

**Directors of Globe to Globe festival
Shakespeare's Globe**

Dear festival directors,

We are writing to ask you to reconsider your invitation to the National Theatre of Israel, Habima, to participate in the Globe to Globe Festival in London this May.

You have told the Israeli-Palestinian organisation Boycott from Within, who wrote you an open letter, that you have organised the festival as a celebration of languages, not of states. But in inviting the National Theatre of Israel you have in fact given cause for celebration to a state more usually criticised for its illegal occupation of Palestinian land, its practice of targeted killings, use of torture, and many other human rights abuses and flouting of international law.

The Habima themselves have no doubt that in inviting them, you are giving credit to the state. When Habima general manager Odelia Friedman responded to the Boycott from Within letter, she was quoted in the Israeli press as saying, 'Habima is busy preparing for the trip, and we think it is an honour to the State of Israel in general, and to the National Theatre in particular'.

You may very well want to celebrate Shakespeare through a festival of languages, and we would support including Hebrew as one of those languages. But by inviting the National Theatre of Israel, you have taken a step which is interpreted by Israelis and non-Israelis alike as political. Your invitation unfortunately implies acquiescence in the abuses and illegalities committed by the State of Israel against the indigenous Palestinian population.

We read with interest Boycott from Within's description of the eagerness with which Habima's administration organises appearances in illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. You

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must know that such performances follow a de facto apartheid model: Israeli Jews may attend; Palestinians from surrounding towns and villages, whose stolen land the settlements sit on, may not.

You told Boycott from Within that Habima is 'publicly committed to providing an ongoing arena for sensible dialogue between Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians'. But are Habima's apartheid performances in illegal Israeli settlements evidence of such 'dialogue'? And what, by the way, qualifies the directors of a Shakespeare festival in London to determine what is and is not 'sensible' dialogue in the situation of national catastrophe in which the Palestinians find themselves?

We invite you to think again and rescind your invitation to Habima.

Yours truly,
Professor Jonathan Rosenhead, Chair, BRICUP
Dr Robert Boyce
Professor Haim Bresheeth
Les Levidow
Mike Cushman

London, 9 January 2011