

Jewish artists oppose campaign to tar actor Mark Ruffalo as an “antisemite”

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More than 180 Jewish actors, directors, writers, faith leaders and others have signed an open letter defending actor Mark Ruffalo against the filthy attempt by Paramount Skydance to tar him as an “antisemite.”

Using direct and sharp language, the signers decried what they called an “outrageous smear campaign” and the “weaponization of charges of antisemitism.” Hannah Einbinder, Joel Coen, Todd Haynes, Ilana Glazer, Tony Kushner, James Schamus, Emma Seligman, Jane Schoenbrun and Wallace Shawn are among the signers.

On August 21, Ruffalo, an outspoken defender of the Palestinians, reposted a video to his Instagram story that shows Safra Catz, executive vice chair of Oracle and member of Paramount’s board, describing what she calls the “really profoundly scary technologies” that Oracle is sharing with the Israeli state as it commits genocide.

In his post, Ruffalo denounced the genocide and pointed out that Oracle, which is facilitating it, is bankrolling Paramount’s acquisition of Warner Bros. He asserted that the technologies in question will one day be used “on you.” He also mentioned the job cuts, price hikes and industry consolidation that would result from the merger. “It’s a classic antitrust case,” he wrote.

Oracle is owned by billionaire Larry Ellison, who is a major backer of President Donald Trump. Ellison also has a close relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He reportedly has donated millions to Friends of the Israel Defense Forces and supported the illegal settlements on Palestinian land.

David Ellison, Larry’s son, is chair and chief executive of Paramount Skydance. The Ellison family already has de facto control of Paramount assets, such as CBS, MTV and Nickelodeon. They have overseen

mass firings at CBS News and slanted its coverage toward the right. The acquisition of Warner Bros. would give the family control of CNN, HBO and a major cable and streaming portfolio. The merger also could cost about 4,500 film and television jobs over three years, according to a report released by Los Angeles County.

Paramount responded to Ruffalo’s post with dishonesty and ad hominem attacks. A company spokesperson characterized Ruffalo’s post as “antisemitic,” adding that it revealed the “true motivation” of the merger’s opponents. Paramount objected to the actor’s use of the word “genocide” and his reference to Israel’s “apartheid system of oppression” without, however, addressing any of the facts that Ruffalo cited. The Simon Wiesenthal Center and the so-called Creative Community for Peace (a rabidly pro-Zionist organization) also lent their support to this foul slander.

Rather than backing down, Ruffalo replied forcefully to Paramount’s attack. He called the accusation of antisemitism “appalling and fundamentally dishonest,” adding,

Criticizing the actions of the Israeli prime minister, a military technology contract or the executives who supply it is not the same as criticizing Jewish people.

The new open letter vigorously defends the actor and opposes the genocide and the merger. The signers praise Ruffalo for pointing out

that the assault on the Palestinian people and the assault on our liberties at home are deeply interconnected, and there is nothing antisemitic about recognizing that fact.

The signatories also characterize the Paramount–Warner Bros. merger as

part of a larger project of tech-driven domination, a project Larry Ellison and his partners have never been shy about trumpeting—and one they themselves have explicitly linked to their support for the ongoing depredations being visited on the people of Palestine and their silencing of critics of those horrors.

They add that Larry Ellison is reported to have given \$350 million in funding and pledges to the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, which is implicated in

the Trump-concocted “Board of Peace” takeover of Gaza, a territory which has become an open-air laboratory for AI-driven killing and control technologies like the ones celebrated by former Oracle CEO (and current Oracle and Paramount board member) Safra Catz.

Citing broad Jewish opposition to Israel’s war crimes, the signatories declare,

Pointing out the crucial connections between what is happening in Gaza and what is happening in Hollywood is the exact opposite of antisemitism. It is, for us, the very essence of Jewish ethical duty.

The letter is notable for its unabashed character and for highlighting the connection between US imperialism’s bloody crimes in Gaza and its attacks on

democracy at home. It deals concretely with the Ellisons’ scarcely imaginable wealth and material interests, along with their support for the fascistic Trump and the murderous Zionist regime in Israel. Moreover, it identifies the Ellisons as members of a group of oligarchs that includes Elon Musk and Peter Thiel (cofounder of PayPal and Palantir)—both of whom, not coincidentally, are notorious promoters of the far right.

The letter is a symptom of increasing opposition to the genocide among Americans, as well as mounting opposition to unqualified American support for Israel.

The Paramount–Warner Bros. merger is part of several interconnected processes: intensified corporate consolidation, the extraordinary concentration of wealth within a tiny elite and Trump’s brutal attacks on culture and science. The level of social inequality in the US is historically exceptional. Especially under conditions of unsustainable government debt and international loss of confidence in the dollar, such inequality cannot be maintained through democratic means. To secure its position, the ruling class is increasingly compelled to attack independent thinkers and artists and pollute public consciousness through degraded spectacles, such as the cage match on the White House lawn.

The open letter in defense of Ruffalo reflects mass opposition to monopoly, censorship, genocide and creeping dictatorship. But the remedies that Ruffalo proposes (that is, appealing to the courts and the Democrats) are utterly inadequate. The courts and the Democrats serve the same capitalist class that has chosen Trump to defend its interests.

The defense of culture and free speech, and the fight against dictatorship and war, requires the struggle for a politically independent, mass socialist movement of the working class.



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