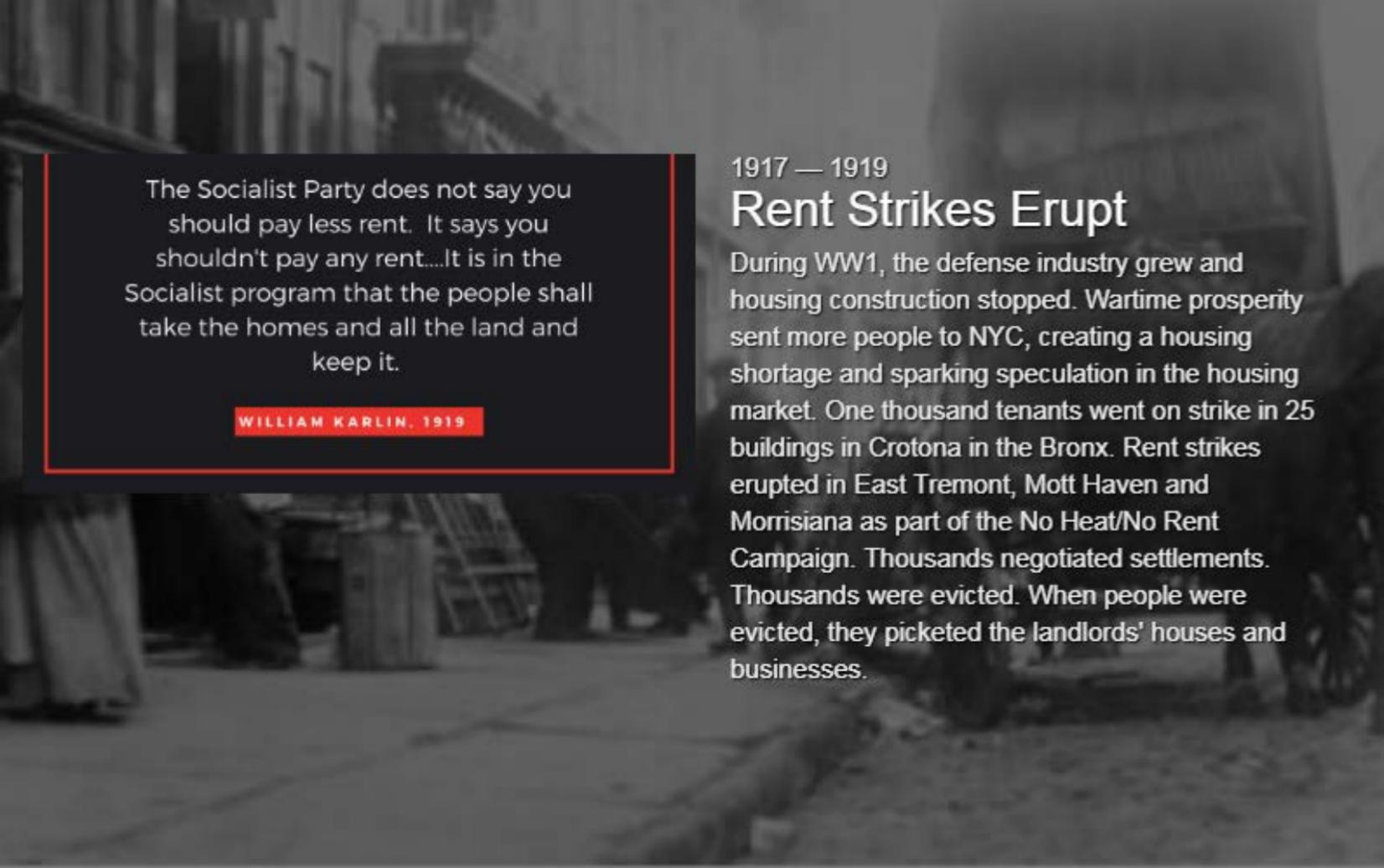
All of the rent strikes and leagues were formed with help from the Socialist Party. The leagues claimed 35,000 members! Nationally the IWW organized hundreds of thousands of workers and the free speech movement captured cities. Socialist alderman and assemblymen were elected.



1917 — 1925

Judge Activism

Judges, who at the time were elected, also responded to the power of the tenant movement. Judges granted long stays of eviction, showed up at tenants' meetings and one judge even dismissed all of his cases and never ruled for the landlord. Judge Cardozo overturned the common law that said landlords weren't responsible for repairs in their apartments. Before this time, landlords could only be held liable for damage done in public spaces, like the sidewalk, not for repairs inside apartments.



The Socialist Party does not say you should pay less rent. It says you shouldn't pay any rent....It is in the Socialist program that the people shall take the homes and all the land and keep it.

WILLIAM KARLIN, 1919

1917 — 1919

Rent Strikes Erupt

During WW1, the defense industry grew and housing construction stopped. Wartime prosperity sent more people to NYC, creating a housing shortage and sparking speculation in the housing market. One thousand tenants went on strike in 25 buildings in Crotona in the Bronx. Rent strikes erupted in East Tremont, Mott Haven and Morrisiana as part of the No Heat/No Rent Campaign. Thousands negotiated settlements. Thousands were evicted. When people were evicted, they picketed the landlords' houses and businesses.

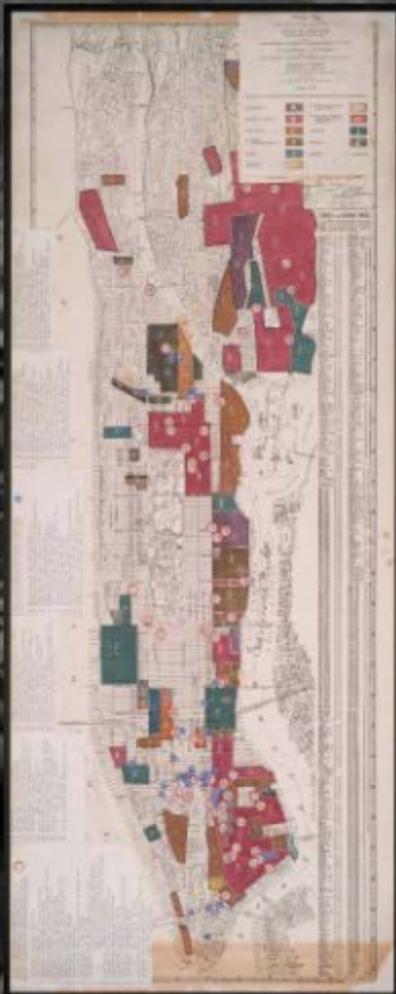


"Wallowing in It," by Robert W. Satterfield (*New York Call*, June 24, 1918, Harvard College Library)

1919

Mayor's Committee on Rent Profiteering is Formed

1919 Mayor's Committee on Rent Profiteering/arbitration (Mayor John Hylan) was formed. It was formed in part as a response to increase of power of the Socialist Party as Democrats were incredibly concerned that the tenant league members would vote and lose power to the socialists.



1919 — 1920

The Red Scare

The government is concerned that the Russian Revolution will inspire a revolution in the US. Five Socialist Party Assembly Members are expelled. NY Attorney General Palmer tracks socialist activity and conducts the infamous Palmer Raids. At least 500 people were deported.





"Patriotic Bronx Citizens Ready to Fight for Their Homes. A Part of the Delegation at the Albany Hearing" (*Bronx Home News*, January 26, 1920, General Research Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations)

1920

Emergency Rent Laws, April-September 1920

The state passed laws that restricted "unjust rent increases," in large part to quell the socialist party's power gained through tenant organizing. Increases of over 25% had to be justified by the landlord. Rent strikes greatly decrease at this point. Two thousand tenants from NYC went to Albany to meet with the governor to strengthen the rent laws! The laws eliminated the 25% allowable rent increase and required judges to review and approve ALL rent increases. This flooded the courts and cases were backed up for years. Judges made a bunch of administrative changes to manage the flow, one of which established that a "reasonable rent increase" was one that gave the landlord an 8% profit.



1922 — 1929

Rent Law Renewal Fights of the 1920s

Every 2 years, tenants fought to renew the rent laws. Housing construction increased, socialist activity decreased (no rent strikes during this time) and concessions were made. Instead of rent control for all apartments, the tenant movement agreed to deregulate apartments renting for more than \$20 per month. Rent laws challenge the rights of property owners to earn unlimited profit but they ceded that a profit level was a key criterion to determine whether a requested rent increase was reasonable. Due to decreased tenant organizing, an increase in the housing stock and landlord activism, the rent laws were allowed to expire in 1929.



INDEPENDENT LENS | AT HO...



1925

Little Moscow: Communist Cooperative Housing

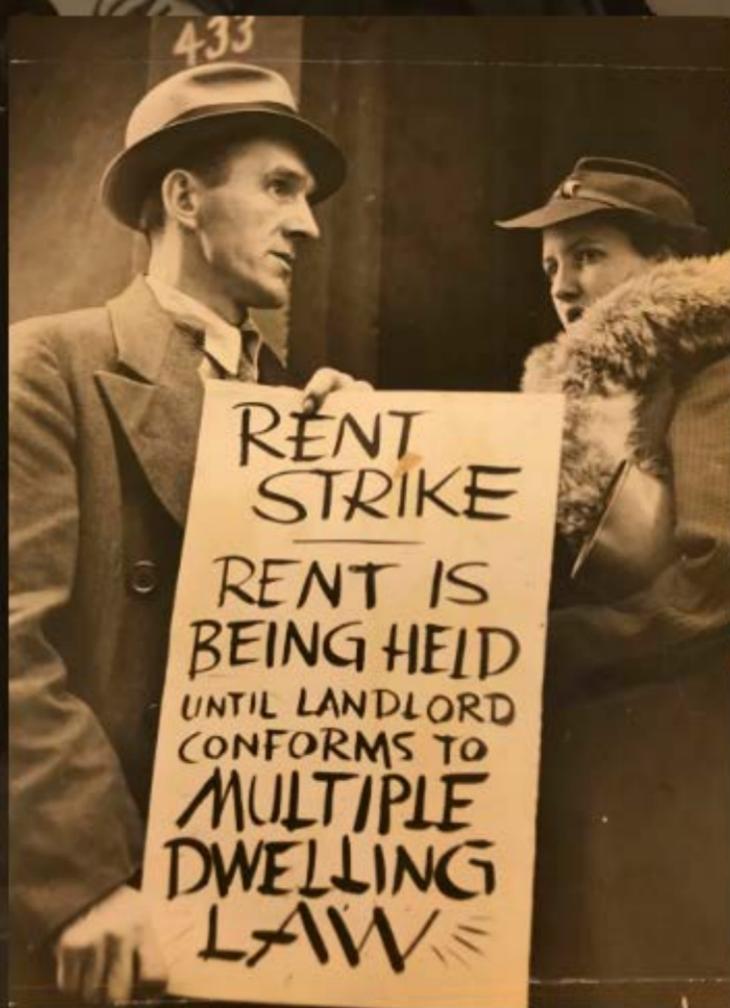
The United Workers Cooperative Colony housed 2,000 people, mostly communist Jewish garment workers, who built four buildings of cooperative housing in the Bronx. It was known as "the Coops" to the residents and as "Little Moscow" to the cops. The coops were also intentionally interracial. During the Great Depression, they did not evict anyone and helped moved their non co-op neighbors back in after evictions. Three other cooperatives also formed in the Bronx. The Socialist Amalgamated Houses, the Communist/Socialist Sholem Aleichem Houses, and the Labor-Zionist, Farband. Only The Amalgamated is still operating as a cooperative today.



1929

Harlem Tenants' League

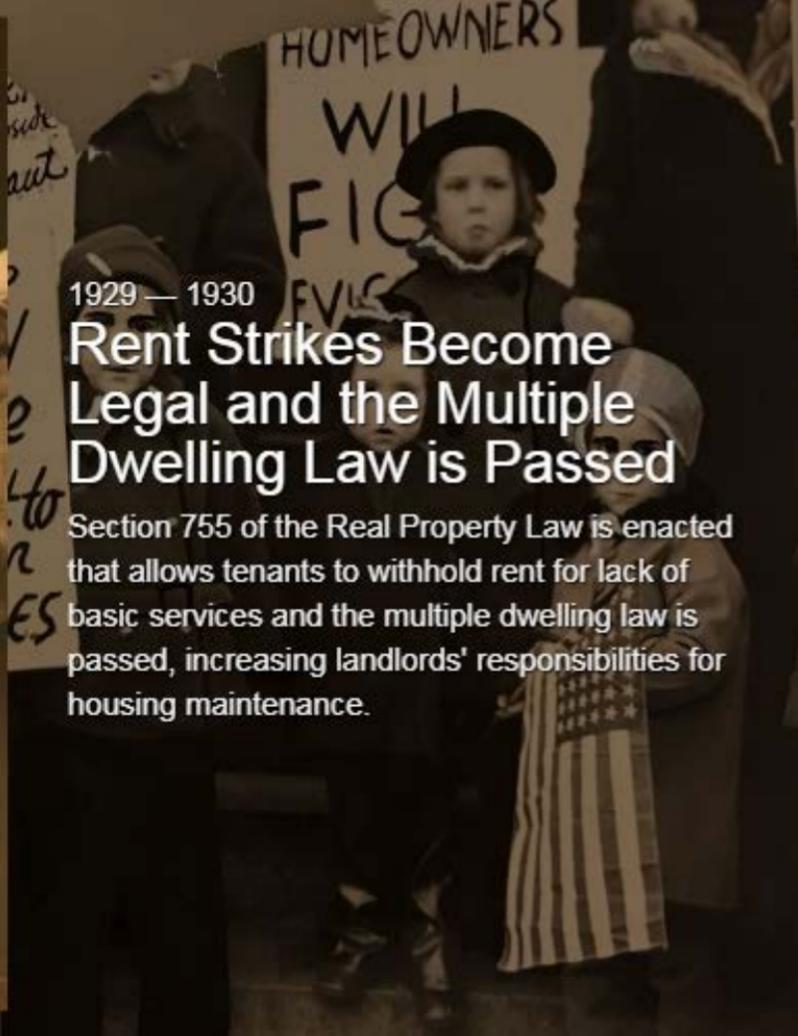
Led by Richard Moore, an avowed Communist, tenants in Harlem fought evictions, for rent control and for tactics that improved living conditions. They also attacked the "capitalist caste system," which exposed the fact that because of segregation, black tenants in Harlem were paying 2-3 times the going rents. This led to two important bills: The Rivers Bill, which established that bad conditions are a defense in nonpayment cases and The Perkins Bill, which allowed tenants to apply to delay their eviction when facing a rent increase in order to find a new apartment.



1929 — 1930

Rent Strikes Become Legal and the Multiple Dwelling Law is Passed

Section 755 of the Real Property Law is enacted that allows tenants to withhold rent for lack of basic services and the multiple dwelling law is passed, increasing landlords' responsibilities for housing maintenance.





1929 — 1939

The Great Depression

Tenants couldn't pay rent because of mass unemployment, landlords couldn't pay bills because they weren't getting rent and the private construction industry became instantly unprofitable. During the first 3 years of the Depression, the city's vacancy rate rose precipitously to over 9% in the Bronx and sections of Brooklyn and to over 15% in some low-income neighborhoods. Who is organizing the unemployed and the homeless? No one! The Communist Party, who played a marginal role in the housing campaigns in the 20's became prominent.



1930 — 1940

Tenant Power and Worker Power UNITE

Communist-led Unemployed Councils organize eviction resistance and rent strikes EN MASSE. In certain neighborhoods where there were communist strongholds, it was impossible to evict tenants. Rent strikes were powerful and if people were evicted, communists would move their furniture back in.

Conference

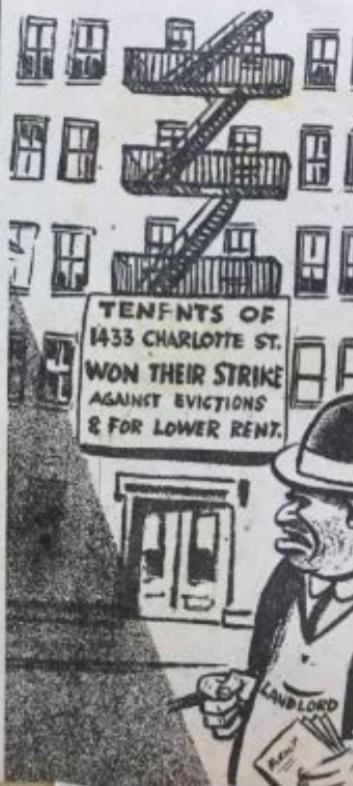
TENANTS IN 14 HOUSES WIN THEIR DEMANDS

The creasingly widespread struggle against high rents and eviction's in New York City led by the Unemployed Councils and Block Committees and House Committees affiliated with it has resulted in a number of splendid victories in the last few days.

All the rent strikes have been marked by demonstrations of 3,000 to 5,000 and with workingclass organizations participating in the hot fight and the tenants grievances. Fourteen rent strikes have already been won and nine more still being fought. Two hundred and sixty five tenants have won victories which include such concessions as the following: 15

How To Do It:

1. Call together all the tenants your house for a meeting.
2. Talk over the conditions in



1932 — 1933

The Bronx is On Fire...

With rent strikes!! In 1933, more than 200 buildings in the Bronx were on rent strike. They demanded a 15% rent reduction, an end to evictions, repairs, and recognition of the tenants' committee as an official bargaining agent. In one case, where landlords moved to mass evict people, 4,000 tenants rallied and attacked the police. While evictions did happen, many tenants won substantial reductions by striking and some won reductions merely by threatening to strike.

Strike
No
Rent
Increase



Race the House we Live In



1933 — 1937

New Deal: Redlining Begins

First through the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) in 1933 and then through Federal Housing Association (FHA) in 1937, the federal government provided mortgage insurance on loans made by approved lenders (banks), in response to the Great Depression. This meant banks could lend more with less risk, so that more people could buy homes. But racist politicians (northern and southern Democrats alike) made racist housing policy and segregation a condition of the government's mortgage insurance. The federal government created maps that assigned levels of risk to neighborhoods based primarily on the desirability of its residents, which it then gave to banks—white neighborhoods were safe for investment and black neighborhoods were uninsurable. Mixed neighborhoods were deemed a risky investment. Redlining is the practice of denying or limiting financial services to certain neighborhoods based on racial or ethnic composition. The term "redlining" refers to the practice of using a red line on a map to delineate the area where the government would not insure financial institutions' investments.

California Newsreel

Race, the House We Live In



1933

Landlords and State Repression

Landlords used every legal device at their command, including a pooled fund to pay their legal expenses, as they sought evictions and requesting injunctions against rent strikes and picketing. They sought criminal charges against tenant leaders for conspiracy and circulated a "red list" of tenants who had participated in the rent strikes. Tenant leaders were indicted and the courts issued injunctions. Communists changed their target from the landlords to the home relief system. They did mass sit-ins at the home relief bureau offices until they were given funds to pay rent, which was largely successful.



1934

Harlem Rent Strike

Black middle class residents went on strike to protest rent gauging and poor conditions, formed the Consolidated Tenants League and offered negotiation services and legal representation. By 1938, Consolidated claimed over 5,000 dues paying members and had a full time staff of organizers and lawyers. Their lead attorney was Vernal Williams, who had defended Marcus Garvey! His creative and aggressive use of the law created an "entire new body of tenant law."



1934

Knickerbocker Village Rent Strike

When tenants moved into a new 1600 unit complex that was built for middle class tenants, which limited rents because of a construction subsidy, and found it unfinished and unsafe, they went on strike. They set up a legal defense fund, got media coverage, met with officials and won. The landlord evicted the tenant leaders and set up an alternate tenants' association, but new tenant leadership emerged and the organizing continued.



December 3, 1935

First Houses: First Public Housing in the US

As WPA head Harr Hopkins remarked, "private capital has never spent a dime to build a house for the poor person." Public housing was pushed by liberal reformers, as well as a public works program that created jobs for the construction industry, a major driver of urban renewal later on.



1936

Tenants Unite Throughout the City

The radicalization of Depression-era professionals inspired a new form of citywide tenant federations with a mix of tactics: legal representation, rent strikes and pickets, research and policy advocacy. Their long term solutions: a moratorium on evictions, the passage of laws prohibiting rent increases in buildings containing violations, the passage of a law allowing the city to make repairs and charge landlords, construction of public housing and passing laws prohibiting racial discrimination. Rent strikes were still used but only if all other methods failed. If organizing entered a militant stage, they could draw upon the Communist Party network to staff picket lines. This style of organizing is what remained after the Communist Party ceased to be the dominant force on the American left.



1940 — 1970

The Great Migration (second wave) and White Flight

Over 650,000 Puerto Ricans fleeing poverty and African Americans fleeing the economic and physical violence of the Jim Crow South head to New York. At the same time, due to both push and pull factors including the subsidizing of suburbia, racial restrictions in lending and real estate, redlining and disinvestment in urban neighborhoods with communities of color present, serial displacement through urban renewal, blockbusting and other racial fears, over 750,000 white residents leave their NYC neighborhoods.



Demonstrators are seen grouped around the speaker's stand on the traffic island at Fordham Rd. and the Concourse yesterday as they listened to Dr. Helen Harris, chairman of the Bronx Consumers Coordinating Council, urge them to buy only absolute necessities until Congress enacts a strong price control law. Scores of retail stores remained closed during the day in support of the demonstration against the rising tide of inflation.

Home News Photo

1942

WWII and Federal Rent Controls

The federal government passes the Emergency Price Control Act and forms the Office of Price Administration (OPA). During the war, there was a nationwide decline in housing construction, exacerbated by a migration to cities of workers seeking employment in defense industries. In many urban areas, a rapid tightening of the housing market occurred, marked by overcrowding and rapid rent increases. It was this severe housing shortage that tenant activists used to demand OPA rent controls in NYC.



1943

First Rent Freeze

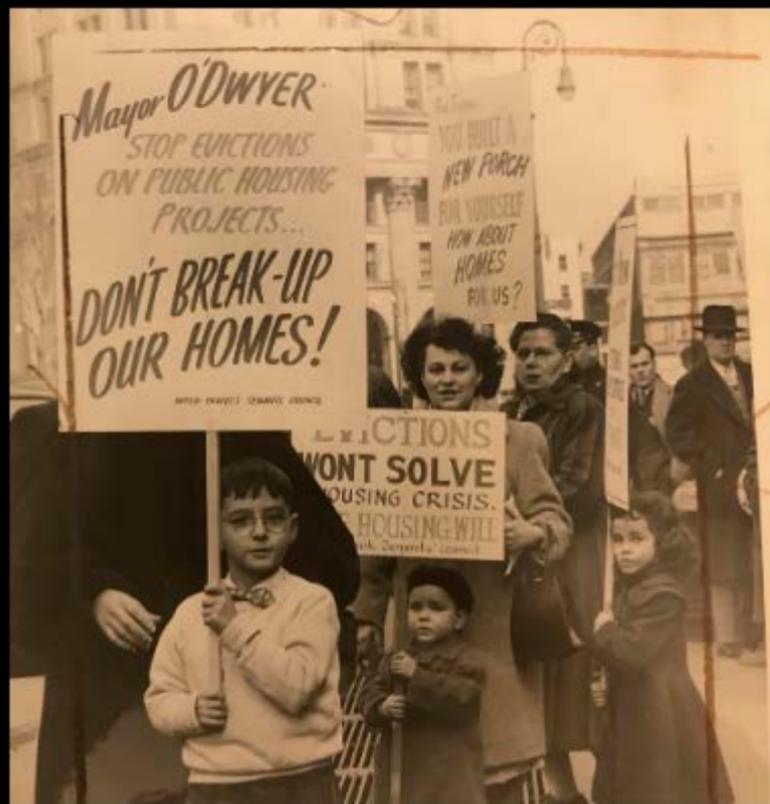
A powerful coalition forms including the Consolidated Tenants League, Communist Party clubs, left wing unions, the National Negro Congress, the Transit Workers Union, the American Labor Party (which had split because of the war into pro-communist and anti-communist factions) to unite to demand a rent freeze, and threatened riots if they didn't get it. They win and the OPA declares NYC a War Rental Area with mandatory limits on rent increases retroactive to March 1. The hard fought battle (it was easier in other cities) meant that all of these forces developed a stake in preserving the rent laws. At the same time, the OPA rent system quickly overshadowed the rent bargaining and rent strikes that had been the central function of tenant unions for a generation.



1943

STUY TOWN

The city, in partnership with Met Life insurance company, unveils plans to displace 3,800 families or 11,000 people to build Stuyvesant Town for middle class white families. Instead of protesting displacement, liberal reformers advocated for relocation assistance. Stuy Town was only challenged after it was built, and only then on grounds of its explicit whites-only policy.



1946 — 1947

Mass Evictions at NYCHA

There was a "massive drive to clear the projects of ineligible tenants." Thousands of over-income tenants, over 1,000 of whom lived at projects that were centers of radical protest, were evicted. Tenants protested to block the evictions, some forming powerful leagues that still exist today, but ultimately they lost and sought concessions, like access to waiting lists at middle income housing—like the racist Stuy Town.



Urban Renewal...Means Ne...



James Baldwin: Urban Renewal Means Negro Removal

1949 — 1974

Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal

Title 1 of the Federal Housing Act of 1949 creates a slum clearance program and the 1954 Housing Act creates urban renewal programs—both with significant federal funding. Heralded as progressive measures to replace bad housing with good, these programs made no provision to rehouse the the people whose buildings were demolished. In NYC by 1959, sixteen massive projects had displaced over 100,000 people who were disproportionately people of color. 5,000 families were displaced from the Upper west side, over 5,000 families were displaced to create the Cross Bronx Expressway and over 7,000 families were displaced from San Juan Hill to create Lincoln Center, just to name a few. In *Root Shock*, Mindy Thompson Fullilove estimates that 1,000,000 people in 2,500 neighborhoods in 993 cities over 25 years were displaced.



1949 — 1962

Fighting Urban Renewal

Activists across the city formed Save our Homes Committees to fight the slum clearances. In 1959, Frances Golden, Esther Rand, Jane and Robert Wood, Jane Benedict and Bess Stevenson formed Met Council on Housing. They lobbied for a moratorium on demolitions, public housing on vacant land and improved enforcement of living conditions and they, along with others like Jane Jacobs, successfully stopped the plan to build a highway through Washington Square Park. At the same time, many housing liberals quietly lobbied for relocation funds and NYCHA allocations for displaced families, and generally sided with "Master Builder" Robert Moses. NYCHA was the "convenient dumping ground where Title 1 developers externalized the costs of relocation."



1950

NY Enacts State Rent Control

When the war ended, the real estate lobby demanded a repeal of rent control and Congress obliged. And in most places, that was that. But New Yorkers won a law creating state rent control to replace federal rent control. They were the only tenants in America to do so, making New York the capital of tenants' rights.



1951 — 1968

Fighting Racial Discrimination in Housing

At Stuy Town, Black veterans sue for denial of housing and white communist residents sublet their apartments to Black families. The Brown-Isaacs law, passed in response to tenant and civil rights demands, banned discrimination in all publicly subsidized private housing in NYC. MetLife tried to evict the tenant leaders but failed. This struggle was aligned with the national one which passed the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968.

October 1966

Black Panther Party Platform and Program

What we want
What we believe

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.
2. We want full employment for our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the white man of our Black Community.
4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of the decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.
6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.
7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of black people.
8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.
9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.
10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

1960 — 1975

The Black Panthers, Young Lords and I Wor Kuen Take On Housing and Health

Housing was #4 on the Black Panthers 10 Point Platform. They organized rent strikes along with health clinics, free breakfast, political education and more. The Young Lords, a like minded Puerto Rican group, took on housing and health by tackling the environmental racism of failing to remove and remediate lead based paint, which formed the foundation of the fight against lead poisoning that tenant advocates later took on. And I Wor Kuen, a Chinatown youth organization, led a community health campaign and squatted in a downtown building owned by the Bell Telephone Company.

RENT STRIKE!!

NEW YORK POST, MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1963

New York Post

DEFICIENT STANDARDS and the Mayor's Privilege

Mayor John Lindsay has a right to say what he wants to say. But he has no right to say that the city's rent control laws are "deficient" and that the city should be allowed to raise rents. The city's rent control laws are not deficient. They are the result of a long and hard fought battle by tenants and their representatives. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that protect tenants from excessive rent increases. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that require landlords to maintain their buildings in good repair. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that require landlords to provide tenants with a safe and sanitary living environment. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that require landlords to provide tenants with a reasonable amount of notice before they can be evicted. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that require landlords to provide tenants with a reasonable amount of notice before they can be evicted. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that require landlords to provide tenants with a reasonable amount of notice before they can be evicted.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1963

Tenants in 34 Tenements Join Growing Rent Strike in Harlem

Under the heading and subheading in *Times* is *Fair To Tenants*

By MARTIN GANBERG

Harlem's rent strike has spread to 34 tenements in the neighborhood of 125th Street and Lexington Avenue. The tenants in these buildings are demanding a 10 percent reduction in rent and the right to elect their own representatives to the rent control board. The tenants in these buildings are demanding a 10 percent reduction in rent and the right to elect their own representatives to the rent control board. The tenants in these buildings are demanding a 10 percent reduction in rent and the right to elect their own representatives to the rent control board.



COMMUNITY COUNCIL ON HOUSING
LEADER OF RENT STRIKE" 6 E. 117TH ST., N.Y.C.

CITY TO REINSPECT SLUM TENEMENTS

Aim Is to Bring Pressure on Owners for Repairs

By MARTIN GANBERG

The city will begin inspecting 50 slum tenements today in a drive to bring pressure on owners for repairs. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that require landlords to maintain their buildings in good repair. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that require landlords to provide tenants with a safe and sanitary living environment. The city's rent control laws are the only ones in the country that require landlords to provide tenants with a reasonable amount of notice before they can be evicted.

City Welfare Dept. Ready To Join Rent Strike Against Skandors

Rent Strike Spreads to 50 Buildings As Harlem Tenants Fight Violations

By MARTIN GANBERG

The city's welfare department is ready to join the rent strike against the Skandors. The city's welfare department is ready to join the rent strike against the Skandors. The city's welfare department is ready to join the rent strike against the Skandors.

55 Buildings In Rent Strike

By MARTIN GANBERG

The rent strike has spread to 55 buildings in Harlem. The tenants in these buildings are demanding a 10 percent reduction in rent and the right to elect their own representatives to the rent control board. The tenants in these buildings are demanding a 10 percent reduction in rent and the right to elect their own representatives to the rent control board.

Rent Strike May Hit Fifty More Buildings

By MARTIN GANBERG

The rent strike may hit fifty more buildings in Harlem. The tenants in these buildings are demanding a 10 percent reduction in rent and the right to elect their own representatives to the rent control board. The tenants in these buildings are demanding a 10 percent reduction in rent and the right to elect their own representatives to the rent control board.

1963

Rent Strikes in Harlem and Bed Stuy

Organizer Jesse Gray, along with the Congress on Racial Inequality, fought racial discrimination and poor housing conditions. When landlords served eviction notices, they distributed applications for rent reductions, requested roof to cellar inspections and scheduled photographer's visits. With the help of attorneys from Mobilization for Youth, a social work and direct action organizing agency, they helped tenants in many buildings do rolling rent strikes or rent slow downs, where tenants would withhold rent, pay and then withhold rent again the next month to force the landlord into negotiations. Famously bringing dead rats to housing court to support striking tenants, they won stiffer penalties, increased enforcement, more reliable heat, as well as renewal of rent control and the emergency repair program in 1965.



1967 — 1985

Sweat Equity and Tenant Takeovers

By the mid-1970's the most common form of a rent strike was tenants withholding rent to buy oil and make repairs themselves. Rehabilitation of abandoned buildings by would-be tenants later became known as sweat equity. Ramon Rueda started the People's Development Corporation in 1974 and Banana Kelly Started in 1977.

Municipal Loans started coming in and sweaters received wages. Both ANHD and UHAB started during this time. Also in 1965, article 7A is passed, allowing tenants to sue their landlords, taking away their ability to manage the building or collect rents. In rem, Local Law 45, is enacted in 1977, allowing the city to foreclose for tax arrears once owners were one year behind, as opposed to the old law of 3 years. These laws together, along with the organizing, enabled more tenants to run their own buildings.



1969 — 1973

State Rent Laws

The New York City Rent Stabilization Law was passed in 1969, which imposed annual ceilings on rent increases and established the mayor-appointed Rent Guidelines Board (RGB). In 1970, the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Law is Passed. In 1971, Governor Rockefeller passed six deregulation bills including Vacancy Decontrol, Urstadt Law (ended home rule, NYS took back power over NYC rents) and non-primary residence as grounds for deregulation. While Met Council called a citywide rent strike to protest, it was only able to lead strikes in a few buildings, leaving the organizers to question whether or not a strike can be used as a pure political tool when there isn't an issue of direct self interest present, like bad conditions. Also in 1971, 421-A is passed, using public money to subsidize the private development of affordable housing. In 1973, purged Met Council organizers form The New York State Tenants Legislative Coalition (precursor to Tenants & Neighbors).



1970 — 1975

Disinvestment, Planned Shrinkage and Abandonment

NYC is bankrupt. The city fires thousands of municipal employees, raises transit fares, cuts welfare benefits, imposes tuition fees at City College for the first time in 129 years, and announces a policy of planned shrinkage: closing firehouses, libraries, police stations, schools, hospitals and subway stations in poor Black and Brown neighborhoods. This led to massive destruction and displacement. In the South Bronx, at the peak of the crisis, there was an average of 44 fires a night. The remaining South Bronx firehouses go on 10,000 runs/year, more than anywhere in the U.S. and (firefighters say) in the world. By the end of the 70's, 80% of the housing stock in the South Bronx burned to the ground and over half a million people were displaced.

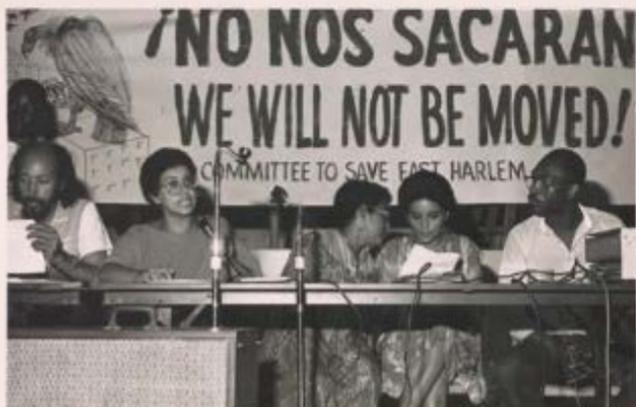
WORLD
DROP
Vows He'll Veto

Abe, Carey

1970

Resisting Austerity--Rent Increases and Peoples Housing Crimes Trial

The Rand Corporation did a study, disputed of course by the tenant movement, that said rent control led to abandonment. Because of this study and the real estate lobby, Mayor Lindsay extended the laws but introduced the Maximum Base Rent System (MBR), increasing rents initially across the board by 15%. Met Council, the Young Lords, the Black Panthers, the Movement for Puerto Rican Independence, and others held the Peoples Court Housing Crimes Trial. Over 1,500 people attended and the city, the landlords and the banks were indicted by activists on 13 crimes.





1970 — 1975

Operation Move In

In "Operation Move-In," one of the largest coordinated squatting actions in city history, activists broke into nine buildings slated for demolition around Columbus Avenue and West 80th Street in the summer of 1970 and soon took over other buildings pending private redevelopment in Morningside Heights. Evictions required force and therefore bad press. Once evicted, squatters returned. The city intentionally damaged the buildings during evictions, to speed up the demolition process. One good result: one building became the first sweat equity to be completed. At one point, Operation Move In claimed 38 buildings and inspired other squats throughout the city.

A group of people, mostly women, are standing in a line outside a building with large, light-colored columns. They are dressed in winter clothing like coats and hats. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an overcast day or late afternoon. The building has a modern architectural style with large windows and glass doors. A yellow caution sign is visible on the ground near the entrance.

1973

NYC Housing Court is Created

While landlord-tenant cases had always happened in civil court, the state legislature passed a law to create a separate Housing Part of the civil court dedicated to landlord tenant law as a “mechanism for providing safe, decent and habitable housing.” While civil judges were elected, and there was a lot of campaigning and advocacy around who was elected, Housing Part judges are appointed. Some saw this as a way to undermine the burgeoning power of electing judges to stop evictions, and some saw it as a way to create a dedicated space for tenants to address their claims.



Interface Archive

Met Council on Housing Flyer

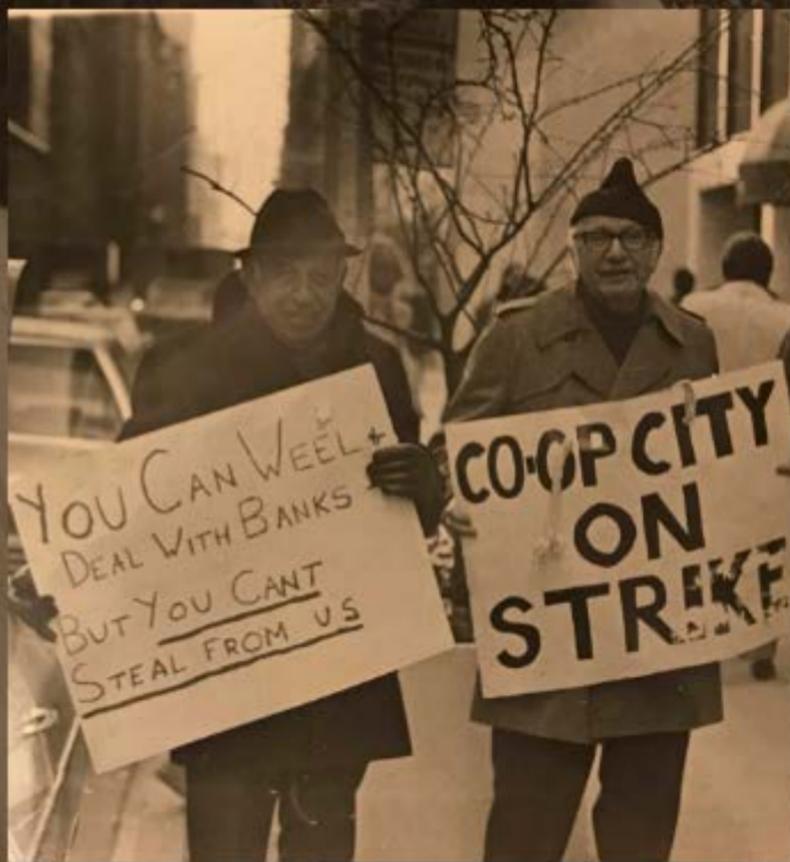
ROLL BACK RENTS TO JUNE, 1970

Any new rent control legislation must principally correct the injustices of Vacancy Decontrol and MBR.

1974 — 1975

Rent Stabilization & Warranty of Habitability

In 1974, The Emergency Tenant Protection Act was passed, creating Rent Stabilization for the older Rent Controlled apartments that had been deregulated because of Vacancy Decontrol. Upon vacancy, rents increased to the market level, and then were stabilized for further increases. This law also required the Census Bureau to conduct a vacancy survey every 3 years. In 1975, the Warranty of Habitability Law was passed, which transformed the lease to a contract with rent abatement penalties for lack of service and maintenance. Also, the Section 8 voucher program was established as part of the Federal Housing Act of 1974.



1975 — 1976

Co-Op City Goes on Strike!

Co-op City was built from 1968-1973. At the time, it was the largest residential development in U.S (it was built on top of the old amusement park, Freedomland). In 1975, 15,000 subsidized middle class tenants, primarily Jewish and Black, went on rent strike for 13 months. 90% of tenants participated, withholding \$25 million. Mario Cuomo, then Secretary of State, negotiated with tenants, and turned over control of the development to the tenants to end the strike.



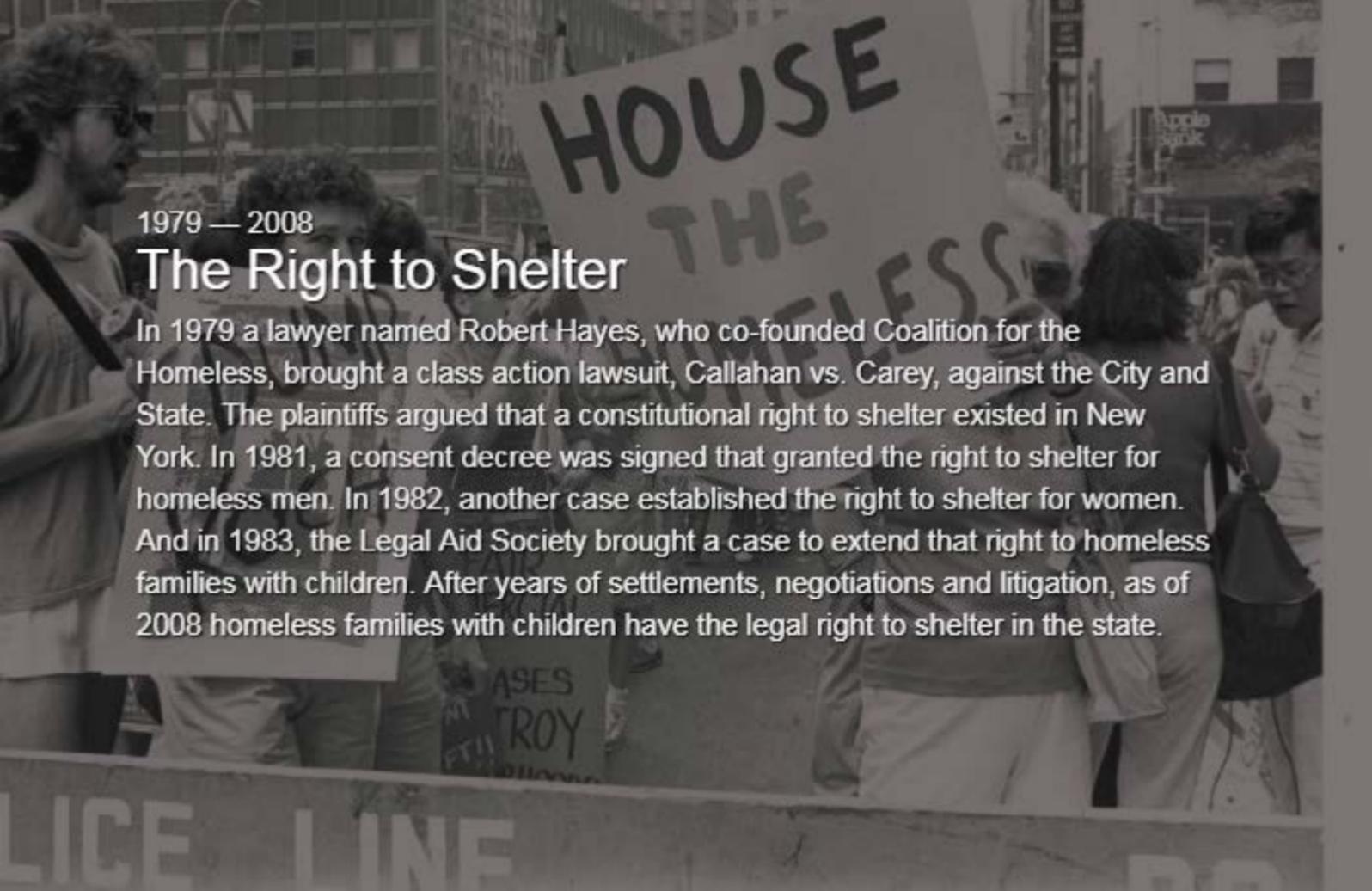
NWBCCC

Don't Move, Improve: The Story of Anne Devenney

1975 — 1977

Tenants Take on the Banks!

Two key laws are passed at the federal level to stop racist banking practices that are rooted in Federal redlining policies. In 1975, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act is passed, which requires banks to release data on their investments and in 1978, the Community Reinvestment Act is passed in NY (the federal law was passed in 1977) requiring that banks invest in low income communities of color.



1979 — 2008

The Right to Shelter

In 1979 a lawyer named Robert Hayes, who co-founded Coalition for the Homeless, brought a class action lawsuit, *Callahan vs. Carey*, against the City and State. The plaintiffs argued that a constitutional right to shelter existed in New York. In 1981, a consent decree was signed that granted the right to shelter for homeless men. In 1982, another case established the right to shelter for women. And in 1983, the Legal Aid Society brought a case to extend that right to homeless families with children. After years of settlements, negotiations and litigation, as of 2008 homeless families with children have the legal right to shelter in the state.

SUNDAY,
DEC. 18,
3:00 P.M.

ASSEMBLE
AT
COLUMBUS
CIRCLE

JESSE
JACKSON
WILL ADDRESS
THE RALLY

THIS
MARCH
IS THE
CLIMAX

of Housing Action Week, December 10-18. Thousands of New Yorkers will participate in a full program of diverse events and activities — working together to call greater attention to the deepening housing crisis in New York. **By working together we can make a difference!**

Information Update: Inquire to WBAI 99.5 FM, or call our office: (212) 222-1901.

MARCH WITH US TO END
HOMELESSNESS AND THE
HOUSING CRISIS



NATIONAL MARCH
OCTOBER 7, 1988
U.S. CAPITOL

1980 — 1988

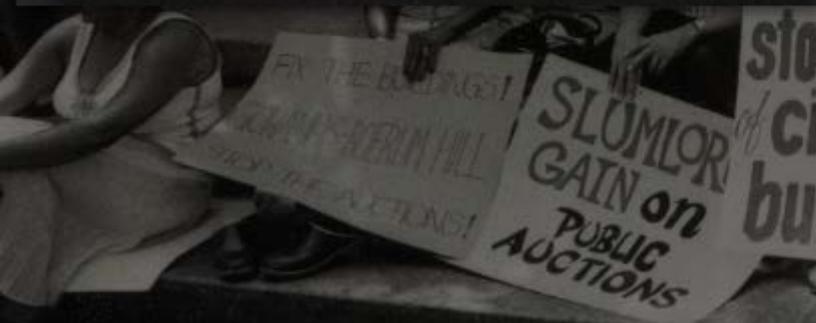
Mass Mobilizations to End Homelessness

In the mid-1980s, there were annual rallies on the Sunday before Christmas protesting homelessness and the lack of affordable housing. These rallies were in part sparked by WBAI, and thus called Listeners Action on Homelessness. The rallies sought to put pressure on Mayor Koch, who released an affordable housing plan in 1985, to ensure there was enough money and that it went to deeply affordable housing. There was a candlelight vigil in 1986 with 1500 people. And on Saturday, December 18th, 1988, there was a huge mobilization with anywhere from 5-15,000 people as part of a week of action. That same week on Tuesday, 50 people were arrested at city hall and 10 at 57th and 9th, in support of Intro 369, which would have extended the anti-warehousing legislation for all apartment owners.

1981 — 1989

Abandonment and Gentrification--Two Sides of Neoliberalism

Much of the funding for the many reforms won in the 70s dried up in the 80s. Sweat equity essentially ended in 1980 as the price per unit went up. Many of the co-ops sold out at higher prices, putting them back in the private market, interest rates skyrocket and many HUD programs were gutted. Tenants in Chelsea, UWS, UES, Brooklyn Heights, Park Slope, and others, all organized around the displacement of long term residents and the influx of luxury housing. Fifth Ave committee fought for the development of rent-subsidized housing and others fought for community planning. Activists on the LES were creating their own affordable housing development plan while the mayor moved forward with his middle income scheme. At the same time, the government creates a new tool, the Low Income Housing Tax Credits (1986), for the state to publicly finance private profit, further establishing affordable housing as a business model.





June 1983

Omnibus Housing Act of 1983

One victory was the creating of a rent registration system! Prior to this law, landlords controlled the system of rent registration. This law put it in the hands of the state, the Division of Homes and Community Renewal. In addition the law, eliminated the three-year lease renewal option, and defeated the 25% vacancy bonus.

1985 — 1986

Fighting for SRO Tenants



In 1985 a moratorium was issued on the demolition of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units. In addition, the illegal lockout bill was passed at city council, changing the role of police in evictions. Prior to the law, police would tell tenants it was a civil matter and that they'd have to go to housing court. The law says the police have to move the tenant back in and give a ticket to the landlord. In 1986, the city extended the moratorium on demolition for 5 more years and an anti-warehousing bill was passed for SROs. A report was released showing the city had lost 100,000 SRO units in 15 years. Landlords challenged the warehousing bill, and it was struck down in 1989 as unconstitutional and therefore lifted.



1989

ACTUP Fight Back!

The AIDS crisis hit NYC and in the 80s, close to 20,000 New Yorkers died. Survivors organized and the tenant movement called to save the homes of the survivors, who didn't have the right to inherit the apartments of their same sex partners. The NYS Court of Appeals ruled that nontraditional families are entitled to remain as tenants when a rent controlled tenant of record dies. These succession rights are extended to tenants in rent stabilized apartments as well.



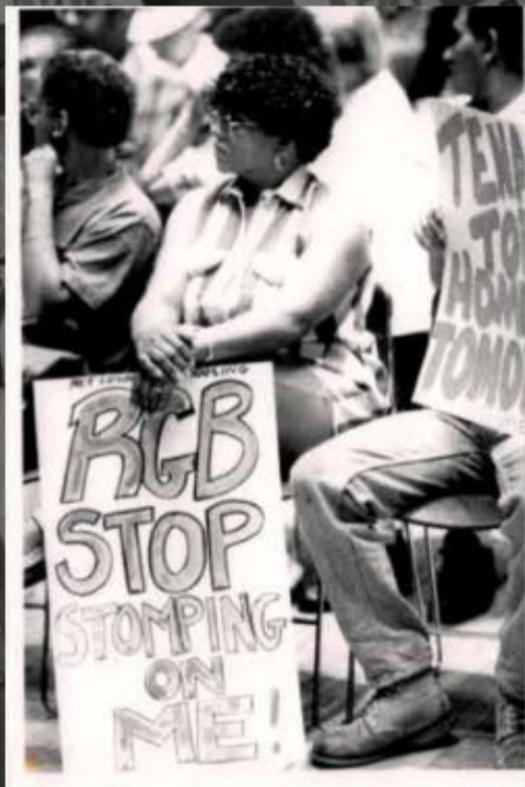
October 9, 1989

Housing Now: National March on Washington

About 150,000 people from across the country gathered to demand an end to the affording housing crisis. They carried signs that said "Build Houses, Not Bombs" and "Every Human Being Deserves a Home." Many chanted: "What do we want? Housing! When do we want it? Now!" At the head of the march, they linked arms and sang "We Shall Overcome." This resulted in the National Affordable Housing Act, with a modest sum of money for affordable housing—which was significant given that Reagan, an opponent of social spending, was president. This march was a month before the election of George Bush.

1990 — 2000

Tenants Mobilize Annually Around Rent Increases at the RGB





1993 — 1994

Vacancy Deregulation: The Beginning of Phasing out Rent Stabilization

In June of 1993, the state legislature passes Temporary High Rent Vacancy Deregulation set at \$2,000 monthly rent and Temporary High Income Rent Deregulation set at \$250,000 household income, set to end in October 1993. The city passes permanent Vacancy & High Income deregulation in 1994, solidifying vacancy deregulation. This sets the stage for the Showdown 97 fight.



May 30, 1995

Squatters Stand Off, LES

Squatters had taken dozens of buildings on the LES, formed eviction watch networks and prevented hundreds of evictions through direct action. On this day, the police brought in SWAT teams while the squatters welded doors shut, welded bikes to fire escapes and poured tar on the street to stop the police. The squatters in these buildings on 13th St. were evicted but squatters in 11 buildings held on, eventually becoming legal owners of limited equity co-op buildings after many years of negotiations with UHAB, the City and others. For more on this, go here: 99percentinvisible.org/episode...

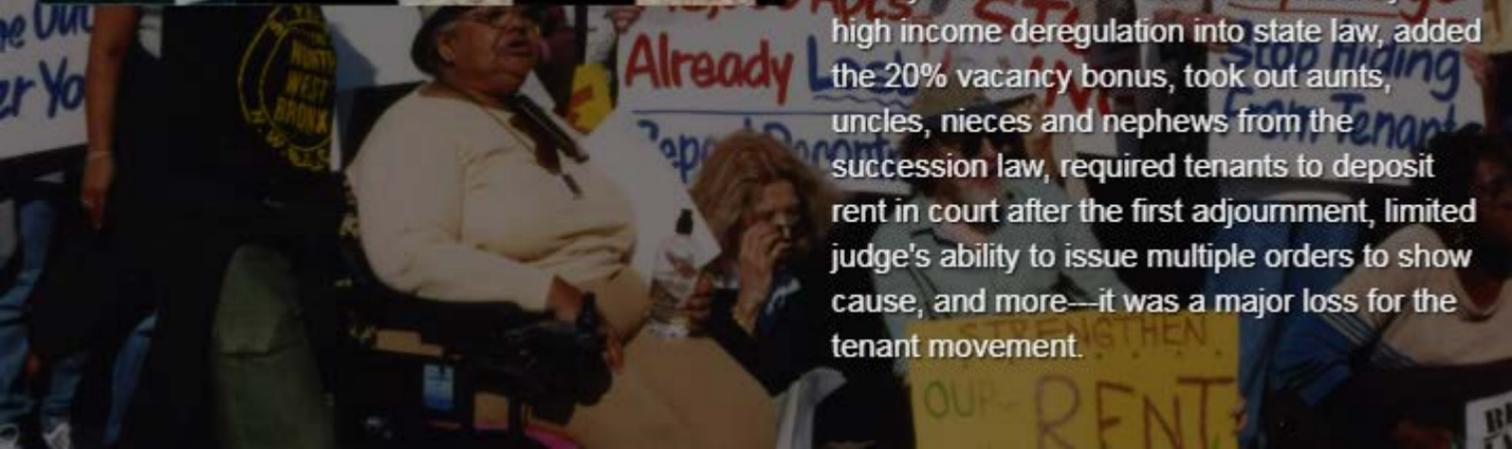


June 1997

Showdown 97

Senate Majority Leader Republican Joe Bruno declared that the rent laws would expire.

Tenants who had never been engaged before flocked to organizing groups and membership soared. On one day alone, 8,000 people went to Albany. The Rent Laws were renewed for 6 years but with huge compromises. As some say, we snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. The new laws enshrined vacancy and high income deregulation into state law, added the 20% vacancy bonus, took out aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews from the succession law, required tenants to deposit rent in court after the first adjournment, limited judge's ability to issue multiple orders to show cause, and more—it was a major loss for the tenant movement.





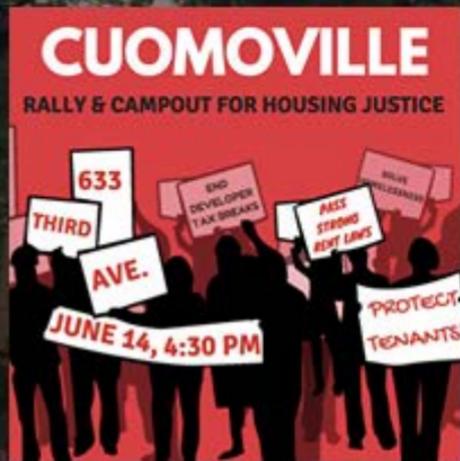
Rezoning Harlem

www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2...

2002 — 2014

Rezoning Fights and "Affordable Housing" Under Bloomberg

Mayor Bloomberg rezoned about 37% of the land in NYC—almost 140 separate rezonings, leading to the construction of more than 40,000 new buildings and 170,000 new housing units. While many neighborhoods protested and organized against the rezonings, especially the ones where land was up-zoned, mostly in communities of color, all of them were approved. While Bloomberg reported that he created an unprecedented number of affordable housing units through subsidizing privately owned housing—the vast majority of the "affordable" housing was unaffordable to the poorest New Yorkers.



2003 — 2018

Rent Law Renewal Fights

Advocates continue to organize around the renewal of the rent laws by going to Albany, organizing protests and even sleeping outside! Protests are organized by both the Real Rent Reform Campaign and the Alliance for Tenant Power. In 2003, the preferential rent loophole was created and in subsequent years the High Rent Vacancy Deregulation thresholds were raised and some changes to MCI's were made as well. For more info, go to: www.realrentreform.org or www.housingjusticeforall.org.



August 2004

Lead Laws Are Passed!

After a 20 year fight, the Coalition to End Lead Poisoning (NYCCELP) won legislation (after the mayor vetoed it and the council overrode the veto), that puts the onus on the landlords to investigate and find out if there is lead paint in their apartments. Landlords now have to inspect annually for lead paint or more often as needed if there are children in the apartment. If a kid gets lead poisoning, LL's can then be held liable. At vacancy, LL's need to remove lead paint at the most high risk areas, like windows, door frames, etc. The law also includes protections for workers.



2006 — 2008

Tenant Harassment and the Tenant Protection Act

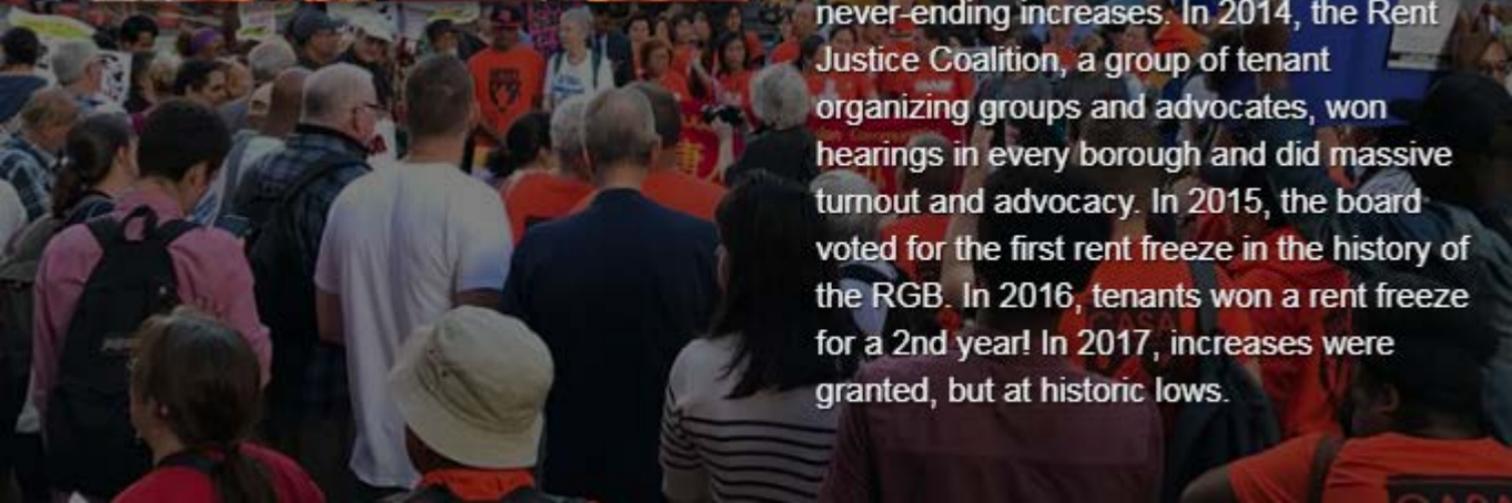
Beginning in 2006, tenants and advocates noticed a dramatic increase in landlord harassment due to predatory investment strategies, backed by Wall Street equity funds, which aimed to push out tenants and convert rent-regulated housing into market-rate units. In response, the Tenants United Against Harassment coalition was formed. The Coalition's goal was to push housing court to recognize a private "cause of action" for harassment, allowing tenants to claim harassment as a defense and proactively sue landlords for harassment. In its city-wide campaign, the Coalition reframed harassment as a crisis, and in March of 2008, the Tenant Protection Act was signed into law. However, unless tenants have attorneys, they rarely raise harassment claims as a defense and as of 2018, almost no proactive harassment cases have been brought against landlords.



2014 — 2017

Rent Freezes and the Renewed Fights Around the RGB!

In 2013, CASA and Tenants and Neighbors renewed the energy around the RGB by organizing a People's RGB Hearing in the Bronx, in protest of the lack of public hearings outside of Manhattan and the never-ending increases. In 2014, the Rent Justice Coalition, a group of tenant organizing groups and advocates, won hearings in every borough and did massive turnout and advocacy. In 2015, the board voted for the first rent freeze in the history of the RGB. In 2016, tenants won a rent freeze for a 2nd year! In 2017, increases were granted, but at historic lows.





We Know What We Want: Bro...



because it does not include provisions for us.

2015 — 2018

Rezoning Fights and "Affordable Housing" under De Blasio

De Blasio releases a plan to create or preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing (35,000 more than Bloomberg), which includes rezoning 15 neighborhoods of mostly low income Black and Brown New Yorkers. However for every "affordable" unit created, 3-4 market rate units would need to be developed, driving up rents in the neighborhoods. A new coalition forms, Real Affordability for All, of tenant organizing groups and labor unions, promoting a platform of truly affordable housing and union jobs. But despite opposition (not always unified or aligned) the Mayor pushed Mandatory Inclusionary Housing through city council, a policy that requires developers to build "affordable housing" that is unaffordable to most poor New Yorkers in exchange for land use changes, and the initial rezonings are passed in the face of sustained community opposition from East New York to the Bronx.





Right to Counsel—Th...



AN EQUITY CRISIS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.RIGHTTOCOUNSELNYC.ORG
OR CONTACT US AT info@righttocounselnyc.org
OR CALL US AT 1-800-368-7722

August 11, 2017

Right to Counsel: NYC Becomes the First City to Make Eviction Defense a Right!

in 2014, a Coalition made up of more than 65 tenant advocate groups, tenant organizing groups, faith based groups, academics, and legal services providers throughout the New York City, came together and launched a successful 3 year campaign, which got legislation passed making it a right for low-income tenants to have an attorney when facing an eviction. Find out more at: www.righttocounselnyc.org



Stand for Tenant Safety

August 30, 2017

Stand for Tenant Safety!

STS is a citywide coalition of community organizations who are fighting to protect the lives and homes of New York City tenants where landlords are using construction as harassment, demanding the systemic reform of the Department of Buildings. After a concerted campaign, 16 bills were signed into law reforming the DOB and curtailing incentives that cause landlords to displace tenants through construction as harassment! To learn more about the bills, go to:

www.standfortenantsafety.com

November 30, 2017

Certificate of No Harassment—A New Tool for Tenants

This new legislation, won by the Coalition Against Tenant Harassment, will discourage tenant harassment by preventing landlords with a history of harassment from accessing DOB permits. This legislation is a pilot program that will last for 3 years. More info is here: www.enddisplacement.org



Empowering Tenants & Building Community™

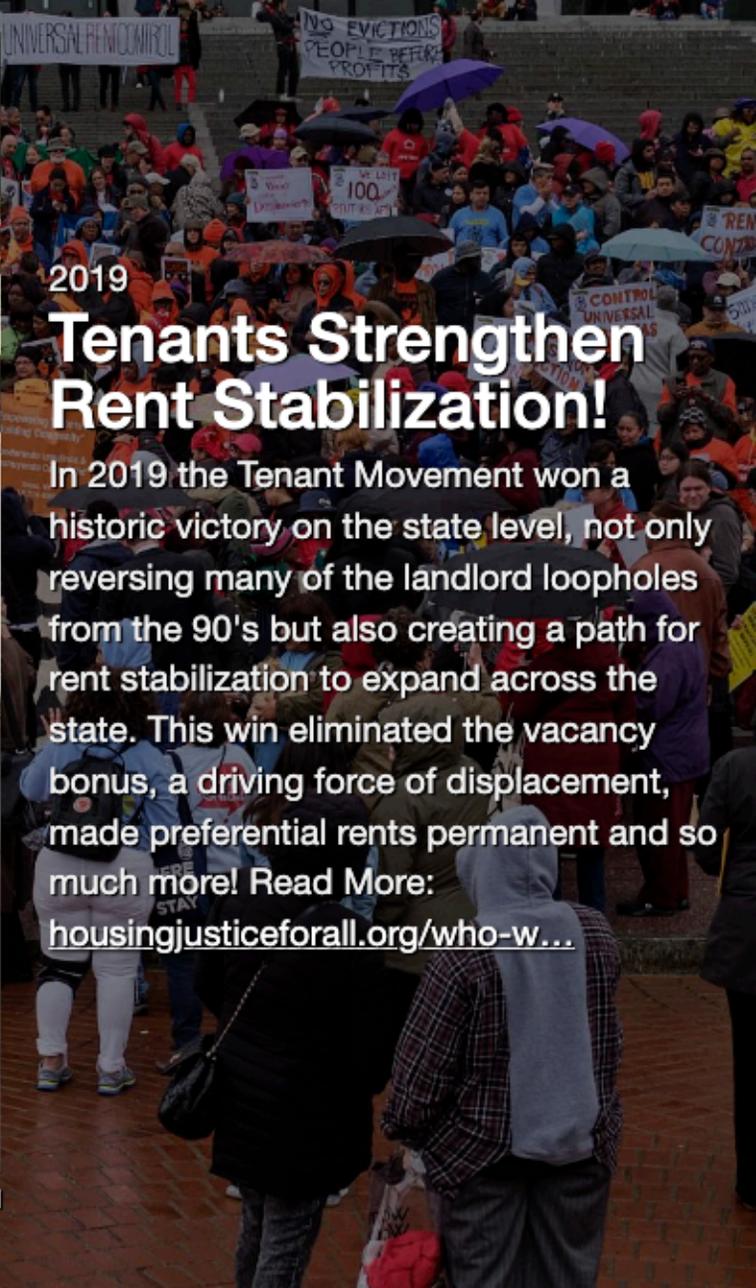
Empoderando Inquilinos & Construyendo Comunidad™

Brooklyn, NY
718-718-8000



ASSOCIATION FOR
NEIGHBORHOOD AND
HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT





2019

Tenants Strengthen Rent Stabilization!

In 2019 the Tenant Movement won a historic victory on the state level, not only reversing many of the landlord loopholes from the 90's but also creating a path for rent stabilization to expand across the state. This win eliminated the vacancy bonus, a driving force of displacement, made preferential rents permanent and so much more! Read More: housingjusticeforall.org/who-w...



Reuters/Mike Segar

2020 — 2022

COVID

The world grappled with a devastating pandemic and millions lost their lives. New York was hit hard. Schools were closed, the city was shut down, makeshift hospitals were erected in parks and boats. Millions lost their jobs and income putting their homes at risk. Black and brown New Yorkers were hit hardest by both the public health and economic crisis of COVID. The pandemic clearly exposed the structural inequity of the state---the government couldn't distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to health care workers but it could bail out landlords. At the same time, COVID exposed the incredible ability of every day people to take care of each other. Mutual aid networks formed all over the city, thousands of New Yorkers banged pots and pans every night at 7 to thank health care and frontline workers, and so much more.



Cancel Rent! Cancelar la Renta!



Watch later



Share



Watch on  YouTube

Right to Counsel NYC Coalition

March 2020 — January 2023

Tenants Fight to Cancel Rent and Stop Evictions!

For the first time in recent history, NYC experienced a city without evictions: courts were closed and evictions stopped. Stepping into the crisis, tenants fought hard to win transformative change and build the movement. Rejecting the neoliberal solution to crisis- bail outs to the powerful- tenants fought to #CancelRent and for an Eviction Moratorium. They introduced Cancel Rent legislation and organized one of the largest rent strikes in NYC's history with more than 50 buildings on strike. For more than two years, tenants continued rent strikes and took direct action like eviction blockades, marches, rallies and so much more. Together the tenant movement won some of the strongest and longest-lasting eviction moratoria in the country. Ultimately, the state rejected #CancelRent and instead passed a rental assistance program called the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). But the fight for an Eviction Free NY has lived on.