

We are here tonight to tell Atlanta, Georgia to STOP treating poor people in the housing projects like slaves.

STOP making mothers in Grady Homes leave their babies at six in the morning and go take care of the rich white man's children in Buckhead. STOP paying those maids only 30 dollars a week and raising their rent.

STOP making men in Perry Homes work for slave wages. STOP evicting their families or dimming their lights when they can't get the rent on time. STOP making them pay fines they don't deserve and bills they are not responsible for.

STOP conditions in Carver Homes that let rats go after children. STOP lying to people about not having their applications.

And STOP, Atlanta, bragging about what you are doing for poor people, because you aren't. Atlanta, you don't even have Grady Homes, Perry Homes and Carver Homes. You have Grady Slums, Perry Prisons, and Carver Ghettoes! And that's where hungry children, unemployed men, and poor mothers live.

We say to Atlanta, Georgia, that if you don't STOP all this, we are going to STOP you from doing it. SCLC and the Tenants United For Fairness ---that means TUFF --- are going to get tough with you, and we mean everyone from Mayor Ivan Allen on down.

WE DEMAND the Bill of Rights for Public Housing Tenants. We are sick and tired of the Mayor and the Board for the Atlanta Housing Authority delaying action on our Bill of Rights. The injustices to poor people in the

housing projects have been going on for years and years, and we will not stand for more delays and more studies. We have studied the Atlanta Housing Authority, and we have found that the Atlanta Housing Authority, starting with Mr. Satterfield (the director) had better get right or get lost. And the Board needs some new blood that represents poor people, not bankers and real estate interests.

We especially demand that the Atlanta Housing Authority tell us exactly why it doesn't reduce rents instead of raising rents. WE DEMAND that they tell us what they are doing with every penny of poor people's money for security deposits when they move into housing projects. Where is the money? Do the banks get it? The white banks? What does the Housing Authority do with the poor people's money? Do they get interest on the money and reduce rents? NO! Do they fix up the housing projects? NO! the tenants have to pay for that. Do they provide more electricity and heat? NO! they dim the lights and the homes get cold. Do they use the money to buy more slum properties? Do they use the money to pay their own salaries? WHERE IS THE MONEY? We demand that the money be controlled by the tenants and used as the tenants determine for improvements in their homes.

WE ALSO DEMAND that public housing be turned over to the tenants so that the tenants can manage their own homes and control admissions, discipline, fines, clean-up, and hiring for maintenance. Do you know that this has been done in projects in Baltimore, Maryland, and Cleveland, Ohio? Why not Atlanta, if Atlanta is so great and so progressive?

WE ALSO DEMAND THAT each housing project have a hearing panel -- made up of tenants and management, and controlled by the tenants. This panel must have the power to veto the rules of the Atlanta Housing Authority. This panel could decide who manages their project and who gets jobs in management and custodial work. The tenants themselves would have first choice. That is a way to really fight poverty by giving poor people jobs. Housing projects don't need managers who come from other communities. We don't need managers who dig up the flower gardens that the poor people planted, as they did at one project here in Atlanta. We don't need managers and government employees breaking into homes and searching property when the tenants aren't there. We don't want dictator managers fining us and putting us into the streets with out money for rent or food.

WE ALSO DEMAND that the Atlanta Housing Authority recognize TUFF as the official bargaining agent for tenants and stop intimidating people in tuff:.

These are our demands, and we want simple answers -- like YES or NO -- and we want answers NOW.

Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph David Abernathy started fighting for poor people and black people 14 years ago in Montgomery, Alabama. They have assassinated Dr. King, but if anyone thinks I am going to let them forget about it or stop fighting for my brothers and sisters -- they got a lesson to learn, starting right here in Atlanta, Georgia.

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