

A HOME IS EVERYONE'S RIGHT

A TOWER HAMLETS HOUSING ACTION GROUP is being formed by several organisations in the borough that have been involved with housing (Tenants associations, housing co-operatives, s uatter's organisations, trade unions, etc.). The group will hopefully become a means of co-ordianting efforts to solve the housing problems that the council has failed to begin to tackle. These obvious problems include:

Homelessness (whether it means living on the streets, crowding up with relatives, having to move out of the borough or having to put up with slum conditions to have a roof over your head)

Tenants lack of control over where they live and the state of repair, security, and surrounding facilities of their houses or flats

People's lack of control over the development plans for Tower Hamlets and the quantity, quality and distribution of houses for the local population

These problems make Tower Hamlets one of the worst areas for housing in London. The Housing Action Group believes that as convential 'solutions' have failed, East Enders themselves must get together to do something to stop the destruction of their part of London.

The whole of East London is under attack. The City is advancing (or rather being advanced) from the West with its offices, luxury flats and world trade marts for international business. At the same time, the housing list gets longer and the number of new houses being built gets smaller. The private rented sector shrinks, in favour of luxury conversions, and the numbers and the misery of the hoemless go up. On most estates, not even basic repairs or re-decoration are completed. Meanwhile houses are left empty for months and years. Homes are smashed and bricked up by

the authorities, only to be left lying unused and derlict.

The authorities try to divide one group from another. They are afraid of our united power for us all to get what we want. They try to turn tenants against squatters who occupy the houses that they have left empty. They divide better-off tenants from poorer ones, and owner-occupiers from tenants. Against these tactics we have to take things into our own hands.

Our fight for the things we need

The Tower Hamlets Action Group has been formed to help unite our different struggles, so we aren't defeated by our won isolation. We want it to be an action group of people who are actively concerned about their housing situation. We don't want it to be just another talk shop.

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We support all actions taken by tenants to improve conditions on their estates, including withholding of rent to go directly into repairs and maintenance, and formation of tenants co-operatives to organise this directly.

*We believe that empty land must be used for building homes, not hotels. It makes no sense that fewer homes are being built when there are building workers out of work. Building workers should be encouraged to take say in what they build, as well as how.

*We defend the right of those whose homes are being redeveloped to decide where and when they go, and to move together if they wish.

*We defend tenants in private rented accomadation from harrassment by landlords who want to evict them and sell their houses for large profits.

*We defend the right of people to take over homes, in a situation where they have no other way of being housed. We will fight empty homes being gutted or bricked up when people are still homeless. We support mass occupation like Sunner House, and their fight against eviction from property left empty by the council.

To back up these proposals a campaign o action, including demonstrations, leafletting, direct action, etc., is needed. The Housing Action Group is open to any suggestions from individuals or groups as to what form this action should take. The Group is being organised from Dane Colet House, Ben Johnson Rd. E1 (tel. 790 5250) or 515 2996. Date and place of the next meeting is Thursday 6th February at 7. 30, at 12 Aston Street, E.1