

New Macklemore song, “F-cked Up,” gives voice to mass global opposition

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Certain cultural events herald big changes in mass consciousness. Resentments—long pent-up or misdirected—can burst suddenly into the foreground, as if millions of people were saying at once, “Enough is enough!”

Grammy winning rapper Macklemore released a music video this week, “F—ed Up,” that expresses widespread revulsion at deepening capitalist barbarism, especially since Donald Trump’s return to the White House. Last year, Macklemore’s songs “Hind’s Hall” and “Hind’s Hall 2” became anthems for the global protest movement against the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza.

The latest track, with all proceeds again going to the relief agency UNRWA US, underscores how much the situation has escalated in such a short time. Only last week, fascist US president Trump announced plans for the forcible seizure of the Gaza strip. Immigration raids now target and victimize the most vulnerable people across the United States. Multi-billionaire Elon Musk is attempting to destroy every government program or service that benefits the working class.

Macklemore and video editor Omar Alali deserve credit for a powerful work that connects the devastation of Palestine to the domestic terror of ICE, internet censorship, the Los Angeles wildfires, inflation and the enrichment of the financial oligarchs.

The video montage amplifies the lyrical content, featuring images of prominent billionaires, of bomb-shattered Gaza neighborhoods and mass demonstrations, even animated political cartoons, including one with Musk pulling strings attached to a marionette Trump.

While “Hind’s Hall” and “Hind’s Hall 2” prominently feature the Palestinian genocide, “F—ed Up” connects the colonial slaughter with interrelated

processes of decaying imperialism.

The video begins with a quote attributed to pioneer American socialist and imperialist war opponent Eugene V. Debs, “The most heroic word in all languages is ‘Revolution.’”

Macklemore sums up his view of the global situation in the first verse:

*The world’s on fire, we don’t own the water y’all
Inmates hired for a couple dollars y’all
New era is ushered but white supremacy is still in charge*

Colonizing Gaza from the White House lawn.

*But the people mobbing and we ain’t backing off,
Finally see the oligarchy and the men that control us all,*

*Tax breaks for the elite, and then they taxing y’all,
Killing Palestinian kids and we gettin’ hit with the cost.*

Why the fuck you think you can’t afford the rent in your building?...

And you know how the West thinks: it’s all about the West banks

Call a ceasefire, then start annexing the West Bank.

And later he says:

*That’s your money and yes it’s all connected,
They controlling your feed, the information that they censor*

Blocking hashtags,

Can’t say “Free Palestine,”

It’s two weeks in

Imagine where we’ll be around July.

Billionaire oligarchs—whose social existence blocks any chance of progress and in fact requires fascistic retrogression—feature front-and-center in “F—ed Up.” Stewart and Lynda Resnick get a visual jab as owners of a majority stake in the massive Kern Water Bank in California. Images of Facebook mogul and Trump

backer Mark Zuckerberg and Amazon's Jeff Bezos fill the montage-like wanted posters.

Musk fully deserves the refrain—with his infamous inaugural Nazi salute as a background:

And Elon, we know exactly what that was, bro.

With a militant, almost marching beat, “F—ed Up” strikes a powerful chord. One doesn’t have to agree with Macklemore’s gratuitous use of obscenities or the obligatory and inappropriate reference to “white supremacy”—what does that have to do with the American capitalist elite, which is lined up against every section of the working class, black, white, Latino and immigrant?—to appreciate the straightforward rhymes and generally crystal-clear message. Macklemore deserves commendation and support. His courageous stance in support of the Palestinians has already cost him cancellations and threatens his future as an entertainer.

With the possible exception of Roger Waters and a handful of others, no established figure has taken so bold a stance in opposition to the genocide and the far-right turn of official politics.

Certainly, there is no other prominent rapper drawing these connections and putting it all on the line. Snoop Dogg performed at Trump’s inauguration. Kanye West promotes Hitler on social media as a matter of course. The much-touted, overrated Kendrick Lamar has failed to offer any coherent criticism either in his Super Bowl performance—a kaleidoscope designed to let anyone see whatever he wanted to see—or anywhere else.

Even in his breakout hit, *Thrift Shop*, Macklemore took a different angle from the mainstream in hip hop music. Instead of champagne, fancy cars and petty crime, here was a young man trumpeting the thrill of great fashion values on used clothing. His later hit *Downtown* celebrated the modest moped as a means to hit the town. Without being demagogic, there was something unusually down-to-earth in Macklemore’s sensibilities.

Now, he is giving artistic expression to a developing mass movement. Most importantly, this bears an *anticipatory* character. Much more outrage is guaranteed. There are already strikes and workers struggles challenging the domination of the oligarchy and its servants in the union bureaucracies.

At the time of this writing, not a single major media outlet has a review or comment on “F—ed Up,” a fact

which only lends credence to the song’s message. (*Rolling Stone* has a two-paragraph blurb).

Attacks on Medicaid, food stamps, Social Security and other programs, along with the program of mass murder and violence abroad, will provoke a popular explosion that the official channels of bourgeois politics and culture cannot contain, and with revolutionary implications.

This, the social struggle and the movement of masses of people, is the real driver of cultural life today. The best artists will draw inspiration from the developing movement of the working class.

The quote from Debs is significant in this regard, hopefully a signpost of where Macklemore and other artists are heading.

Perhaps his next hit video will be called something like “Worldwide general strike.”

For now, as the song says, “It’s game time.”



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