We receive no funding except from dues, which average five dollars a month. We are an all-volunteer effort. This is how we got started.

In 2002, School of Echoes, a group of people, diverse in age, race, and organizing experience, figured that what we all had in common was living in neighborhoods undergoing a process often euphemized as “change.”

The abstraction of this process allowed some to call it no more than “neighborhoods” and even “gentrification.”

We are working on balancing long-term thinking and short-term survival; on developing new techniques of eviction resistance; on strategies for public housing advocate Catherine House to said: “It is a struggle not a debate. As in any battle, there are sides."

We need to stop looking to landlords, developers, planners, or consultants to solve a problem whose insolubility produces the interests. We need to step up to the housing crisis, whose definition in 2012 seemed to be written by the people it benefited.

28. We heard city governments expanding their taxbases not to their services, but by recruiting tech firms of Silicon Valley. When we call this crisis a housing crisis, it benefits the people who design housing, who build housing, who profit from housing, not the people who live in it.

29. We came to understand gentrification as permanent and producer-specific. We defined gentrification as “displacement and replacement of the poor for profit.”

30. But we didn’t just want to analyze gentrification, we needed to organize against it.

31. We recognized that the solidarity amongst gentrification’s beneficiaries—the police, landlords, developers, government representatives of the real estate industry—made it necessary to build equal solidarity for ourselves.

32. In other words, we knew we couldn’t fight gentrification alone.

33. We knew our work on tenants rather than housing, because tenant organizers not housing activists, has fundamentally shaped our participants, our strategies, and our goals.

34. We asked How do we build solidarity across language differences?

35. We asked Who do we expect tenants to organize themselves?

36. We asked: How do we make the LATU Tenants Union a place where you learn you are not alone?

37. There are some answers we came up with.

38. But the principle of language justice, by which we mean everyone has the right to speak and be understood in the language they are most comfortable with.

39. We are the Hillside Villa Tenants Association, focused citywide at tenants’ unions in buildings, in tenant chapters in neighborhoods, in our union which spans the city.

40. We are a tenant-led organization; our definition in 2012 seemed to be written by the people it benefited.

41. Together, School of Echoes wanted to redefine gentrification as a racial process, but in 2013 Ukraine L. E. Junior’s phrase—a “human bond” produced by humans, by actors, agents, and targets.

42. We went to the school of gentrification to see the black hole of color could be parsed out for sitting together outside.

43. To residents of Forest, where a new public park arrived after half of neighborhood properties had changed hands in three years;

44. To Neville Exchange in Hollywood, whose outreach operated to keep a unit shaped as an area of open space.

45. To Union de Vecinos, who fought against Clinton’s Texas White, which meant the destruction of more than nine hundred public apartments from Boyle Heights.

46. To LATU in a number of cities, we went not to nonprofits, we receive no funding except from dues, which average five dollars a month.

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48. In 2002, School of Echoes, a group of people, diverse in age, race, and organizing experience, figured that what we all had in common was living in neighborhoods undergoing a process often euphemized as “change.”

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50. When you call this crisis a housing crisis, you misunderstand the problem as one of production—the so-called “shortage”—not of distribution. There are two recent, modern-oriented lessons for every housing problem in American cities.

51. You have heard it all one million times and will hear it a million more: there is a housing crisis, and we’ll build our way out of it.

52. From Janet Napolitano’s “Marshall Plan” to Ben Carson’s embrace of deregulation, this supply-side, build-baby-build strategy of what gets priced as economic common sense.

53. But we understand supply-side policies—such as tax breaks for landlords—wasting public housing without governance, to get people out of politics. To benefit the people who profit from housing, not the people who live in it.

54. We should hear in supply-side policy the echoes of “brightline” designations, and “slum clearance” projects, through which cities backs up—rather than people allowed for their displacement.

55. There is a shortage of housing except for poor and working people, which the market has none and will never provide.

56. As public housing advocate Catherine House to said: “It is a struggle not a debate. As in any battle, there are sides."

57. Rather than ask why there wasn’t enough affordable housing, we should ask why any home was affordable in the first place. The pre-conditions for tenant justice is public control over the cost of private housing. Tenant justice is public control over the market.

58. How will we get this control?

59. It will not be given to us by the people who build, and let us be evicted, or who sell us like a horse.

60. It will not be given to us by our representatives, with their hands in the pockets of landlords.

61. It will not be based on us, by Zuckerberg’s charity.

62. Control over the cost of housing will not rest from nonprofit “Affordable Housing” development or Section 8 subsidies.

63. Remember: “Affordable” is still the opposite of public.

64. White. CA governor Gavin Newsome calls his plan for housing tenants a “Marshall Plan,” we shouldn’t ignore the Cold War-era anticomunista metaphors within the metaphors.

65. Rather than asking of tenants’ rights, we don’t need to control the market, we need to kick the fuck out of it.

66. We need to stop looking to landlords, developers, planners, or consultants to solve a problem whose insolubility produces the interests.

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80. When we reenvision the housing crisis as a tenants’ rights movement; it is a movement.

81. We are organizing multiple buildings owned by the same landlord.

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84. It encourages us to think in abstractions, in numbers, in abstractions, “bail,” and not about people, or about power.

85. We don’t have a housing crisis. We have a tenants’ rights crisis.

86. In the LA Tenants Union, the subject of our work is not housing but the tenants.

87. We are an all-volunteer effort. This is how we got started.

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