

**NCAC PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS**

Actors' Equity Association  
American Association of School Administrators  
American Association of University Professors  
American Association of University Women  
American Booksellers for Free Expression  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Ethical Union  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Jewish Committee  
American Library Association  
American Literary Translators Association  
American Orthopsychiatric Association  
American Society of Journalists & Authors  
Americans United for Separation of Church & State  
Association of American Publishers  
Authors Guild  
Catholics for Choice  
Children's Literature Association  
College Art Association  
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund  
The Creative Coalition  
Directors Guild of America  
The Dramatists Guild of America  
Dramatists Legal Defense Fund  
Educational Book & Media Association  
First Amendment Lawyers Association  
Free Speech Coalition  
International Literacy Association  
Lambda Legal  
Modern Language Association  
National Center for Science Education  
National Communication Association  
National Council for the Social Studies  
National Council of the Churches  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of Teachers of English  
National Education Association  
National Youth Rights Association  
The Newspaper Guild/CWA  
PEN American Center  
People For the American Way  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Projectensored  
SAG-AFTRA  
Sexuality Information & Education Council of the U.S.  
Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators  
Student Press Law Center  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Union of Democratic Intellectuals  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
United Church of Christ  
Office of Communication  
United Methodist Church,  
United Methodist Communications  
Women's American ORT  
Woodhull Sexual Freedom Alliance  
Writers Guild of America, East  
Writers Guild of America, West

## Free Speech Groups Support Lincoln Center's Decision to Host "To the End of the Land" Despite Calls to Cancel the Play

As organizations committed to free speech and an open public sphere, we fully support the decision of New York City's Lincoln Center to proceed with its plans to host "To the End of the Land," a production of Israel's Ha'Bima National Theatre and the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv, in spite of calls for the play's cancellation.

Those calling for the cancellation are not opposed to the content of the play but to its sponsorship by the Israeli government as a "strategy of employing arts and culture to divert attention" from the state's policies towards Palestine. While they have the right to protest the production—[a right that we have defended](#)—cultural boycott campaigns like this one are a blunt instrument that exacts a high price: sacrificing the free exchange of ideas about the most important issues of our times.

"To the End of the Land" is about the tragic entanglement between private lives, war and history in Israel between 1967 and 2000. David Grossman, on whose celebrated novel the play is based, is an outspoken critic of the Israeli government and a prominent peace activist. In his 2010 review of the novel, Colm Tóibín wrote: "To say this is an antiwar book is to put it too mildly. ... There is a novelist's notice taken of the sheer complexity not only of the characters but of the legacy of pain and conflict written into the gnarled and beautiful landscape... This is one of those few novels that feel as though they have made a difference to the world."

Art relating to the Middle East is often controversial, whether because its politically sensitive content raises accusations of anti-Semitism—as was the case with the 2014 Metropolitan Opera production of John Adams' "Death of Klinghoffer"—or because of the belief that any work receiving a repressive government's support serves to create a national "brand" that promotes the country's image.

The discussion spurred by controversy over the politically motivated state sponsorship of art is welcome, and the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement has done much to generate such discussion and to raise awareness about human rights abuses. It is unlikely that the cancellation of the play would contribute further to such awareness, while it is certain to deprive audiences of a deeper understanding of the human side of a tragic socio-political conflict.

Cultural institutions have a responsibility to maintain an open and lively cultural sphere by presenting a wide variety of perspectives even in the face of controversy and protest. Were institutions like Lincoln Center to yield to calls for cancellation coming from the BDS movement or elsewhere, any ensuing conversation would be much impoverished and further polarized. Therefore, we strongly support Lincoln Center in maintaining its integrity of purpose and its independence from political pressure.

National Coalition Against Censorship

Dramatists Legal Defense Fund