

IT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY to PUSH BACK



Articles to inspire solidarity and action.

by, April Ailes PTU Co-Organizer/ Housing Activist

FIRST THEY CAME Martin Niemöller

First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist
Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me

HINDSIGHT

The above poem was penned as a confessional by a Lutheran pastor in post-war Germany. He was referring to the silent indifference shown to the atrocities of the Nazis by German intellectuals and clergy. It stands as a reminder of how we must always stand up for human rights. Even if the humans currently being attacked do not look, think or believe like us; when we fail to defend the rights of others we ultimately fail ourselves.

The rights of so many have been under attack. With the governments constant onslaught of insanity it can be difficult to keep up with who is currently under threat. The easiest answer to this is, all of us. Many conservatives are very angry right now because the fascist they voted for is doing fascist things. And instead of them just impacting the groups they've been groomed to hate, they are personally being affected. And that, my dears, is the point of the poem and the point of unionizing. Allowing injustice for one, means we accept it for us all. When we fail to stand with others that are being put out, we will find there is no one left to stand for us when our numbers up.

EXHAUSTION and STRESS

Talking to union members, other organizers and neighbors currently uninvolved; I hear often "I just don't have the time. I've already got too much to worry about, I can't add unionizing to my plate." I understand this completely. We are all exhausted and stressed to the max. We have very little free time and fighting back against injustice seems too hard, until it's you.

When suddenly it's you under threat; your job, your body, your home etc., suddenly it feels like a crisis and you can't understand why no one is doing anything to stop it. Because "it's not right and it's not fair." This is why we need to stand united, particularly when it comes to our housing.

Take a moment and think about all the reasons you have for not getting involved in the union. Think about your time constraints, other obligations you have and stressful things you must deal with. Now imagine still having all of that, while being homeless. Not having a home makes everything else more difficult.

Sign Your Union Card Today!

www.pinehursttenantsunion.org

YOUR BACKUP COULD BE LOOKING TO YOU

Some of us may be privileged enough to have relatives or friends they could stay with short term, in a pinch. But this is not a reality for many, and for some, that back up plan may be looking at your home as their back-up plan.

Let's not forget that every single social program we currently have is being stripped. Therefore, anyone currently relying on any of these programs is about to take a hit. Social Security is already not going out appropriately or on time for some. Legal residents have been deported. Benefits for Veterans are under attack, as are Medicaid and SNAP. Trump's tariff wars will cause the price of goods to skyrocket. We are in deeply unsettling times. Our society is already dystopian, although we do not think of it in that light because it doesn't look the way it's been portrayed in film. At least not on the surface. We are on our way.

With empty shipping ports there are no goods to move. Dock workers and truckers are going to see major industry job losses. Stores will have less inventory, restaurants will have less access to ingredients and people over all will have less disposable income which will lead small businesses that offer "little extras" to go under. Photography studios, pet groomers, salons and spas etc. will close their doors. Add this to the already displaced tens of thousands of government workers out of jobs and you've got a situation where the job market is flooded with desperate and overqualified people needing to feed and house their families in a devastated economy.

There will be farm jobs. The mass inhumane deportation of agricultural workers will ensure that. These jobs are taken by immigrants because they pay little to nothing, offer no benefits and are physically grueling in horrid conditions. People largely look the other way because it means we pay little for domestically grown produce. But what we're really saying is that it's acceptable to subjugate US ALL. When those are the jobs that are left for "legal citizens", those working conditions won't look or feel like savings or fair treatment. Changing the conditions under which we work takes organizing our co-workers and demanding better. Unions have been, and will be, the backbones of the rights for working class people.

All of this also affects housing. When people are no longer making the money they previously were and are forced to take lower paying jobs they are often forced to find more affordable housing. As current tenants, we are already far too aware of how un-affordable rent is, and how few options there are.



We must protect our housing. Kalamazoo is hopping on the organizing band wagon, in ways- by the people for the people. Kalamazoo tenants are unionizing.

We will not allow the continued gentrification of Kalamazoo as a playground for well-to-do elitists. We live here, this is our home and no one should be trying to profit from our forced displacement. Our survival should not be com-modified at all, let alone to our ruin. We can fight back. We must.

Sign your union card online today. It's available on our website www.pinehursttenantsunion.org. After you've signed your card, share this article with a neighbor. Print out a copy or contact me and I will print some for you. Don't stop at Pinehurst residents, talk to any renters you know and we will get them involved with We The Tenants to help them build their union. People power is how we stay in our homes at rates we can afford. People power is how we take back our housing. Imagine a world without landlords...just housing provided to and owned by the people that need it. It's not an unattainable dream. It's a real, tangible, achievable future that we must take for ourselves. As working class humans we are the ones the rich take, take, take from. Anyone that has ever been poor can tell you how expensive it is. We do not have to accept this. We do not have to accept paper thin walls, 24hr surveillance, scary rent increases and threats of eviction. But a better living situation will not be handed to us and no one hero is going to fall into our laps and save us all. If we want it, we must fight for it, together.