



MARISA TOMEI

PEOPLE'S INAUGURATION

<https://youtu.be/c2xqHLlb-d4>

On the day of the eviction, we would tell all the men to leave, leave the building. We knew that the police were rough and would beat them up. It was the women who remained in the apartments in order to resist. We went out onto the fire escapes and spoke through bullhorns to the crowd that gathered below.

As soon as the police came to begin the eviction, we roped off the street and people gathered. The police put machine guns on the roofs. They pointed them down at the people on the street. People, fellow workers, we are the wives of unemployed men, and the police are evicting us. Today we are being evicted. Tomorrow it will be you.

The things we take for granted now these were revolutionary ideas when we began to demand them in the thirties. We wanted unemployment insurance. We wanted home relief, hot meals for children in schools and housing for the destitute, people living in the city dumps.

In that time who heard of an eight hour day. Even the idea of a union was in this time a new concept in the world. No one expected decent wages. The others with the privilege were born up there. But we, we were on the bottom. To us, the idea that we had the right to strike that was something that was, it was hard to imagine. So what could be done about all this? We began to organize, we formed unemployed councils. They were spontaneous people's organizations. We would open an office in the middle of a neighborhood. We organized around our needs. The women were organized to monitor the prices of food all the time. If an item became too expensive in a particular store, we immediately went on strike.

We picketed with the sign, "Don't patronize this grocery. They are charging too much for bread". Nobody would cross our picket lines. By that time, our workers were everywhere. Leading demonstrations, circulating petitions, speaking on street corners. So we would go into a building, introduce ourselves and ask the people to organize. We promised that we would fight the evictions and help take care of the people who were thrown out. In those days, you would walk down the street and see whole families with their children, sitting on the sidewalk, surrounded by furniture.

When an entire building was organized and willing to participate in a strike. We formed negotiating committees. For the tenants, we put up large signs in every window facing the street and picketed the house, the signs read, "Rent strike! Don't rent apartments in this building". The landlord of course, would rather die than give in to the tenant's demands. So the strike began. We knew that one day he would give some eviction notice. But he could never evict everyone. It cost too much.

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As soon as the police came to begin the eviction, we roped off the street and people gathered. The police put machine guns on the roofs. They pointed them down at the people on the street. I would address the crowd gathered in the street below.

People, fellow workers, we are the wives of unemployed men, and the police are evicting us. Today, we are being evicted. Tomorrow, it will be you. What is happening to us will happen to you. We have no jobs, we can't afford food. Our rents are too high. The Marshall has brought the police to carry out our furniture. Are you gonna let it happen?

Sometimes we poured hot water on the men that came to evict us, and sometimes they would hit us. Then we would run out onto the fire escape, grab the Bullhorn and shout to the crowd, "They're hitting us. They're big men and they're hitting us, but we're not going to let them move the furniture". Sometimes we failed and the furniture was carried into the street. Immediately, we would cover it with a tarp, so it wouldn't get spoiled. And then we'd hold a mass meeting on the furniture, using

it as a platform. We were only waiting for the police to leave. As soon as they were gone, the people standing around would pick up the furniture and carry it right back into the building.

We'd break the lock. We'd put back the furniture, install a new lock and the landlord would have to go through the whole procedure another time. Within two years, we had rent control in the Bronx.

Hi friends. Thanks for all the love for Spidey, for the trailer, for May, thanks for the May fans. And I'm excited for you to see the film just a few more months. Tease you a little bit more.

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