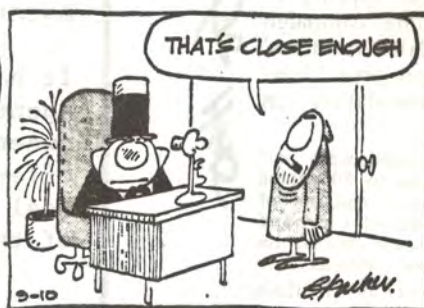
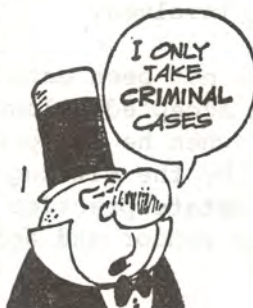




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LEGAL BACKUP OFFERED TO TENANTS' ADVICE SERVICES

The N.S.W. Public Solicitor's Office has agreed to provide a telephone lawyer back-up service for the Tenants' Advice Network.

This will enable our voluntary advisors to clarify the legal position of tenants inquiring about their rights.

Negotiations are taking place between the Public Solicitors Office and the Tenants' Union to have this service available at all local Public Solicitors Offices.

This heralds a major break-through for the Tenants' Union. We have been trying for a long time to gain legal back-up and to have the valuable work of the Tenants' Advice Network recognized and supported by legal advice.

Most of the problems tenants have can be dealt with adequately by our voluntary advisors. However, there are always a percentage of cases which need legal advice and referral. Up until now this advice was only available to low income earners via the independent legal centres at Redfern, Marrickville and Parramatta. Now that the Public Solicitor's Office is on-side, the T.A.S. network will be able to offer improved service to tenants in need.

Registered for posting as a publication Category B
 Newsletter of the Tenants' Union of N.S.W. Co-op Ltd.,
 118 Regent Street, Redfern, 2016.

Chippendale Housing Co-op. battles greedy speculators

Squatters fight to stop sale of houses

By MALCOLM BROWN

Eight squatters were arrested in a police raid yesterday in what appears to be a continuing campaign by Chippendale residents' groups to preserve low-rental accommodation in the area.

The eight arrested were part of a group of up to 50 people who had moved in and out of the terraced house in Cleveland Street between midday on Sunday and 1 pm yesterday.

They appeared in Redfern Court of Petty Sessions yesterday afternoon charged with trespassing and were remanded on self-bail to appear in the same court next Monday.

But, according to more than 20 activists who met in the Sydney University Settlement building in Chippendale last night, there is likely to be more action to draw the attention of business and government authorities.

The 25-hour squat in Cleveland Street was to try to stop the sale of three terraced houses and a shop, which have been held for many years by a local family company, the Chippendale Estate.

The estate agents handling the sale, Mitchell and Cranston Pty Ltd, of Abercrombie Street, Chippendale, say that the Chippendale Estate has decided to sell and has a perfect right to do so.

These houses form part of a proposal for a low-cost housing co-operative. Local tenants have made a submission to the State Government for a long-term, low interest loan which will enable them to buy the houses they now live in. However, while the government procrastinates, the tenants are being evicted and the houses tarted up for sale at enormous profit.

(cont.)

Although the scenario is familiar, there are some strange features about the sale of these houses. In one case, the sitting tenants Mr and Mrs Herbert offered the Agents \$40,000 to buy their house. They were told by the Agent that contracts had already been exchanged and their bid was too late.

The house was bought for \$36,000 by Haven Cruises, a company in which Mr and Mrs Gibson are the shareholders. Mr Gibson also happens to be a director of Mitchell and Cranston, the Real Estate Agent involved.

It has not been explained satisfactorily why the agent accepted a lower price on behalf of the owner when he had previously been made a higher offer by the sitting tenant. Is it normal Real Estate practice to act against the interests of the vendor and accept the lower price?

CONSUMER AFFAIRS INVESTIGATES AGENTS.

Details of the transaction have been reported to the Minister for Consumer Affairs who has directed the Council for Auctioneers and Agents to investigate Mitchell and Cranston, Real Estate Agents.

The Chippendale Housing Co-op is fighting an uphill battle against the sale of these houses on the private market. The squat on Monday, 25th February was an attempt to draw public attention to the plight of tenants in Cleveland Street (and across the inner city). Their campaign is designed to pressure the government into an early decision on funding for the Housing Co-operative before it is too late and the houses are sold.

The tenants and their supporters are determined to fight on against eviction and the sale of their homes.

The establishment of tenant managed housing co-operatives is long overdue in Australia. In the U.K., Canada, Europe and the U.S., co-operatives have been accepted as the most economically and socially viable alternative to exploitation in the private rental market for low income earners.

If the attempt to gain government approval and funding for the Chippendale Housing Co-op fails, future prospects for stopping the wholesale eviction of low income tenants from the inner city of Sydney will be lost. Major housing reforms such as non-profit organizations where tenants have control over decision making, rents etc. may fade from the political agenda altogether if the Chippendale tenants lose this fight. The Chippendale Housing Action Group needs support. Contact Margie or Bob on 698 3087 for further information.

More ACTIVE support needed by union

All members have received notice of:

THE TENANTS' UNION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TO BE HELD

18th MARCH, 7.30 PM AT 118 REGENT ST., REDFERN.

This is a reminder and a request that as many people as possible attend. The Union needs your ACTIVE support if we are to keep up the pressure on government and the public conscience to improve the position of tenants and work towards the demise of landlord exploitation.

As you know we are a voluntary body and rely on the energy and resources of our supporters. At present there is a core of dedicated and tireless workers who have given much of their free time to administrative and organizational duties. However, because of the democratic way we are set up, some will have to resign from the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting and cannot renominate for at least one year.

NEW BLOOD IS NEEDED

to fill these vacancies and nominations are also being sought for the following positions

1. SECRETARY
2. MINUTES SECRETARY
3. EDITOR - NEWSLETTER
4. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
5. PUBLICITY OFFICER
6. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
7. PUBLICITY COMMITTEE
8. POLICY COMMITTEE
9. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

"ALL MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE" to nominate for any of these positions and the A.G.M. is when elections take place.

If you wish to participate in decision making and help influence the future direction and impact of the Union -

HERE IS YOUR CHANCE.

There are many other ways you can contribute to the work of the Tenants' Union. How much of your time you devote is entirely up to you. It may be a few hours per week or per month. Here is a list of some of the ways you can help.

- ARTISTIC? - The Tenants' Union is looking for volunteers to help with design and layout of new posters and with the layout and art work for our monthly newsletter.
- ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS? - There is a mountain of office work, e.g. distribution of resource material, typing, taking enquiries etc.

IDEAS? - Everyone has them, few of us are confident that ours are worthwhile.

Do you have any suggestions on:-

- How to promote and publicize the Union, the housing crisis and encourage tenant solidarity.
- How to recruit new members and volunteers for the Tenants' Advice Service network.
- How to step up pressure on the government to change the Landlord/Tenant law so that tenants have security of tenure and security against rent increases.
- How we can improve our services to tenants and make more people aware of their rights and where to get help and advice.
- What are the best methods we can use to educate tenants, community groups and prospective volunteers about their rights.
- How can we raise funds to further the work of the Union.



FREE TIME? - Every organization has an amazing amount of hack work which needs ongoing attention, the Tenants' Union is no exception, e.g.

- folding and distributing leaflets.
- addressing envelopes, posting mail.
- filing.
- Helping with the Newsletter.
- Working on a Committee.
- Work as a volunteer at your local TAS, no experience necessary, we will train you.

If you wish to offer your assistance in any of the above areas,

PHONE

REYNA ON

698 8033 BEFORE 1 PM.

699 4741 BETWEEN 1 PM - 5 PM.

AND COME TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 18TH MARCH.

REMEMBER THE TENANTS' UNION IS ONLY AS EFFECTIVE AS THE COLLECTIVE STRENGTH OF ITS MEMBERS.

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE IS UP TO ALL OF US.

how to win the tenants' jackpot

Hundreds of people in New South Wales could be eligible to claim back much of their rent.

A spate of recent claims has shown that many houses and flats were still under rent control without the knowledge of the Landlord or Tenant.

Many tenants are paying high rents for a poor standard of accommodation. So if tenants feel the rent is oppressive their only chance of having it reduced is to find out if their premises are under rent control by default because their Landlord has not followed the correct procedure in taking it out of rent control.

In fact your Landlord might owe you money. Here's how to find out

1) FIND OUT IF YOUR HOUSE OR FLAT IS UNDER RENT CONTROL.

Do a search with the Landlord and Tenant Section, Department of Consumer Affairs (Rent Control Office) on the 2nd Floor, 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst. This search will cost you \$2. You should ask if there are any registered 5A leases on your house or flat, and if so:

- * the name of the landlord;
- * the full name showing first names or initials, of the tenant at time of registration;
- * the term of the lease and the amount of rental; and
- * the registration date and number, should such a lease exist.

You should ask the person at the counter to interpret the information they give you and tell you whether or not the place is under rent control.

An interpretation follows:

- * *If there are no registered 5A leases on your premises and those premises were built before 16/12/54, then your house or flat is under rent control.*

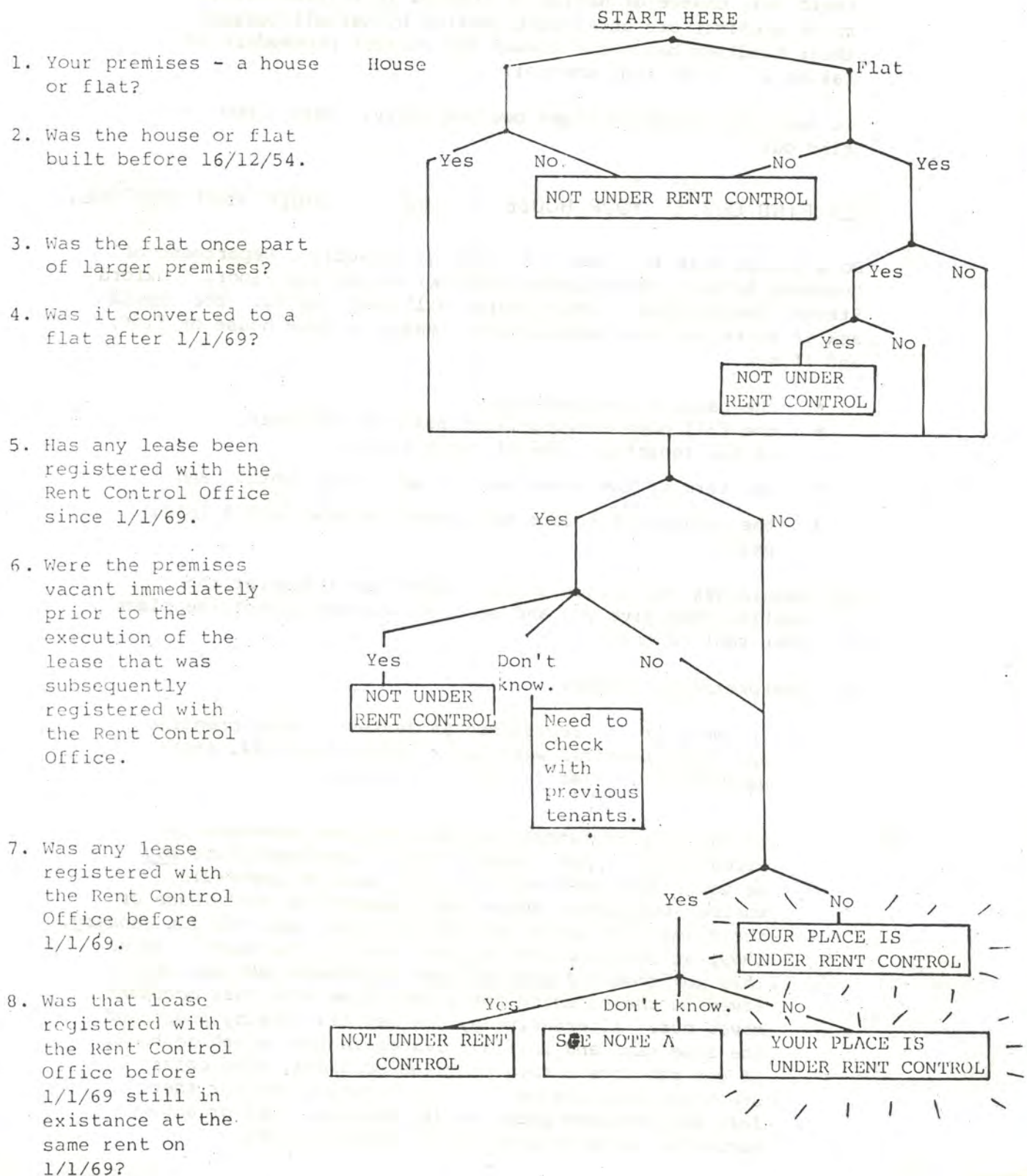
Note A * *If the only registered 5A lease on your premises is dated prior to 1st January, 1969, then your place may be under rent control. You will need to ascertain whether the person whose name appeared on that lease or their deserted spouse was still living there on 1st January, 1969, at the same rent as spelt out in the lease. To do this you should discreetly ask neighbours who may have lived in the vicinity for a long time when this occupant moved out. Alternatively, you may try ringing people of the same name and initials listed in the telephone book. If you can locate this previous occupant, then obtain a Statutory Declaration from them stating whether they left the premises prior to 1st January, 1969 or any variation in rent prior to 1st January, 1969.*

If you can't locate the previous occupant then you will find it difficult to prove that the place is still under rent control.

Note that any lease registered with the Rent Control Office must be done so within the principal (i.e. fixed) term of the lease. Also, there must be vacant possession prior to execution (i.e. signing) of lease for it to be validly registered with the Rent Control Office.

A simple guide for checking if your house or flat is under rent control follows. Also there are more complex factors which might place your premises under rent control.

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO CHECKING IF YOUR PLACE IS UNDER RENT CONTROL.



2) FIND OUT IF THERE IS A FAIR RENT ON YOUR HOUSE OR FLAT

If you can establish that your house or flat is under rent control, then you should do an additional search to see if there was ever a fair rent determination on the premises and, if so, what was the latest rent and date of determination. The fee for this search is \$5.00.

If there is a rent determination, you may seek reimbursement of all rent paid in excess of the latest rent determination over the last six year period.

THIS IS LIKE WINNING THE JACKPOT BECAUSE IT COULD BE A FEW THOUSAND DOLLARS.

You must realise that any action to recover overpayment of rent will sour any good landlord-tenant relationship and almost certainly lead to eviction proceedings. The tenant should balance the benefit of reimbursement of rent against the risk of eviction.

However, note, it is not unusual to find prescribed premises which do not have a fair rent. In this case any agreement between landlord and tenant to pay a certain rent is binding.

You should not tell anyone, particularly your landlord or real estate agent, that you have discovered that the place is under rent control or that there is a fair rent on the property. You should immediately get advice from a solicitor familiar with landlord-tenant matters or a Tenants' Advice Service supported by the Tenants' Union (phone 698-8033, Monday to Friday 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.).

A tenant may prefer to keep quiet about the fact that he or she is living in controlled premises. In the event of receiving a "Notice to Quit" it will take much longer to evict such a tenant.



kings cross tenants

win round one!

Palisades Tenants' Committee and Darlinghurst Resident Action Group with the support of volunteers from Kings Cross and Darlinghurst Tenants' Advice Services were successful in pressuring the Sydney City Council to reject two plans for high rise strata unit developments on vacant land adjoining tenanted properties on the Palisades site.

One of the developers affected by the Council's decision is a large property company, well known for its harassment and eviction of local tenants over the past 18 months.

STRATA TITLING THREATENS TENANTS

Tenants and owner occupiers in the area have been fighting an uphill battle against further residential development and the conversion of existing flats into strata title units. They are concerned that the growing trend towards strata conversions depletes the housing stock available for rental at costs local people can afford.

SMH 25/10/83 **Council rejects high rise plans**

By ROBERT ALLAN,
Civic Reporter

Two plans for high rise residential developments in Darlinghurst were rejected by Sydney City Council last night.

The plans, which included five tower blocks up to 16 storeys high on the old Palisades site, were thrown out despite a last minute attempt by the Civic Reform group to reach a compromise with the developers.

Alderman Charles Boag voted for an amendment by Alderman Tony Reeves (Lab) which rejected the plans and called for the suspension of the planning regulations which cover Darlinghurst.

The council will ask the Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Landa, to suspend

the Interim Development Order while a full review is made by council officers.

The IDO, which was introduced a year ago, made it possible for developers to construct high rise buildings.

The compromise put forward by Alderman Barry Lewis, chairman of the works committee, was that the plans be redesigned to make them more compatible with "the historic buildings in the immediate vicinity."

One of the developers, McDonald Industries has lodged an appeal with the Local Government Appeals Tribunal because the council did not consider the plans within two months of receiving them.

In petitions to Sydney City Council, residents objected to the plans on grounds which included increased traffic and pollution, loss of use and the change in the character of the area.

ACTIVE RESIDENTS are calling for a moratorium on strata title development and conversions of existing flats to units. Instead of the high rise, they are proposing that flats in keeping with the existing character of the area be erected and let at reasonable rental to low income earners.

NATIONAL TRUST CLASSIFICATION

Some of the flats on the Palisades sites have been classified by the National Trust. Strata conversion could destroy the character of these buildings, not to mention the obvious fact that existing tenants will be kicked out, so that the units can be sold at exorbitant prices.

Strata title conversions are a threat to many tenants in older buildings, and its happening right across Sydney. If you are affected or are aware of this practice in your area, contact the Tenants' Union or your local Tenants' Advice Service.

WOMEN AND HOUSING

SOUTH SYDNEY WOMEN'S HOUSING ACTION GROUP is organizing a one day workshop on Monday, 24th March, 1980, to discuss womens' housing problems.

Issues to be covered include:-

homeless women; the handicapped; emergency permanent accommodation for women leaving refuges; discrimination against women and children in the rental market; aboriginal and migrant women; and the need for long-term low interest loans for single parent families and those on fixed incomes.

Although South Sydney Women's Centre is organizing the workshop, women and concerned community groups from outside the vicinity are participating. Women are discriminated against in many ways when attempting to find accommodation. The aim of this mini-conference is to document the housing problems specifically faced by women and to pressure the government into action.

Contact the South Sydney Women's Centre 699 7494 for details of time and place. Any interested women are invited to attend.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON NEWSLETTER

You will remember that in your last newsletter we asked you to return a questionnaire asking you what you thought of your Newsletter.

Just a reminder if you have not done it, please do so.



STOP PRESS

The Volunteer Bureau of N.S.W. is holding 'Volunteer Week 1980' from March 17th-22nd to publicize the valuable work of voluntary organizations and to hopefully recruit more volunteers to carry on the good work.

The promotion is being sponsored by Myer Sydney Ltd and stalls will be set up in all of their stores.

The Tenants' Union would like to participate but can only do so if we can recruit volunteers to staff the stalls. If you are interested in telling the public about our services to tenants and distributing T.U. literature, please contact Reyna on 660 6741.

Minister not in favour of rent control for housing

"The New South Wales Government is not interested in rent control."

This assurance was given by the State's Minister for Housing and Co-operative Societies (Mr Einfeld) in a recent address to construction industry leaders in Sydney.

Discussing the current rental housing problem, the Minister said: "I notice that for the last two quarters rentals are inflating faster than the general rate of inflation."



"This may be a statistical hiccup but it seems unlikely, given the state of the private rental market."

"What can be done about this situation?"

"More to the point — what can governments do to tempt the investor into the private rental market?"

"One way is to remove the residual worry of the entrepreneur — rent control."

"My knowledge of the practice here and overseas is that such control is bedevilled by all sorts of problems."

"Most important — as the experience of Canberra showed a few years ago — it acts in fact as a disincentive to investment."

"I repeat — there will be no rent control under this government."

Dealing with government initiatives, Mr Einfeld said there would be releases of government-owned land on the market for rental housing.

Sites on these properties would be leased to private builders and developers on a medium-term leasing arrangement at relatively low ground rents.

Lessees would be required to build two and three-bedroom rental accommodation for private letting at rents "that were satisfactory to the government".

At the end of five years, head lessees would be required to buy out the government's interest in the land at the current market value.

The deferred cost of the land would offset the normal low rate of return on this kind of investment.

The first sites to be offered were at Marsfield, Chullora and Sefton.

'Corroboree' Dec'79 / JAN '80 P7

WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP

NEXT:

WEDNESDAY 19TH MARCH - 6.30 P.M.

TENANTS'

at Tenants' Union Office,
118 Regent Street, Redfern,
(Grey Church next to B.P. Service Station).

ADVICE

FOR T.U. Members, Advice Service Volunteers and
interested tenants.

WORKSHOP

Become an expert. Solve your own and other people's tenancy problems.

Remember: INFORMATION IS POWER.