Tenants Group Protests Housing Conditions in City's Northwest
Lear, Len
Philadelphia Tribune (1912-2001); Sep 2, 1969;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Philadelphia Tribune (1912-2001)
pg. 6

Tenants Group Protests Housing Conditions in City's Northwest

By LEN LEAR

Three local tenant groups went to Melrose Park Tuesday to protest housing conditions in Germantown, Kensington and North Philadelphia.

About 60 members of the East Front Street Tenant Union, the Neighborhood to Remedy Tenant Housing (NORTH), and the Northwest Tenants Organization marched in front of Coventry House, Coventry road and Valley ave., in Melrose Park.

The picketers carried signs addressed to Morton Gellard, who they said lived there.

SEVERAL SIGNS

Some of the signs read: "High Rents For Unfit Housing," "We Put Your Kids Through Private Schools," "Come Out and Meet Your Neighbors," "Why Don't You Live in One of Your Own Slums?" etc.

The marchers passed out flyers claiming that Twin Investments Co., "a rental investment company listed under the names Morton Gellard, Doris Gellard and Morton Daroff," owned at least 25 slum properties in Germantown, as well as dozens more in Kensington and North Philadelphia.

"The Twin Investments Co. has rented run-down properties and it has raised rentals on properties that had housing code violations. These things are against the law," charged Bill McCammitt, NORTH president.

SICK AND TIRED

"We're here today to let Gellard know that we're sick and tired of paying sky-high rents for unfit and sub-standard housing."

When contacted, Gellard disputed the charges leveled against him by the housing groups. "We run a very ethical operation and have an enviable reputation as managers of real estate," he said.

"We have many, many satisfied tenants. Some of them have been with us ten years and are still paying the same rent they paid ten years ago."

NO COMMENT

Gellard declined to comment on another charge made by the marchers, that he used a false name, "Mr. Roberts," whenever dealing with the tenants.

Martha Dean, of 2603 e. Huntington st., president of the East Front Street Tenant Union, said she was far from satisfied with Gellard's disclaimers, charging that she had lived in three of his houses which were all "unfit."

"We had been in one of them only a few days when I walked in and found my baby covered with blood in her crib," Mrs. Dean said. "She had 26 rat bites."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.