



TIOHTIÀ:KE STRIKE

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Ceci est une pétition et/ou un engagement pour la Grève de Tiohtià:ke, une grève de loyer illimitée ayant pour but de **transformer les logements à louer de Tiohtià:ke/Montréal en coopératives**, gratuites ou sinon très abordables, bien maintenues, ainsi que embellies. Nous, les locataires de Tiohtià:ke, avons aussi l'intention d'utiliser ces structures démocratiques de logement afin d'organiser le **logement pour tous**, ainsi que pour soutenir le retour des terres à leurs intendants originaux et l'autochtonisation de nos relations avec le logement et la terre, «**Land Back**», selon les besoins et les propositions de nos communautés de la rue et de nos communautés autochtones.

La Grève de Tiohtià:ke s'organise par quartier / arrondissement. Notre grève de loyer se déroulera en deux étapes que nous répéterons dans chaque quartier:

Étape 1: Une fois qu'une douzaine d'immeubles ou une centaine de locataires dans un quartier signeront l'engagement, iels déclencheront une grève, qui continuera à s'accroître. Nous espérons atteindre cet objectif dans au moins deux quartiers en 2026.

Étape 2: Une fois que la plupart des locataires, dans un ou plusieurs quartiers, A) feront grève ou bien B) signeront la pétition appuyant cette grève, ce(s) quartier(s) parviendront à un accord collectif concernant le processus de la transformation de leurs logements en coopératives.



The following is a petition and/or pledge form for the Tiohtià:ke Strike, an unlimited rent strike with the goal of **transforming Tiohtià:ke/Montreal's private rental housing into cooperatives**, either free or extremely affordable, well-maintained, and beautified. We, the renters of Tiohtià:ke, also have the intention of using this democratized housing structure to organize **housing for all**, as well as to support the return of **Land Back** to its original stewards and indigenize our relationship to housing and to land, in accordance with the needs and the proposals of our street communities and our Indigenous communities, respectively.

The Tiohtià:ke Strike organizes by neighborhood / borough. Our rent strike has two steps that will repeat in each neighborhood:

Part I: Once a dozen buildings or a hundred tenants in a neighborhood sign a pledge form, they go on strike, and this strike will continue to grow in number. We hope to achieve this in at least two neighborhoods by 2026.

Part II: Once most renters, in one or multiple neighborhoods, either A) go on strike or B) sign a petition in favor of the strike, that (or those) neighborhood(s) will come to a collective agreement regarding the process of transforming their rental units into cooperatives.

WHY RENT STRIKE?

Housing is a human right, yet we are suffocated by the cost of rent. Rent puts an enormous strain on our finances, forces our unhoused neighbors to sleep in the cold, and intensifies the gap between the rich and the poor, by forcing out of our hands whatever little wages we make, and handing them over to proprietors who tend to monopolize the land and raise prices artificially.

From Harlem to Barcelona, from Buenos Aires to Soweto, historical rent strikes around the world have shown their effectiveness in lifting the strain off the backs of everyday people. Anti-apartheid strikers in 1980s Soweto, South Africa either got to keep their homes or went over a decade without paying any rent whatsoever. And countless other rent strikes of the 20th century won reduced rent and improved conditions for tenants, as governments scrambled to write up new laws in order to subdue tenant movements, or as landlords caved to financial pressure.

Impressed with the results of the 1963 Harlem rent strike, Malcolm X called on mass rent strikes shortly before he was murdered:

“We propose to support rent strikes. Yes, not little rent strikes in one block. We’ll make Brooklyn a rent strike. We’ll get every black man in this city; The Organization of Afro-American Unity won’t stop until there’s not a black man in the city not on strike. Nobody will pay any rent. The whole city will come to a halt. And they can’t put all of us in jail because they’ve already got the jails full of us.”



A rent strike is the easiest way to improve our lives: Just stop paying rent.

WHY CO-OPS?

Co-ops cut out the middleman: The landlord. Instead of having a landlord make passive income while paying a manager, janitor, repairman, etc. to do actual work on the building, co-op tenants pay these workers directly, or else they do the maintenance work themselves. That’s how co-ops keep prices extremely affordable and their buildings in excellent condition. Decisions are made for our own benefit, not for the landlord’s profits. Co-ops are efficient.

Co-ops empower the worker. By taking control of our housing, we will no longer need to work just to survive. Co-ops can build their own greenhouses and solar panels, they can reserve space for a store whose profits would go toward making the price of housing completely free for those who need it. By running our housing democratically, we could become entirely self-sufficient. We’d have a stronger hand in negotiating for better wages and working conditions. We could turn our workplaces into co-ops as well, and standardize 2- or 3-day work weeks for everyone, all while enjoying a higher standard of life.

Co-ops make redress and dignity possible. They give us the capacity to make decisions for the benefit of all, such as Housing For All and Land Back, where our authorities have failed us. Is it any wonder, then, that Mohawk artist and activist Louis Karoniaktajeh Hall called for the creation of cooperatives, in his 1974 *Ganienkeh Manifesto*:

“The coop system of economy shall prevail. Instead of the people competing with each other, they shall help and co-operate with each other.”



How do we turn our rentals into coops? Just agree on it.

WHO ARE WE?

The Tiohtià:ke Strike is a grassroots movement that seeks to organize strikes, not to pressure public or private authorities, but to free up people’s time and resources, and thus to empower them. Our demands are aimed at people themselves.

Horizontal mass organizing: We trust people. Our world is so full of violence and suffering because the vast majority of people’s intelligence, creativity, and decision-making capacities are actively suppressed. From childhood onward, we are made to compete with one another, to work alone, and to be valued individually so that we are isolated from our fellows. And we are made to obey order after order, whether at school or as professionals, and overworked to the point of exhaustion, so that we forget ourselves and our needs. But the human being is a social animal; our excellence shines through when our powers are effectively combined. Our approach seeks to develop our own capacity, as a project, by giving anyone the power to help organize and take initiative, rather than having a core team give orders to a majority of volunteers, and to often rotate managerial tasks so as to demystify these skills to the average person. True leaders inspire leadership in others.

Prefigurative Direct Action: A strike is often imagined as a most laborious affair, the height of a ‘struggle’ between classes. But just the opposite ought to be true: A work strike frees you from exploitative labor, and in principle, any strike or boycott is a refusal to partake in those mandatory activities and institutions which are bad for you. For this reason, we believe it is our duty, and more strategic, to live as if we are already free. Rather than using our newfound resources, time, and energy to pressure and negotiate with authorities, we ought to use them to build mutual aid networks, including co-ops, to lead a more self-sufficient way of life. The strike is a choreographed act of rest and healing, so that we can deal with the crises of our time.

Consensus vs. Difference: While we seek to make decisions by building consensus, we do not impose it. A better world would be one in which differences are given space to co-exist, so long as no one is subject to systemic violence, and where disagreements are not shushed and shamed for the benefit of an artificial unity. Those wishing to branch off and take initiative are encouraged, as are those seeking spaces reserved for specific, marginalized communities. In order to observe these irreducible and complementary values of consensus and difference, we encourage, in the words of Black American author and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston:

“Open disagreements openly arrived at.”

