



APRIL 2021

# A CALL TO THE PEOPLE: JOIN OUR WORKING GROUPS!

## Fellow tenants,

KUT has been meeting regularly, building its constitution and formalizing its structure while the hard work of helping each other and our less fortunate unhoused neighbours has continued. Over the last few meetings we have established a plan of action for the near future and it includes an establishment of several working groups tasked with growing particular areas of our focus and concern. For this to work well we need greater involvement of members. While we are in the process of formalizing membership through a constitution, we want to get more people involved in the work of our organization and hope you can lend us some of your time and/or expertise. If you're reading this, in other words, you're welcome to volunteer.

We're looking for volunteers to help us with following working groups/tasks:

- Encampment support
- Fundraising
- Research and policy development
- Individual case work
- Media, agitation, and propaganda
- Building representatives
- Tenant action support (bed bug team, landlord problems etc.)



# **An overview of our working groups/tasks:**

## **Encampment and housing support**

**Right now the Katarokwi (Kingston) Union of Tenants is involved in directly supporting underhoused people in Kingston. For the last few months, we have been raising money alongside allies in the community to pay for homeless people in motels. More recently, we have started to house others in the community. Together with the Kingston Peace Council, we are in regular contact with and are providing necessities to those who are marginalized and without permanent, adequate shelter in our community. We are also working with legal experts to try and find ways to assist our homeless community.**

**Do you want to help deliver food, heating supplies and other necessities to our friends staying outside or in motels? Do you want to attend to people's needs? Do you have a car or a truck that can transport large items and donations? Are you a sensitive, caring person who trusts poor people to know what's best for them and is willing to ask rather than impose on them what you think is right? Do you understand the effects of trauma on people? The need is overwhelming and there's never enough feet on the ground and hands on deck. Your help will be very much appreciated.**

## **Treasury, Finance and Fundraising**

**Our organization is in the midst of deliberating about our legal status, and we have regular meetings to discuss whether we should incorporate, become a non-profit, or pursue other options. We are interested in funding and fundraising opportunities that will enable us to expand our capacity.**

**Are you good at writing grant proposals? Are you good at raising money for good causes? Do you have banking or finance background and are good with money? Do you understand the ins and outs of the non-profit or charity 'sector'? Do you want to learn? If so please consider joining this working group and helping us raise money and spend it wisely.**

# **An overview of our working groups/tasks (continued):**

## **Research and Policy**

**Are you into politics? Do you like to watch the news? Do you watch parliamentary debates or Kingston City Council Meetings? Do you enjoy reading government reports? Are you interested in how various levels of government function (or not function)? Do you have ideas about how to resolve the problems of unaffordable and inadequate housing supply and homelessness? Do you yell at the TV when you watch bourgeois politicians' 'debates'? Do you have ideas about how a humane government should function? Have you thought of running for office?**

**We need people who are willing to pierce through the fog of lies and obfuscations, of double-speak and policy jargon and translate for the people what the capitalist state and its politicians are up to, to show how can't can be turned into can, how to change government from being the servant of private interests to being an instrument of people's power. Our group aims to produce and spread news, opinions, and theory that can help us better understand and conceptualize the myriad ways in which working class tenants are being oppressed by this neoliberal machine.**

## **Bed Bug Team**

**A lot of the low-income housing in Kingston is infested with bed bugs, cockroaches and rats. People on fixed incomes, people who are unemployed, underemployed or unable to work because of their age or disability are often having to choose between homelessness and living with vermin. We have been trying to figure out ways to force the landlords and the municipal government to clean up people's apartments and we have been helping our fellow tenants help themselves with resources, tools and knowledge necessary to tackle this formidable problem. If you have ideas about how we could do better, if you know the ins and outs of public health regimes we're coming up against, if you have experience dealing with pests and landlords who don't care that their apartment buildings are bug infested, get in touch with us.**

# **An overview of our working groups/tasks (continued):**

## **Building Representatives**

**Right now we have a number of members who are acting as building 'representatives' for their complex or block. We want to expand our tentacles around the city and have tenants representative from every building and block in Kingston. Building representatives give updates at our monthly meetings and are asked to report on the struggles they are facing in their area. If you are a social person who is a good neighbour and who would like to see tenants have representation and power in this society, please get in contact with us. We can offer assistance in dealing with landlords, navigating intra-tenant problems, and more. If you're "that person" your neighbours turn to, or if you're hoping to be an ally in the struggle for affordable rental housing for all, please get in touch!**

## **Individual Case Work**

**Do you know the law? Do you know what to do if someone's roommate or partner has left them with rent to pay? Do you know what the tenant's options are when their landlord tells them that they're selling the building and that they need to move out in 2 months? Do you have experience fighting landlords at the Rental Tribunal? Do you know what services are out there to help tenants who are facing bad landlords? Do you want to become someone who is proficient in all this? Then this working group is for you. A lot of this kind of work is being done 'organically' through our Facebook group - people ask questions and others chip in and answer them. While this is certainly welcome, we would like to train tenants on their rights, so that we could have members who are able to concretely answer questions. If you are interested in receiving tenants' rights education, reach out to us. We have educational resources at our disposal and are looking to build a small 'course' that will enable members to help others.**

# **An overview of our working groups/tasks (continued):**

## **Media, Agitation and Propaganda**

**Our media team has been doing amazing work recently churning out videos, articles and our newest newsletter, growing our Facebook page, developing our logo, website and starting our Twitter and Instagram accounts. They have plans to develop pamphlets and banners, business cards etc. If you are social-media savvy, if you know how to reach a wide audience and if you love to write and create media, then this working group is for you. We've had some issues with Facebook censoring our posts so if you're interested in helping us deal with that problem or know how to sidestep censors without compromising our ability to communicate or restricting our reach then we need you!**

**If you would like to contribute your time and expertise to any of these please comment here or private message me.**

**Thank you for your attention.**

**Yours truly,  
Ivan Stoilkovic, General Secretary KUT**