

Filmmaker Jonathan Glazer receives support against Zionist smear campaign

David Walsh
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As the WSWS has reported, British writer-director Jonathan Glazer has come under vitriolic attacks by pro-Israeli elements for his comments at the Academy Awards March 10 on receiving the prize for best international feature film. The historical drama, *The Zone of Interest*, deals with the commandant of Auschwitz and his family.

In his statement at the ceremony, Glazer spoke out against “dehumanization” past and present. He rejected the effort to “hijack” his Jewishness “by an occupation which has led to conflict for so many innocent people. Whether the victims of October 7 in Israel or the ongoing attack on Gaza—all the victims of this dehumanization, how do we resist?”

The comments, which drew considerable applause, including prominently from figures such as actor Mark Ruffalo, outraged pro-Zionists in the US, because it lifted the lid, in the first place, on the reality that increasing numbers of Jews reject identification with the Israeli state and its genocidal policies. In fact, a growing percentage of Jewish youth want nothing to do with the Zionist criminality, as part of a global process of radicalization.

Moreover, the statement broke the wall of silence that has been assiduously policed by the Hollywood establishment intended to prevent criticism of Israel. For speaking out, actors Susan Sarandon, John Cusack, Melissa Barrera and others have been on the receiving end of McCarthyite treatment.

We have documented the ignorant, reactionary flood of abuse to which Glazer has been subjected since March 10.

As the support for Glazer’s comments at the Academy Awards itself demonstrates, this filth is a minority opinion.

Even in the entertainment industry, where defense of

the Gazan population against homicidal bombings, massacres, starvation and disease can mean the end of one’s career, voices have been raised in Glazer’s defense.

Jesse Peretz, director of *First Love, Last Rites*, *Our Idiot Brother* and *Girls*, and a signatory of Artist4Ceasefire, expressed support for Glazer in comments to *Variety*. As did filmmaker Asif Kapadia (director of *Amy*, the Amy Winehouse documentary, which won an Academy Award in 2015), who explained: “He used his power and position and the biggest global stage to speak up for people with no power, no voice, or those too afraid to speak up, in an industry which is very conservative and risk adverse and which has a long history of blacklisting people ... He stood up and told the truth. This is what true artists do.”

Actress Zoe Kazan also expressed support for Glazer, observing on social media she was “shocked that anyone who saw *Zone of Interest* could be shocked by what Glazer said at the Oscars ... a movie so rigorously intent on not allowing its audience escape into sentiment or self-congratulation, that turns a mirror instead, asking us to look at ourselves and think.”

Also on X, musician-filmmaker Boots Riley posted “Salute to Jonathan Glazer. Not just for speaking out against the atrocities in Gaza & saying that his movie is about the present day—but I finally saw *Zone Of Interest* last night.”

The band Massive Attack tweeted that “Jonathan Glazer is a filmmaker of the highest integrity, craft & bravery. A filmmaker who researches his subject matter painstakingly, & weighs his artistic judgements with high care & deep humanity. That care, judgement & humanity led to the conclusions of his speech. Solidarity.”

Deadline reports that industry professionals who have posted support for Glazer's comments speech include "Black List founder Franklin Leonard and Red Sea Film Festival programmer Kaleem Aftab. Since the publication of the letter condemning Glazer's speech, there have been a slew of supportive messages for Glazer on social media, including from prominent film critics including Guy Lodge and Dave Ehrlich, indie filmmakers such as Mark Cousins, and non-profit organizations including Jewish Voice For Peace. Those messages have in turn drawn praise and criticism."

In response to *Variety*'s headline "More than 450 Jewish creatives, executives and Hollywood professionals have signed an open letter denouncing Jonathan Glazer's 'The Zone of Interest,'" film critic Ehrlich tweeted "Shoutout to the 900,000 Jewish creatives, executives, and Hollywood professions who haven't."

Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, Auschwitz Memorial Director, released a statement on X:

In his Oscar acceptance speech, Jonathan Glazer issued a universal moral warning against dehumanization. His aim was not to descend to the level of political discourse. Critics who expected a clear political stance or a film solely about genocide did not grasp the depth of his message. *The Zone of Interest* is not a film about the Shoah. It is primarily a profound warning about humanity and its nature.

Melissa Barrera, as noted above, one of the first victims of the witch-hunt against opponents of Israeli genocide, posted this comment on Instagram:

What Glazer actually said is much clearer: He and his collaborators reject that Jewishness and the Holocaust are being used to justify the ongoing military offensive in Gaza.

This sentiment is one held by many Jewish people. Like Glazer, Jews around the world have spoken out about how they perceive their identity to have been co-opted by the extremist Israeli government and its allies in pursuit of a

fully repressed Palestine state.

Breaking the Silence, the Israeli organization of veterans who "have taken it upon themselves to expose the public to the reality of everyday life in the occupied territories," defended Glazer's comments. The group asserted that the "heated discussion" surrounding his Academy Awards comments "is mostly missing the point. His main message was simple and yet vital: empathy is not a zero-sum game."

The group added, "Glazer did not 'deny his Jewishness,' as some seemingly purposely misunderstood. He took an unequivocal stance against the cynical utilization of Judaism and the Holocaust in the name of justifying the occupation."

In response to the reactionary open letter of "Jewish Hollywood Professionals," which defends the genocide in Gaza, absurdly claiming, in the face of incontrovertible evidence, that "Israel is not targeting civilians," an independent filmmaker started a petition on Change.org.

In his motivation for the petition, the anonymous filmmaker writes:

As a Jew who is absolutely appalled by the reaction in my industry by my peers against Jonathan Glazer and his speech at the Oscars I wanted to start a petition of support from myself, others in the industry as well as others who support what he said and stand with Palestine against the atrocities that Israel is doing to innocent civilians.

We stand with Glazer, speak the truth, speak your truth.

The petition has collected more than 1,500 signatures, over 1,300 on Wednesday alone.



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