



"For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land will bring them bread, and above all, dignity." -Frantz Fanon

ONE DC & the Global Land Movement



*Sharecroppers
in Eutaw,
Alabama,
1930s*

ONE DC recognizes that because all basic necessities of human life come from the land, community control of the land is an essential element of liberation. Displacement and dispossession from the land are perhaps the most powerful tools of colonialism because they strip us of our self-sufficiency. We become dependent on capitalist structures to provide our food, water, and housing as commodities, forgetting that as human beings on a plentiful Earth, we all have an inherent and equal right to these necessities, regardless of our ability to pay. Without control of the land, we may survive (when our survival is useful or convenient for those in power) but we can never ensure that our survival will continue. We cannot guarantee access to healthy food and safe, decent

housing for our families and communities; and we cannot protect our water, soil, and air from pollution that poisons our bodies.

In DC, we live our daily lives on land with a long history of contestation, environmental inequality, and racial injustice. Our city exists on land stolen from its original residents, the Nanotchtank people, and developed using the exploited labor of enslaved African people by European colonists. People of color in the District have been relegated to less desirable land, and dispossessed of their land as soon as it has become profitable for those with more power. Systemic housing discrimination and mass displacement guised as "urban renewal" efforts have led to the disenfranchisement of Black residents throughout the 20th century. At the same time, many white residents were able to benefit from this inequality to build intergenerational wealth, creating a dramatic wealth disparity between white and Black families in DC.



*Overlooking
development
in Anacostia*

In the ongoing struggle to defend our homes, DC residents must contest with the joint powers of corporate greed and government corruption. It is common practice in DC for government officials to provide enormous subsidies to real estate developers in return for campaign contributions. Instead of funding affordable housing, transportation, education, or community-led, equitable development, hundreds of millions of dollars of city funds are given away to developers each year by way of tax breaks and land deals. In these so-called "[sweetheart deals](#)," corporations have received public land worth millions of dollars for [only \\$1](#). Meanwhile, D.C.'s housing costs continue to skyrocket, and the rate of homelessness remains [one of the highest](#) in the U.S. **Now, as the housing crisis reaches a critical point, political resistance in the District is stronger than ever as working class people and people of color are uniting and organizing for land, equity, and justice.**

Congress Heights

At Congress Heights, tenants are still going strong in their fight for community control over housing and for safe, dignified housing conditions. After a [fire broke](#)

[out](#) on the property in November 2018, the tenants have been temporarily relocated to other buildings in the area, and maintain their legal standing as tenants of their Congress Heights apartments as they wage the fight for quality, long-term, and meaningfully affordable housing in their neighborhood. The two ongoing [lawsuits](#) against Geoff Griffis and City Partners regarding their [improper ownership and evasion of tenants' TOPA rights](#) have been fought in the courts over the past year. The property also remains under the control of a court appointed receiver due to past negligence of the property.



Congress Heights tenants hold a meeting at the BWWC

Kelsey Gardens

In the way that development and humanitarian aid are often [used to mask imperialist intervention abroad](#), the rhetoric surrounding mixed-income development obscures a sinister process of displacement. At the very core of the politics of mixed-income development is the undermining of communities of the working poor, particularly when these communities are also Black. Gentrification exposes already marginalized communities to increased policing and surveillance. As new, wealthier, whiter residents move into communities, long-term tenants find themselves subject to racialized stereotypes of criminality, often resulting in dangerous and violent encounters with the police.



*Kelsey
Gardens
tenants
prior to
the
demolition*

In addition, once residents move into shiny, new developments, building management implement a draconian slate of rules enforced through constant surveillance of private behavior and space. This is coupled with an aesthetic and cultural transformation of neighborhood and community space, which compounds feelings of unfamiliarity, loss, and discomfort. As this discomfort mounts and long-term residents choose to leave, rather than be subjected to continued indignities, the traditional networks of mutual support, which working class and poor people rely on to survive the perpetual onslaught of capitalism, start to fall apart.

Kelsey Gardens, one of the first properties where ONE DC organized, is a clear example of the negative impact of mixed-income development on working class and Black communities in DC. After a long struggle against the developers who sought to transform their housing into luxury apartments, in 2006, the residents of Kelsey Gardens, led by their tenant association, **won the right to return** to the new building after construction was completed. The residents would live in subsidized apartments within the building, which would be shared by new arrivals to Shaw who could afford to pay market-rate rent.

When the residents returned to the building after being displaced for six years, however, they realized that **the communal feel of the old Kelsey Gardens had been erased with the construction of the new property**, Jefferson at Marketplace. In the new building, subsidized tenants found that they were subject to a different set of rules than the market-rate tenants, including restrictions on access to amenities, surveillance and criticism of their guests, and verbal harassment from management.

In addition, residents have reported previously undisclosed fees for basic services, coldness from market-rate residents, and interference with the tenant associations right to organize on the property. In one extreme case, a resident was even evicted for smoking cigarettes in her apartment, a practice she had

maintained for most of her adult life. These forms of harassment and invasion of privacy and comfort have caused many of the original residents, who fought hard for the right to return, to leave the new building and Shaw entirely.

Despite the injustice they faced at the hands of building management, **the current and former residents of Kelsey Gardens continue to fight, and want their experiences to serve as a counterbalance to the dominant discourse on mixed-income development.** Over the course of the last few months, former Kelsey Garden residents have been working with ONE DC member Martha Davis and Virginia Commonwealth University Professor Kathryn Howell to share and record their experiences living in new mixed-income developments.



Former Kelsey Garden tenants sharing their stories in 2018

The results of these interviews will be compiled into a policy document that will be used to educate lawmakers and combat the mythology of mix-income developments. In addition, the interviews will be turned into a **popular education tool to discuss the relationship between mixed-income development and the displacement of working class and working poor communities of color in DC.** This, in turn, will be used to collectively educate buildings experiencing similar redevelopment attempts and give them tools to identify, articulate, and organize against mixed-income development and in favor of their right to the city. We look forward to the results of this project and the implementation of its associated written resources.

Richman Apartments

In November 2017, Mrs. Jourgette Reid-Sillah, (aka. Ms. J.), a ONE DC member, along with a few of her neighbors voted to create a Tenants Association at the Richman Apartments in Southeast DC. The Richman Apartment residents, noticing the increase in expensive housing developments popping up in their community, wanted to take action and get organized.

Ms. J and other tenant-leaders began meeting monthly in their laundry room, and encouraged fellow residents to get involved. ONE DC enthusiastically supported Ms. J. and her neighbors' organizing efforts. ONE DC staff and

members helped knock on doors, conducted outreach, and offered technical assistance on how to create a Tenants Association.

Ms. J. saw the Tenants Association as an important group that could help build community and stay abreast of development plans. But even as residents recognized its value, not everyone was willing to contribute the necessary labor. "Everyone thinks that a coalition is a good idea," Ms. J. says, "the challenge is making people understand that they must help carry the water."

Their hard work has paid off. They have named their association the *Because We Care Coalition, Richman Apartments Tenants Association*. Through a process of debate and discussion, the tenants created their by-laws and are now focusing on electing a board and registering their Tenants Association with the DC Government.

Ms. J. is excited about the future victories they will win for their complex and neighborhood. She, like Fannie Lou Hamer, believes, "If you don't speak out ain't nobody gonna speak for you." Over time, even more community leaders have become dedicated to building power in their community, and the association is continually seeking to recruit tenants who care. They are focused on organizing and setting goals for the future.

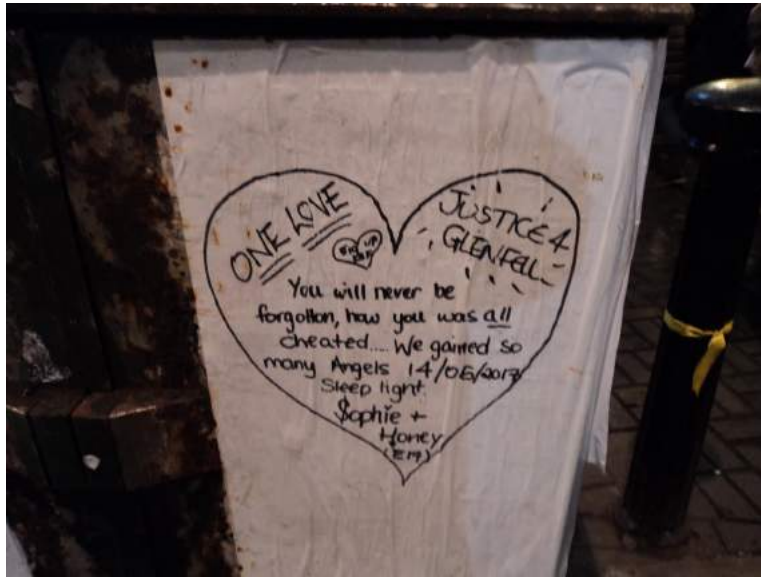
ONE DC is only one component of a growing international movement - we partner with and take inspiration from organizations all over the world who share our vision. Methods of achieving community control of land and housing differ from place to place, as different communities exist in unique historical contexts, with different needs and cultural values.

From Justice for Grenfell in London...

The official enquiry into the Grenfell Tower atrocity is currently adjourned indefinitely. Justice delayed is justice denied. But some of the root causes are well known to the working class communities around Grenfell, across the Atlantic and throughout the world. Neoliberalism considers the lives of the poor unimportant. Housing has become just another commodity to be traded. The people and agencies who should have been ensuring the safety of people at Grenfell were more interested in making money out of them, or pursuing their political careers.

But it goes deeper. UK council tenants, like US public housing tenants, have been stigmatized for decades. The Grenfell fire spread because of the flammable material fitted to prettify a council housing tower block.

*There are some very rich people living near Grenfell. They didn't want to look at "ugly" housing, or think about the people who lived there. Grenfell has become a symbol of our failing housing policy and divided cities. But there is hope. It's also become a totem for campaigns demanding decent, safe, secure and truly affordable homes for all. Winning that is the real way to get Justice for Grenfell. -Glyn Robbins, author of *There's No Place: The American Housing Crisis and what it means for the UK**



...to the [MST \(Landless Workers' Movement\)](#) in Brazil:

*Agrarian reform may seem like an old problem, but it is vitally important for a new vision of modernity. **It means tearing down three fences, as the MST puts it—fences around land, capital, and knowledge.** As part of a larger effort to democratize access to resources, agrarian reform and food sovereignty can encompass everything from providing credit for settlers in land reform areas so that they can practice agroecological methods, to establishing good public schools and universities in every region. It might start with diversified local economies supported through farmers markets, but it also envisions universal health services, access to the internet, public transport, movie theaters, and more in every town. ([Source](#))*



...to [Abahlali baseMjondolo \(Shack Dwellers' Movement\)](#) in South Africa:

The state makes promises. The state breaks its promises. People respond. We were promised a piece of land. That land was sold to a businessman. Anger welled up. We brought traffic to a standstill for hours, demanding answers from the authorities. Most popular protest in South Africa uses road blockades as a tactic. What is significant is that although there were so many protests around the country, we were able to sustain that protest and

turn it into a movement. What made that possible is that the state was prepared to lie and put lies ahead of the truth and put profit ahead of human needs. Because they were prepared to continue lying, I think that act really enabled us to put sustaining plans in place to resist. We did not only organise our locality. Neighbouring communities also got involved. They said, 'we identify your demands with our demands. We can amplify our voices if we all unite'. So, this unity was organic. This movement grew from anger to the table, not from the table to anger. **Ours is a politics of the poor – a homemade politics that everyone can understand and find a home in.** ([Source](#))



And in 2018, ONE DC joined [Homes for All](#), a national campaign launched by Right to the City Alliance that aims to protect, defend, and expand housing that is truly affordable and dignified for low-income and very low-income communities by engaging those most directly impacted by this crisis through local and national organizing, winning strong local policies that protect renters and homeowners, supporting efforts at building models for truly affordable community-controlled housing and shifting the national debate on housing. We believe that housing is a human right not a commodity.

To get involved, contact Patrick Gregoire at pgregoire@onedconline.org or 202-232-2915.

SAVE THE DATE: ONE DC Annual Membership Meeting



ONE DC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Saturday, March 23

2pm to 5pm

LOCATION TBD

Food will be served. All ages welcome
Please let us know if you need transportation or
childcare!

RSVP: onedconline.org/annualmeeting
organizer@onedconline.org
202-232-2915

The Annual Membership Meeting is a space for members to guide the vision of ONE DC. The agenda will include:

- Elections for an open seat on the ONE DC Shared Leadership Team
- Overview of our 2018 wins and goals for 2019
- Community learning exercises on shared leadership
- Financial updates

The ONE DC Annual Membership Meeting is an opportunity to meet and build relationships with other members. The program will also include music, spoken word, videos, and political education. Free food will be provided. Childcare will be provided and transportation is available upon request.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

About 2019 Shared Leadership Team Elections

ONE DC is governed by a 9-person Shared Leadership Team (SLT) made up of appointed and elected board members and ONE DC staff. At the 2019 Annual Membership Meeting, we will hold an election for one (1) of two open elected position. We will hold the election for the other open position in 2020 in order to create staggered terms. All are welcome to attend, but only members who paid membership dues in 2018 are eligible to vote in the election.

According to our by-laws, requirements for being elected to the Shared Leadership Team are:

- Be a resident of the District of Columbia,
- Be at least 18 years of age,
- Be a ONE DC member for at least 6 months and current in the payment of membership dues,
- Complete ONE DC leadership and capacity training, and

-Demonstrate commitment to ONE DC's values, work and mission as demonstrated through an interview process with the Shared Leadership Team.

We strongly encourage members interested in running for the SLT to attend one of our pre-election orientations to learn more about the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of being a SLT member. If you are interested, please contact us at organizer@onedconline.org for orientation details.

2019 Membership Drive

Membership dues support the organizing campaigns of ONE DC, membership event, & member-leader development. As we grow more powerful, it becomes more and more important to be funded by our base. [Click here to pay your 2019 membership dues.](#)

Upcoming Events

Worker Cooperatives 101

Wednesday, February 27th - 6:30 PM

West End Library - WEE Conference Room - 2301 L Street NW

Hosted by Democracy at Work DC

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Bring Human Rights Home - DC Human Rights City Alliance

Saturday, March 2nd, 10 AM - 12 PM

Black Workers and Wellness Center - 2500 MLK Ave SE

RSVP: 202-544-0324

Defend Public Housing! Empower DC Quarterly Membership Mtg

Saturday, March 2nd, 2 PM - 4 PM

Christ United Methodist Church - 900 4th Street SW

Hosted by Empower DC

[Click here to RSVP](#)

The Exiled Palestinians: Voices from Stateless Women

Monday, March 4, 2019 at 7:30 PM – 9 PM

Westmoreland Congregational UCC - 1 Westmoreland Circle Dr., Bethesda

Hosted by North America Nabka Tour

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Film Premiere & Panel: Cubanas, Mujeres, en Revolución

Thursday March 7, 2019 - 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

True Refomer Building - 1200 U Street NW

Hosted by Thought in Action

[Click here to RSVP](#)

We Were There! A Celebration of Women's History - International Women's Day

Friday, March 8, 2019 - 3:00 pm

AFL-CIO President's Room - 815 16th Street NW

Hosted by the Labor Heritage Foundation

[Click here for more information](#)

Harriet Tubman Day - "Celebrate to Educate"

Friday March 8, 2019 - 6:00 Light Reception / 7:00 Program

Charles Sumner School Museum Archives - 1201 17th Street NW

Hosted by the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Assata Shakur Study Group

2nd and 4th Wednesday of the Month, 7-9 PM

Black Workers and Wellness Center - 2500 MLK Ave SE

Hosted by Pan-African Community Action

[Click here for more information](#)

Workers Rights Clinics

Friday, March 1 - 12:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Friday, March 15 - 12:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Black Workers & Wellness Center - 2500 MLK Ave SE

Hosted by Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs & ONE DC

Contact 202-319-1000 or clinic@washlaw.org to set up an appointment

ONE Bit of Good News - Matching Gift from the Share Fund

In January, the Share Fund generously pledged to support ONE DC by [matching all donations](#) made towards the renovation of the Black Workers & Wellness center until April 16 (Emancipation Day) up to \$100,000! That means for every dollar our members donate, ONE DC will receive *double* that amount! The full-scale, state-of-the-art renovation of the building is set to begin late Summer 2019, with the design of [Emotive Architecture](#), a local Black-owned architecture firm. If you would like to contribute to the effort, please [click here to donate](#) to the Black Workers & Wellness Center!



Future Black Workers & Wellness Center Facade

[You can find online editions of the Monthly Voice here.](#)

Do you want to be a writer, editor, or designer for the ONE DC *Monthly Voice*?

Email organizer@onedconline.org

**Become a
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to the
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