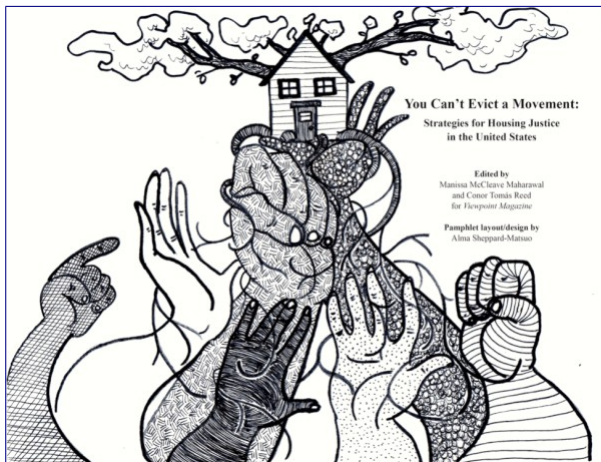


You Can't Evict a Movement: Strategies for Housing Justice in the United States

Edited by [Conor Tomás Reed](#), [Manissa McCleave Maharawal](#) and [Alma Sheppard-Matsuo](#)



[Thanks to the hard work of Alma Sheppard-Matsuo, we have two pamphlet versions of this roundtable that you can download. [The first](#) is a PDF designed for your reading on an electronic device. [The second](#) is formatted to print double-sided on 11in x 8.5in paper, then folded in half as a booklet.]

Introduction

This roundtable on housing struggles is *Viewpoint's* inaugural “movement inquiry” feature, in which we ask people across the United States to share organizing experiences so that local lessons can be bridged towards more regional, national, and international strategies. With this resource, we encourage radicals to make time to reflect, regroup, and more widely circulate our work. We hope that as these stories are shared, new connections will be made, and that a larger struggle for our cities’ futures can be waged.

It seems that every week there are new, ever more dire, statistics about how unaffordable urban centers in the United States have become for the multi-ethnic working and workless poor, and how quickly these cities are being forced to suit the whims of the wealthy. The violence of these changes reverberates and affects education, health, homelessness, police brutality, and unemployment. As neoliberal gentrification accelerates to outrageous levels, we focus on three epicenters of housing struggles – the Bay Area, Chicago, and New York City – as well as a national housing rights alliance, to share emerging and long-term strategies of resistance. In doing so, we intend to amplify a national conversation about how to combat the displacement, inequality, and violence that constitute gentrification.

These seven organizations shared reports with us:

In the Bay Area, the [Anti-Eviction Mapping Project](#) and the [San Francisco Tenants Union](#) have been central to struggles both recent and decades-long. The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project uses radical mapping, data visualizations, and oral history to document the dispossession and political economic landscape of Tech Boom 2.0 in the Bay Area. For over 45 years, the San Francisco Tenants Union has provided invaluable tenant counseling and organizing, while helping to write and affect housing policy in San Francisco, using a model that is entirely member-funded. Since the rise of neoliberal urban policies in the 1980s, the Bay Area has become a ground zero of gentrification and resistance, where longstanding claims to the right to transform public space have given rise to some of the most creative direct actions.

In Chicago, [Centro Autónomo](#), linked with the Mexico Solidarity Network, opened a community center in September 2006 in the Albany Park neighborhood that “constructs community, builds political consciousness, and unites people in and around the Latin@ immigrant struggle.” The [Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign](#), founded in 2009 by South Side Chicago residents and students, has transformed dozens of abandoned properties, in order to move “homeless people into people-less homes.” Both of these groups have helped shape a larger struggle over the future of Chicago amidst Rahm Emanuel’s controversial 2-term mayoral tenure (2011-present), the 2012 Chicago Teachers Union momentous strike, and rampant police violence that has endured for decades.

In New York City, the [Crown Heights Tenant Union](#) was founded in summer 2013 by longtime neighborhood residents, Occupy Wall Street participants, Urban Homesteading Assistance Board [UHAB] organizers, and the Crown Heights general assembly to build tenant power and fight the cycle of displacement in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. One year later, anarchists at the Base in Bushwick, Brooklyn, created the magazine [Rent is Theft](#) to “challenge conventional wisdom about rent and housing, and attack the problem from a radical perspective.” Steeped in histories of squatting, tenements’ reforms, and eviction resistance, New York City now suffers a rapid displacement/development cycle, and in June 2015 underwent changes in rent regulations that may signal a slow erosion in tenants’ rights.

Nationwide, [Right to the City](#) was formed in January 2007 as an alliance of economic, racial, and environmental justice organizations, and has developed a network with 57 groups across 22 cities to “halt the displacement of low-income people, people of color, marginalized LGBTQ communities, and youths of color from their historic urban neighborhoods.” Through their work, we see the contours of what a national movement for housing justice can look like.

Viewpoint envisions this roundtable as a beginning, not an end. We welcome your ideas, feedback, critiques, as well as your support in sharing this resource with friends and neighbors, in workplaces and organizing meetings, at rallies and direct actions, and beyond. We are eager to work with organizers to collectively create future roundtables on the struggles unfolding today – Black and Brown liberation, climate justice, education, feminism, LGBT power, youth-led migrant struggles, and in transportation, logistics, and the workplaces of retail and service workers, to name just a few. To get involved, please email us at roundtables@viewpointmag.com. - *Conor and Manissa*

ANTI-EVICTION MAPPING PROJECT (Bay Area, California)

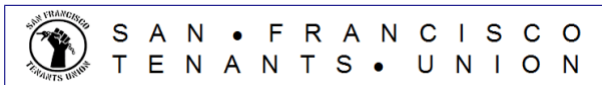
by Erin McElroy and Karyn Smoot



“Not only do we gather stories of those who have been evicted, but we also include stories of those impacted by gentrification in other ways, such as through police violence, increased racial profiling, and immigration struggles.” [Read More...](#)

SAN FRANCISCO TENANTS UNION (San Francisco, California)

by Andrew Szeto



“San Francisco, long championed for its ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism,’ is facing heightened class warfare, within which the right to housing has been at the front. And it is the city’s Black and Latina/o population that is most directly affected by racial capitalism’s destruction.” [Read More...](#)

CENTRO AUTÓNOMO (Chicago, Illinois)

by Barbara Suárez Galeano, Antonio Gutierrez, Alejandro Monzón



“We see land as something that should not be a commodity. Having a dignified home is a human right that needs to be recognized and enforced so as to ensure that we do not continue to victimize and brutalize the lives and livelihood of many in defense of a limited few. The goal is to take land and housing off the market.” [Read More...](#)

CHICAGO ANTI-EVICTION CAMPAIGN (Chicago, Illinois)



“Direct action is at the core of our focus on enforcing human rights. We rely on the power of being based in the community. If the bank puts a family out, we rally the neighbors to put them back in their home. If a bank leaves a home vacant, we work with the neighbors to turn it into a home for a homeless family.” [Read More...](#)

CROWN HEIGHTS TENANT UNION (Brooklyn, New York)

by Natherlene Bolden, Joel Feingold, Esteban Girón, & Donna Mossman, for the CHTU Organizing Committee



“The cycle of displacement and overcharge is a cycle of exploitation: landlords and brokers force out the Black and working-class communities that have built up this neighborhood for generations. The same landlords and brokers then bring in new tenants, who they illegally overcharge.” [Read More...](#)

[RENT IS THEFT](#) (Brooklyn, New York)



“The goal was to provide a contemporary, revolutionary anarchist perspective on gentrification and resistance against it. Our core message was that the cause of gentrification was not the individual consumers in the market (hipsters, transplants, yuppies, etc.), but capitalism itself, and those who hold power in the capitalist system.” [Read More...](#)

[RIGHT TO THE CITY ALLIANCE](#) (United States)

by Lenina Nadal



“Oftentimes, organizations put political education last. The priority is mobilizing the base around the policy fight... And because we are so busy trying to figure out how to get abuelita to the meeting, we may not have time to think through the role of neoliberal urban development in the planning of cities.” [Read More...](#)