

Ellison-owned Paramount launches McCarthyite blacklist of actors opposed to Gaza genocide

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According to *Variety*, Paramount Skydance, the media conglomerate headed by David Ellison, “maintains a list of talent it will not work with because they are deemed to be ‘overtly antisemitic.’” By “antisemitic,” Paramount executives mean opposition to Zionist criminality and the ongoing Gaza genocide.

Ellison is the son of Larry Ellison, multi-billionaire arch-Zionist, close friend of war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu and supporter of Donald Trump.

A civil war is raging in the film, television and music fields between artists opposed to the mass murder in Gaza, as well as Trump’s fascist policies, and the upper echelons of studio executives and owners.

The Paramount case is a particularly stark example. In September, thousands of writer-directors, actors and other film industry workers signed a pledge “not to screen films, appear at or otherwise work with Israeli film institutions—including festivals, cinemas, broadcasters and production companies—that are implicated in genocide and apartheid against the Palestinian people.”

The organizers of the protest, Film Workers for Palestine, pointed out that the individuals involved included “Oscar, BAFTA, Emmy, Cannes, Berlin, Venice, César, Goya, and Peabody Award winners.” Actors Emma Stone, Olivia Colman, Ayo Edebiri, Mark Ruffalo, Riz Ahmed, Joaquin Phoenix, Tilda Swinton and Javier Bardem, as well as writer-directors Yorgos Lanthimos, Ava DuVernay, Asif Kapadia, Emma Seligman, Boots Riley, Adam McKay and Joshua Oppenheimer were among the signatories, whose total number has now reached almost 8,000.

Paramount was the only major studio to brazenly reject this appeal out of hand, defending Israel and its military operations, albeit using duplicitous language. Its statement sanctimoniously proclaimed that Paramount believed “in the power of storytelling to connect and inspire people, promote mutual understanding, and preserve the moments, ideas, and events that shape the world we share.”

A group of workers calling themselves Paramount Employees of Conscience denounced the Ellison-Paramount statement, cutting through the high-flown verbiage and bluntly informing studio executives in an open letter that “you are aligning yourselves with systems of apartheid, occupation” and what “countless” international organizations “have recognized as a genocide in Gaza and of the Palestinian people.”

The blacklist reported by *Variety* is the answer of the Ellisons to the widespread opposition to Zionism and its crimes in Hollywood, including among many Jewish performers, writers and directors.

In addition to eliminating thousands of jobs, Paramount Skydance has set about shifting its television network, CBS, further to the right. It named right-wing, pro-Zionist Bari Weiss as editor-in-chief of CBS News. The Ellisons, as Truthout explained, also appointed “Kenneth Weinstein, former head of the conservative Hudson Institute think tank, as CBS’s new ombudsman, a position they agreed to fill as part of the [Paramount-Skydance] merger’s approval.”

Paramount Skydance is now attempting to purchase Warner Bros. Discovery, which would create one of the largest media firms in the world and would also “undoubtedly include a massive tranche of layoffs, as a union of the two conglomerates would reduce corporate overhead and would consolidate functions across studios, TV and streaming operations.” (*Variety*)

Larry Ellison is involved in the proposed new American version of TikTok through his company Oracle, which would manage the platform’s US user data and algorithm. He is a key investor in the pending deal.

All in all, Ellison is a piece of work, an appalling product of the transformation of American politics and media into the playground of the super-rich.

In addition to his strong financial and political support for Trump, Ellison is one of the biggest contributors to Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF), the US-based outfit that

raises tens of millions of dollars for the Zionist killing machine. In one of the most widely publicized events associated with the FIDF, a Beverly Hills gala raised \$53.8 million in 2017. According to the *Times of Israel*,

The largest single gift in FIDF's history was announced at the [2017] event as \$16.6 million from Oracle Co-Founder, Executive Chairman and Chief Technology Officer Larry Ellison. His donation will support the construction of well-being facilities on a new training campus for the IDF's coed infantry units.

Ellison told the benefit,

Through all of the perilous times since Israel's founding, we have called on the brave men and women of the IDF to defend our home. In my mind, there is no greater honor than supporting some of the bravest people in the world, and I thank FIDF for allowing us to celebrate and support these soldiers year after year.

The IDF, through bombing, murder and torture, the killing or wounding of some 200,000 dead or wounded Palestinians, has been responsible over the past two years for some of the most horrendous crimes since the Nazis.

With great appropriateness, the FIDF is now embroiled in a sordid financial scandal, again according to the *Times of Israel*,

over allegations of financial mismanagement, cronyism, and a toxic workplace culture. The crisis at Friends of the Israel Defense Forces centers on the group's chairman, Morey Levovitz, who is accused of consolidating power, awarding contracts to associates without oversight, and authorizing lavish spending that some insiders say betrays donors' trust.

Just International further notes that

Ellison has worked tirelessly to advance Israel's political project. Among his closest personal friends

is Benjamin Netanyahu, with whom he vacationed on his private island in Hawaii. Ellison was so impressed and confident in the Israeli prime minister that he offered him a seat on his company's board, replete with a salary of \$450,000.

Moreover, Truthout reports that

Ellison maneuvered to push Israeli billionaire Arnon Milchan to allow Milchan's star attorney to represent Netanyahu in one of his corruption cases. Milchan was hesitant but "he relented after pressure from Ellison," ... Ellison is also mentioned in two of Netanyahu's corruption cases. ...

Ellison is also a backer of former U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair and has given or pledged at least \$348 million to Blair's Institute for Global Change. Blair could be part of Trump's "Board of Peace" in Gaza if the current ceasefire deal holds.

One could go on...

The open declaration by Paramount that it has launched a blacklist of anti-genocide actors and others should be viewed as a declaration of war by the oligarchy against freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

No return to McCarthyism! The stranglehold over film and television by reactionary parasites like the Ellisons needs to be answered by the growth of *consciously socialist* opposition in Hollywood and elsewhere. These giant firms need to be expropriated and turned into publicly owned entities, democratically controlled by the artists and workers who create everything of value.



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