

Hollywood celebrities' "open letter" solidarizes itself with Israeli government policies

David Walsh
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An entity calling itself the "Creative Community for Peace" (CCFP) has organized an open letter supporting the Israeli regime and describing the Hamas attack on southern Israel as "evil" and "barbaric acts of terrorism." In fact, the letter is a right-wing provocation, organized by mouthpieces for the Tel Aviv regime, which is in the midst of carrying out mass murder in Gaza.

The appeal has nothing to do with "peace," nor does it reflect the view of those genuinely torn and confused by events. This is something different.

The lies here come thick and fast. The CCFP, in a press release, claims that more than "1000+ celebrities and entertainment executives" have signed their open letter. In fact, there are two or three dozen recognizable names, including, sadly, a few genuinely talented individuals (Helen Mirren, Alfred Molina, Liev Schreiber, Andy Garcia and Stephen Fry). After that come a group of lesser-known performers and hundreds of lawyers, accountants, casting directors, talent agents, executives, producers and personal managers, all of whom have been lumped together as "leaders from the entertainment industry."

The letter is pure propaganda. It claims that the "nightmare that Israelis have feared for decades became a reality as Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israeli cities and towns." It repeats the Zionist regime's claims, which have been widely discredited, that Hamas "raped women and mutilated their bodies."

Civilians were killed in the attacks, and this was tragic. But the responsibility lies with the Israeli regime and its imperialist backers in the US, Britain, France, Germany and elsewhere.

For more than 70 years, the Israeli government and

military have oppressed the Palestinians, through expulsions, theft of land, destruction of villages, violence, repression, torture and officially sanctioned state murder. According to UN figures, for example, in the occupied Palestinian territory some 6,407 Palestinians have been killed since 2008, and 152,560 injured, compared with 308 Israeli fatalities and 6,307 injured. That's a ratio of 24 to 1.

Over the past 16 years, Tel Aviv has turned the Gaza Strip into a living hell, an "open air prison," a 141-square-mile internment camp, condemned to privation and misery. Thousands of men, women and children have been killed in Israeli shellings and bombings. In the 2014 fighting alone, 1,600 Palestinian civilians were killed, compared to six Israelis (a ratio of 270 to 1), and 550 Palestinian children perished, as against one Israeli child (a ratio of 550 to 1).

Numerous documentary and fiction films have honestly examined the tragic situation in Gaza, including a good number from Israel itself. In fact, films on the Palestinian question and its history have been among the strongest in the difficult cultural landscape of the early 21st century.

In any event, those confined to such brutalizing conditions as exist in Gaza are not likely to "break out" bearing flowers in their hands. That has never been the case when the oppressed have risen up, not in Haiti, not in China, not in India, not in America, not in German South West Africa, not in Kenya and not anywhere else. Oppressors generally decry resistance as "terrorism," recognizing as legitimate conduct only their own ruthlessness and cruelty.

The CCFP letter has not a single word to say about history, about the actual source of the violence. "This is

terrorism. This is evil. There is no justification or rationalization for Hamas' actions." These people are talking to those already convinced, among the affluent and complacent. In fact, there is widespread sympathy for the Palestinians.

They write: "As Israel takes the necessary steps to defend its citizens in the coming days and weeks, social media will be overrun by an orchestrated misinformation campaign spearheaded by Iran."

By "necessary steps" the letter's organizers have in mind the genocidal offensive planned by the Israeli military, aimed at "eliminating" Hamas, an organization that won 440,000 votes in the January 2006 election. Do the signatories understand what they are agreeing to? The murder of tens of thousands of civilians in an act of illegal collective punishment? A few artists can be duped, others may merely be stupid, but signing up for mass killings is the opposite of the "creative" impulse.

The notion that social media will be overrun by a misinformation campaign spearheaded by Iran lets the political cat out of the bag. This is the unmistakable, authoritative voice of Tel Aviv and Washington, pursuing a wider war, seeking to destroy Iran and establish American imperialist hegemony in the region. Why should artists agree to that agenda, which spells potential disaster not only for the Middle East but the entire world?

The misnamed Creative Community for Peace is the "polite face" of right-wing Zionism. Its claim to be an "apolitical organization" is laughable. Formed in 2011 to oppose the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, the CCFP has been associated with StandWithUS [SWU], an unabashedly far-right outfit.

Jewish Voice for Peace and other organizations released a fact sheet in 2018 documenting CCFP's origins and character. The fact sheet pointed out that despite a "history of denying the accusations, registration and tax documents now show that the Los Angeles-based entertainment industry lobby organization *Creative Community for Peace (CCFP)* and Israeli government-linked *StandWithUs* are simply alternate names for a single IRS-registered non-profit: *Israel Emergency Alliance*."

The sheet goes on: "Examples of SWU and CCFP's partnership with the Israeli government include

convening an organizing meeting with Israeli government officials and music industry executives, and producing a pro-settler video series with Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. SWU even announced they were awarded a grant from Israel's Prime Minister's Office."

Shalva Wise, Arts and Culture Coordinator from Jewish Voice for Peace, asserted: "Artists who oppose racism and support justice for all people should steer clear of CCFP's anti-Palestinian lobbying and propaganda efforts."

The events of the past week have been tumultuous and disturbing. The first obligation of the serious artist is to seek the truth, no matter how painful or difficult that may be. Superficial impressions, purely emotive reactions, susceptibility to ethnic or nationalist appeals, the desire to be on the "winning side," all of this is damaging or fatal to genuine creativity, always associated with criticism of what exists. In our convulsive times, it is hard to imagine that any serious artist would not engage him or herself in unmasking official lies and mystifications and speaking out resolutely for the oppressed.



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