

New Self-Respect in Ghettos

Tenant Unions' Value Cited

By Robert Greenberg

The rise of tenant unions will not only affect the economic bargaining power between landlord and tenant, but serve to impart a new feeling of self-respect in the ghetto dweller.

That was the message of an address to be delivered Thursday by Gilbert Cornfield, Loop attorney and a leader in negotiating tenant union contracts covering 5,000 to 6,000 apartment dwellers in Chicago.

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By organizing into unions, Cornfield said, the tenant gains strength to deal with the landlord on a more nearly equal status and participates in decisions affecting his own future.

PREDICTION that the courts will eventually take a liberal attitude toward tenant unions was made by Miss Peggy A. Hillman, one of the law students, in a paper prepared for delivery Thursday.

"Given the history of (labor) unions in the courts and the judicially accorded status of the courts," she said, "it is probable that the courts will, albeit belatedly, permit direct action by the tenant unions," she wrote.

Another student, William Bove, in a paper discussing the "model lease," pointed out that leases are "weighted heavily in favor of landlords" and cited the current Chicago Real Estate Board's form lease, dating from 1936, as typical. He suggested that a model lease, like a labor contract, must be drawn to meet specific situations in different buildings, and should be attended when necessary.

If it is to achieve wide use, he said, "it will probably come through the efforts of well-organized tenant unions."