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The Golden Globes dominated by the US war drive and identity politics

This year's Golden Globes awards ceremony provided another platform for Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky, in a taped message, to offer a lying defense of the US-NATO war, which threatens to turn into a global conflict between nuclear powers.

The Hollywood establishment, firmly in the pocket of the Biden administration, did what it could Tuesday to delude and confuse the annual award ceremony's viewing audience (one of the lowest in Golden Globes history). Wealthy portions of the American middle class, represented at the event by actor Sean Penn, who introduced Zelensky, have made the anti-Russian war their particular crusade.



Volodymyr Zelensky at the 2023 Golden Globes

Penn, having shifted from anti-war opponent under the Bush administration in 2003 to pro-war fanatic, made nearly incoherent remarks. The actor indicated he was proud that the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), who stage the Golden Globes annually, had seen fit to encourage the “highest aspirations” of filmmaking by having those

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aspirations “share this stage tonight with a very real world example of that which inspires film’s creation.”

In fact, Zelensky is a stooge of US and European capitalism, a front man in their war drive against Russia, aimed at advancing their vast geopolitical ambitions. He presides over a regime infested by fascists and neo-Nazis that has declared war on democratic rights in Ukraine and overseen the vast impoverishment of the population.

After paying tribute to the opposition in Iran and the “women’s movement” in Afghanistan, Penn claimed that “the freedom to dream is not simply a human luxury, but rather a human need that must be fought and sacrificed for.” He went on, bizarrely, “If the freedom to dream were a spear, I proudly present a human being who tonight represents that spear’s most honed tip,” i.e., Zelensky.

In his own brief comments, Zelensky pointed to the birth of the Golden Globes in 1944, asserting that the “Second World War wasn’t over yet, but the tide was turned. All knew who would win. There were still battles and tears ahead.” Zelensky did not point out that many of the Ukrainian nationalist forces, whose political descendants form part of his regime today, were openly and actively on the side of Hitler’s forces, collaborating in the unimaginable crimes of the German military.

The Ukrainian president went on to claim that in 2023 “the war in Ukraine is not over yet, but the tide is turning, and it is already clear who will win.” The well-heeled crowd in Los Angeles broke into applause at this point. Likening the world political situation to an awards program, Zelensky commented that “I can definitely tell you who were the best in the previous year: It was you, the free people of the free world, those who united around the support of the free Ukrainian people in our common struggle for freedom and democracy.”

This is obscene. “Freedom and democracy” for the “free people of Ukraine” as defined by the White House, the CIA and the Pentagon: in alliance with fascists, submitting to the dictates of American imperialism, participating in the proposed dismemberment of Russia and helping pave the way for an even more cataclysmic war with China.

Zelensky promised his audience that while the “First World War claimed millions of lives” and the “Second World War claimed tens of millions of them,” there would be “no Third World War. It is not a trilogy: Ukraine will stop the Russian aggression on our land.”

The reference to the danger of a Third World War and the empty pledge to prevent it are tacit acknowledgments that the ongoing war is not popular in the US or anywhere else, and that fear about its inexorable expansion grips growing numbers of people.

Every aspect of Zelensky's appearance was cynical. His reactionary propaganda was forced on the viewing audience, and those in attendance, who had no choice in the matter. Again, however, recognizing that support for the war was not widespread, the entertainment media made as little as possible of Zelensky's presentation. Remarkably, in the face of what was widely reported as a "historical," "powerful" speech, much of the media ignored the Ukrainian president's presence in its coverage of the Golden Globes. In its extended "highlights" of the event, *Entertainment Tonight*, for example, omitted his speech entirely!

Zelensky has previously appeared via recorded messages at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival and the Grammy Awards.

The other dominant feature of the Golden Globes this year was race politics. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association was the target of a largely manufactured controversy in 2021 when it came under attack for its lack of "diversity." As a punishment, NBC refused to broadcast the 2022 ceremony.

Desperate to get back into the good graces of the identity politics crowd, the HFPA has expanded its membership and recently partnered with the NAACP on a five-year plan named "Reimagine Coalition."

The HFPA has about 105 members from 55 countries who cover the entertainment industry for media with a combined following of some 250 million people.

One of the outcomes of these sordid goings-on was the hosting of this year's Golden Globes by comic Jerrod Carmichael, who delivered a tasteless, vulgar opening monologue. "I'll tell you why I'm here. I'm here because I'm black," Carmichael commented. "The Golden Globe Awards did not air last year because the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which I won't say they were a racist organization, but they didn't have a single black member until George Floyd died. So, do with that information what you will."



Cate Blanchett in *Tár*

In the course of his monologue, Carmichael referred, astonishingly, to the fact that he was receiving \$500,000 for the one night's work!

On the whole, the organizers did everything in their power Tuesday night to emphasize race and gender.

The American media enjoys asserting that such ceremonies, with attendees coiffed and dressed to the nines, glittering and shimmering with rented diamonds, display Hollywood and the entertainment industry "at their best." The opposite is generally the case. Such awards programs, organized by and under the thumb of massive corporate interests, designed to deaden the consciousness of the participants and those watching them, bring out and encourage the very worst instincts—above all, prostration before wealth and celebrity.

Nonetheless, in spite of the deplorable political aims and mercenary commercial interests at work, a number of worthy individuals, films and series were nominated for awards this year. A few of them even won.

Cate Blanchett deservedly won for best actress in a drama for her performance in *Tár*, as did Amanda Seyfried for best actress in a limited series or television movie for *The Dropout*. Jennifer Coolidge took home the prize for best supporting actress in a limited series or television movie for *The White Lotus*, and the latter received recognition as best limited series, anthology series or television movie. Malaysian-born, Hong Kong-based Michelle Yeoh was honored as best actress and Vietnamese-born American actor Ke Huy Quan as best supporting actor for *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.



Amanda Seyfried in *The Dropout*

Other prominent winners included *The Fabelmans* (awards for best dramatic film and best director for Steven Spielberg) and Martin McDonagh's *The Banshees of Inisherin* (best musical or comic film, best screenplay [McDonagh] and best actor in a musical or comedy, Colin Farrell).

Abbott Elementary received the award for best television musical or comedy series, and its creator and lead performer, Quinta Brunson, took the honor for best actress in such a series. Tyler James Williams won the award for best supporting actor in a television series for the same program. *House of the Dragon* won for best television drama series. Austin Butler was named best actor in a drama for his performance in *Elvis*.

Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* was honored as best animated film, and *Argentina, 1985* (Santiago Mitre) won in the best non-English language film category (over Edward Berger's *All Quiet on the Western Front*).

The 95th Academy Awards, hosted by comic Jimmy Kimmel, is scheduled for March 12.

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