

FROM THE BATTLEFRONTS

1. "TAKE THA HOUSE BACK" A DETROIT-MADE MUSIC VIDEO

Detroit Music Video wins Best Hip Hop Video at the American Music Video Awards; explores tax foreclosures and gentrification

“Take tha House Back,” a Detroit-made music video which explores Detroit’s mass tax foreclosure problem, won “Best Hip Hop Video” at the American Music Video Awards this weekend in Charlotte, NC. The video is directed by Detroit filmmaker Kate Levy and Detroit hip hop artist Will See. The video is produced by Bryce Detroit for Detroit Recordings. The song was produced by Matthew Cross, for Rise Like Lions Productions. The song also features Detroit civil rights icon Maureen Taylor. The video features the Detroit Poetry Society, who is currently restoring to function as a live-work space in the North End.

Following the 2008 financial meltdown, home assessments remained high, while property values plummeted. These improperly assessed home values led to tens of thousands of long-term homeowners losing their homes on the heels of the tsunami of bank foreclosures that ransacked neighborhoods. According to the Coalition to End Unconstitutional Tax Foreclosures, from 2011-2015, the Wayne County Treasurer 1 in 4 homes faced tax foreclosure.

Take tha House Back also shines a light on who benefits from these foreclosures. As thousands of Detroiters lose their homes, new Detroiters are purchasing properties cheaply through the Detroit Land Bank Authority. "The reason why the land bank has 100k properties is because of tax foreclosures," says Michelle Olberholzer of United Community Housing Coalition.

Take Tha House Back worked with local organizations such as United Community Housing Coalition and Detroit Eviction Defense to use the video to bring awareness to this issue. Part of this process was to bring to life the resistance and neighborhood-level sufficiency of long-term Detroiters who are defending their homes. "One solution," says Olberholzer, "is for the Land Bank to offer homes to people who previously lost homes during tax foreclosure. This is what the Coalition to End Unconstitutional Tax Foreclosures is calling for. We have all of these vacant properties now. There is no reason why people who lost their homes unjustly should continue to suffer." To seek help, volunteer for or donate to tax foreclosure prevention, reach out to United Community Housing Coalition or the Coalition to End Unconstitutional Tax Foreclosures. To hear stories of Detroiters who lost or saved their homes from foreclosure, visit detroithomeownership.org, a project of United Community Housing Coalition and director Kate Levy. To watch the video, visit vimeo.com/willseemusic/tthb

2. PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE: Long Live International Solidarity!

On June 11, the militants of POP joined our comrades of the Brooklyn-based December 12th Movement, a National Assembly for Black Liberation endorsing organization in a Black contingent of the 2017 National Puerto Rican Day Parade, up NYC’s 5th Avenue. In demonstration of anti-imperialist internationalist solidarity, the contingent marched behind

banners proclaiming support for: “SELF-DETERMINATION for PUERTO RICO”; “VIVA OSCAR LOPEZ-RIVERA”; “FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!” Marchers chanted: “From the Land to the Sea, Puerto Rico Will Be Free!” and “Viva Oscar Lopez-Rivera!” The contingent’s solidarity manifested the historic unity between advanced elements of the Puerto Rican and the African –American Freedom Struggles, a la the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords Party.

And, regarding the class struggle within the Parade, we stood with the forces who consider recently released political prisoner, Oscar Lopez-Rivera (after 35 years incarceration for seditious conspiracy because of his leadership of the Armed Forces for National Liberation {FALN}, though never accused or convicted of any FALN bombings), to be a freedom fighter; rather than a terrorist, as did the bourgeois state and corporate forces who withdrew sponsorship and participation from the parade, when parade organizers named Oscar “Hero of the Nation,” to lead the parade. Goya Products, the NY Yankees, Coca-Cola,, AT&T, NY Gov. Cuomo, Sen. Chuck Schumer, NYPD, including the “Hispanic” and LGBTQ officers’ organizations sought to sabotage the parade and it’s national liberation politics, while parade organizers and the majority of the hundreds of thousands Boricuas, from all strata of the Puerto Rican community, lining the streets declared that only they would choose their leadership and heroes, not the agents of the imperialist colonizers.

MARCH FOR REPARATIONS

“THEY STOLE US! THEY SOLD US! THEY OWE US!!! Thundered through the streets of downtown Newark on Saturday, June 24, as 150 multinational marchers mobilized by POP, demanded “REPARATIONS NOW!”for descendants of victims of the African slave trade. Shoppers joined the chants with raised fists and drivers honked in solidarity. The demand resonated with the masses Speakers exposed the oppression and exploitation suffered by Black People in America and the African Diaspora; pointed to precedents of reparations paid other victims of crimes against humanity ; and made the case of the righteousness of the democratic demand for reparatory justice for African Americans. A consistent theme of the day was recognition of reliance of the rise of capitalism and imperialism on the system of slavery; the super-exploitation of Black Labor; and the necessity to eliminate the system for real reparatory justice.

The Rally focused on Rep. John Conyers’ H.R. 40, the repeatedly introduced legislation intended to: “...*address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies between 1619 and 1865 and to establish a commission to study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African-Americans, to make recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies,*

and for other purposes.” Newark’s own Rep. Donald Payne, Jr. who heretofore was not a cosponsor of HR40, pledged to sign on by Monday. POP Chairman Larry Hamm announced an initial campaign to enlist the other NJ Black Congressperson, Bonnie Coleman –Watson as a cosponsor and to get companion legislation introduced in the Senate, by Senators Booker and Menendez. As well, supporters of Reparations will seek Local and State Resolutions supporting HR40 as a start. The struggle continues. The Debt is owed. Reparations Now!