

Housing Strategy

Tenants are disposable in a capitalist society; tenancy with a signed lease offers little more security than squatting. The only systemic avenues to negotiate with landlords are geared towards maintaining the status quo and the protection of property owners. Tenants may encounter more or less sympathetic landlords, but the landlord-tenant relationship remains fundamentally exploitative, leaving ample room for corruption. The capitalist society in which we live sanctifies property, while dehumanizing those that live there. Minimum wage workers live in constant fear of homelessness, being driven deeper into poverty trying to pay their rent, despite under-employment or poverty wages. Landlords hold power over tenants, and as a result, tenants feel threatened and lack housing security.

Meanwhile, homeless, marginalized individuals living in poverty are being criminalized. The current solutions to homelessness provided by the government tend to result in permanent dependence upon the social service networks. The lack of decent, affordable housing in Halifax makes it very difficult for homeless, marginalized individuals to change this cycle. Homeowners are not exempt from shelter security fears, as more and more banks are choosing to foreclose on mortgages, evicting individuals and families. Under capitalism, all land is privately owned, leading to homelessness and lack of housing security. The individualism of capitalism is antithetical to the communal sense of care for others and the standard of living that would be required to envision real solutions to homelessness and to providing housing security for all.

Stand therefore embraces communal and self-managed space. Stand encourages the formation of radical tenants' collectives that can take action in our neighbourhoods, establishing more control or leverage where we live. Stand supports struggle within the community for housing security via self organization, direct action, and solidarity with others regarding housing security; using tactics through which the working class can realize its needs. Stand advocates occupant controlled housing, as the present profit-based system of housing produces homelessness and high rents. Stand supports the efforts of people in neighbourhood reclamations, and supports them in the face of eviction or foreclosure.

Stand believes that the poor and working poor should have control over their neighbourhoods, without being displaced themselves. Gentrification should not be a solution to slumlords in the city. Homelessness is on the rise, while many properties in the city sit idle and abandoned, including public housing. At the same time, housing services are being defunded or eliminated.

Ways to organize class struggle around housing can include:

- tenants' collectives
- rent strikes
- squatting
- making privatized spaces public
- responding to landlords' abuses of tenants' rights, and to evictions, foreclosures or repossessions
- organizing to resist rent increases

Stand encourages the seizure and transformation of abandoned spaces into centres meeting community needs. Self management and mutual aid can be made possible through the seizure of spaces abandoned by capital. The taking of space is in direct opposition to the capitalist power structure. The state protects property and capital to the detriment of the working class and homeless.

Self organization increases solidarity and alliance among neighbours, establishes more leverage for the tenants, and leads to more egalitarian communities where everyone has a vested interest in the success of the community. Direct action oriented campaigns will increase Stand's visibility, and will encourage new members to approach their housing concerns using communal methods and mutual aid, as well as to end the systemic oppression of capitalism.