

CARTON 5:20

STRONG IN THE STRUGGLE

WRITINGS BY LEE BROWN  
ON THE HOUSING CRISIS IN THE  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

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## HOUSING CRISIS

By Lee Brown

I want to concern myself with the housing crisis problems primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area, but I am relating facts which exist shamefully all over our country.

As a Trade Unionist I fight for the right for housing for working people in this country. I would also include the Seniors, retirees, the Disabled or Handicapped, and housing especially for the poor and Working Class Youth. Because the young who want to have their own decent place to live cannot find anyplace to live, they are forced to live in overcrowded homes. Mostly these "homes" are a health hazard and fire hazard. These traps are indecent and immoral. WE NEED HOUSES FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFIT. It is a human right. Houses for people, is a basic and human right. In California we are 210,000 housing units short, and that is not including the unliveable housing. By not having adequate houses for the people we have lost over the 175,000 jobs in California. This is from the record of the Building Association.

In 1937 Section 8 of the U.S. and housing Act as amended, was for in low income and poor people to have decent homes. And the workers, low income and poor people are still without housing. This is uncivilized. The people who need these houses must have them. And even for a very long time the people did not know much about Section 8. These people who must have help are just now hearing about Section 8. Those who can well afford to get housing get more help, and

the poor, working class and low income, and poor people are not come continue to cry out for a decent place to live. The only thing they ask for is a decent place to live. A place that we can afford. And especially hard hit are our single women with children.

The community groups, those linked to city government especially, who claim to fight for the building of houses in the interest of low

income, and poor people are not really serving our need when it takes so much of our community effort just to get 3 or 4 housing units. That does not solve the problem for the poor. A lot of people take it for granted that getting the government and landlord lobby to give up 3 or 4 housing units is solving the problem. Because there is racism.

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## CITY'S HOUSING CRISIS

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ism in housing as elsewhere in this exploiting society, people of color pay more for housing and get less. Housing goes up at the rate of at least \$25.00 each 3 months in San Francisco. (This was a Saxe Realty quote) Think of what this means across the country, where in some areas unemployment for Black youth reaches 80%. Black youth is the one group hardest hit by racist government policies.

I now would like to present a solution to the housing crisis in the USA as follows. A battle for rent

control. Because we have a serious fight ahead (Rent control law is in serious jeopardy in Calif. If not the whole country) We need a National rent control law. The poor people are living in the worse houses in the central city areas. The landlords only use a small sum of their profits, which they receive from the pockets of their tenants to patch up falling down housing, and then use any repair as an excuse to raise the peoples rent. This then forces the seniors and us poor out. The poorest hit are on fixed incomes. Those of us on fixed and slipping incomes have to give up food for higher rents and utilities. This means to pay more for the worse housing and you must starve, and you cannot look forward to eating more because you must pay for housing increases and, cannot do without heat or lights for survival.

Now also to discuss Co-ops. Co-ops mean big profits because individuals buy apartments, and hit big by inflation they will not be able to keep them. Especially those again on low and fixed income. This still does not solve the problem. Only Middle income can afford Co-ops. This does fool the low income and poorer workers who scrape up enough money to get a Co-op and end up keeping it maybe 5 months or less. Co-ops housing only benefits the Middle class. Landlord propaganda forces the low income and poor people to buy in and then

be out in months. You lose in 4 or 5 months, you lose everything you put in. It only holds off being kicked out. So for us the low and poor income worker this is not the solution.

I think the people in the various communities should be concerned about studying the housing problem. The only way the housing problem will be solved is by we the people in the housing crisis in the USA. We must act, we must turn talk into action, and form housing committees for immediate action. We can then form community organizations on a block by block basis to do something other than to just talk about this problem. Go after your Churches, your labor organizations, and your neighbors, to form committees.

They have been talking about housing in useless groups since 1937. Now is the time to go beyond the talking stage. We must have action, DO DEEDS NOT WORDS, and demand houses to fit the needs of the people. I am determined to succeed in our efforts to obtain decent housing. It is my duty as a Trade Unionist to do all I can to make the law of 1937 work for the people.

Write us at New Bayview if you are concerned about housing. We can work together and share our information, and plan solutions to solve our housing problems, and make decisions collectively.



# On the Housing Crisis

by Lee Brown

As a Black Trade Unionist and senior activist, I am concerned with the housing crisis in San Francisco and throughout the Bay Area. Primarily I am referring to people on welfare and fixed incomes in the Bay Area. I am asking for houses in the public domain!

We feel the way poor people, people on fixed incomes, seniors, people on welfare and other poor people do: like the poor of the poor! We are not being treated fairly here in San Francisco and throughout the Bay Area.

I have studied this problem for a number of years. I am an activist who is out in the slum areas among the fixed income people,



LEE BROWN

send them to school. I think this country is violating human rights and decency with poor people having to suffer while landlords are exploiting and ripping them off.

I feel the poor people don't oppose rent; they like to have their fair share of decency and protection, so they can survive and not just survive to pay rent

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the seniors, the poor and poor of poor, living below the poverty level. The housing crisis is a serious matter. I feel the poor should demand housing in the public domain. We should start with our organizations writing letters to religious, labor, union, city, state, and federal organizations.

It is a right, not a privilege that poor people throughout our cities and nation should have shelter—a decent home, reasonable rent, etc. They must have a home they can afford to pay the rent for, so they can raise their families in a decent place—not with overcrowding, health hazards, fire-hazards, roaches and rats and other pests! This must be brought to the attention of our leaders. As a Trade Unionist who's been working among poor people like myself, I'm well informed about the condition that we should demand in housing.

I call upon you to write letters to call for a two-day conference in S.F. and ask religious, union, labor, and political leaders to talk about this most serious problem confronting the people in our nation. Let us start here in S.F. and the Bay Area to make this issue a top priority. We have thousands of homeless on the streets; thousands more on fixed incomes can't even afford rent. They cannot feed themselves or their children; they have clothes for

and the Bay Area, especially concerning people on fixed incomes, on welfare, those below the poverty level, and the poor in general. This call should be sent to the labor and community organizations, religious groups and individuals who are concerned about the housing crisis. It is a crisis that shows that it is time for the people to act!

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I propose that a conference be called for the purpose of dealing with the housing crisis in S.F.

must make known the issue, and use the power of our votes. We may not have the money for the lobby, but we have the voting power, the people's power! Be sure you get the votes out and vote for those friendly to our cause.

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It is a right, not a privilege that poor people throughout our cities and nation should have shelter—a decent home, reasonable rent, etc. They must have a home they can afford to pay the rent for, so they can raise their families in a decent place—not with overcrowding, health hazards, fire-hazards, roaches and rats and other pests! This must be brought to the attention of our leaders. As a Trade Unionist who's been working among poor people like myself, I'm well informed about the conditions that we should



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F. A. M. Mance



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It is a right, not a privilege that poor people throughout our cities and nation should have shelter—a decent home, reasonable rent, etc. They must have a home they can afford to pay the rent for, so they can raise their families in a decent place—not with overcrowding, health hazards, fire-hazards, roaches and rats and other pests! This must be brought to the attention of our leaders. As a Trade Unionist who's been working among poor people like myself, I'm well informed about the condition that we should demand in housing.

I call upon you to write letters to call for a two-day conference in S.F. and ask religious, union, labor, and political leaders to talk about this most serious problem confronting the people in our nation. Let us start here in S.F. and the Bay Area to make this issue a top priority. We have thousands of homeless on the streets; thousands more on fixed incomes can't even afford rent. They cannot feed themselves or their children, how do they live?



## SPECIAL RESOLUTION:

I propose that a conference be called sometime in the future for the purpose of dealing with the housing crisis in San Francisco and the Bay Area, especially concerning people on fixed incomes, on welfare, the poor in general, and those below the poverty-level. This call should be sent to the labor organizations, community organizations, religious groups and individuals who are concerned about the housing crisis in San Francisco and the Bay Area. We should come together to discuss this serious problem confronting us and share information and find a solution to the fixed, low-income, and poor people's problems about decent housing and reasonable rent for the poor. We must also deal with the public housing for the poor and demand a decent and secure place for the poor and reasonable rent. ( In the projects it is estimated that about some 25,000 people are overcrowded into 5,000 units.) And, therefore, I, Lee Brown propose that the only solution to the housing crisis for poor people is to put housing in the public domain. The housing crisis in San Francisco shows that it's time for the concerned and poor people to act!!

by: Lee Brown, Trade-Unionist



## On The Housing Crisis In S.F. And The Bay Area

by: Lee Brown, Trade Unionist

As a Black Trade Unionist and senior activist, I am writing an article on the housing crisis in San Francisco and throughout the Bay Area. Primarily I am dealing, at this time, with people on welfare and other fixed incomes in the Bay Area. I am asking for houses in the public domain!

We feel like poor people, people on fixed incomes, seniors, people on welfare and other poor people do: like the poor of the poor! We are not being treated fairly here in San Francisco and throughout the Bay Area.

I have studied this problem for a number of years. I am an activist who is out in the slum areas among the fixed income people, the seniors, the poor and poor of poor, living below the poverty level. I emphasize: the housing crisis is a serious matter. And, I feel the poor of poor, below the poverty level, should demand housing in the public domain. We should start with our organizations to write letters to religious, labor, union, city, state, and federal organizations.

It is not a privilege; it is a right that poor people throughout our cities and nation should have shelter: a decent home, reasonable rent, etc. They must have a home they can afford to pay the rent in, so they can raise their families in a decent place. Not with overcrowding, health-hazards, fire-hazards, filled with cockroaches, rats and other pests! These things must be brought to the attention of our leaders. As a Trade Unionist who's been working among people and poor people and low-income and fixed-income people like myself, I'm well-informed about the condition that we should demand in housing.

I would also ask and call upon you to write letters to call for a two day conference in San Francisco and ask religious, union, labor, political leaders to talk about this most serious problem confronting the people in our nation. Let us start here in San Francisco and the Bay Area to make this issue a top priority. We must lay a base here and bring it to the attention of everyone. We have thousands homeless and on the streets; thousands more on fixed incomes can't even afford the rent. They have nothing to feed themselves or children or buy clothes or send them to school. I think this country is violating human rights and decency for poor people to have to suffer while landlords are exploiting and ripping off the people on fixed incomes and poor people in San Francisco and the Bay Area.

In addition, I feel the poor people don't oppose rent, but they like to have their fair share and decency and protection, so they can survive: not just to pay rent on inferior homes, infested with pests, firehazards, ill-repaired. And we also must demand public houses: decent, secure, safe. In the projects, it is estimated that about some 25,000 people are overcrowded into 5,000 units. And that's so poor people can have a place to live!...We demand it be placed on the frontburner for poor and below the poverty-level, that we must make known the issue, march, and use the power of our votes. We may not have the money for the lobby, but we have the voting power, the people's power! Be sure you get the votes out and vote for those friendly to our cause.

We as poor have sat idly by for years and listened. But, now it's time to act. We must do away with fighting and hating each other, unite together, work collectively as human beings for one issue that's so badly needed throughout this nation and I want to repeat it again: it's decent, reasonable, fair share of houses for the poor and needy. This is the most important issue. As a Trade Unionist who's fought for the rights of the poor, I will repeat it: housing is the issue!