Long live the degenerate art"
The old state faces Mahraganat songs
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Methodology

The paper relied on the analysis of official data and statements issued by the Syndicate of Musical Professions and the Department of Censorship of Artistic Works. The paper also reviewed the laws organizing the Syndicate of Musical Professions and the Department of Censorship on Artistic Works, in order to clarify the legal environment governing the practice of singing in Egypt.

Introduction

Frequent questions arise in the discussions of artistic issues concerning “degenerate art”; the art that does not adhere to the customs, traditions or patriotism promoted by the current authority. What are we watching? What do we listen to? How do these words enter our homes?

With these rhetorical questions, the anti-creativity campaign continues, but the current authority seems to be more hostile to mahraganat (festivals) songs and singers, and this is addressed in this paper in an attempt to understand the attack on the mahraganat songs, in context of understanding the nature of this art coming from the margin.

Mahraganat originated outside the traditional production system or, more specifically, without protection from the legal frameworks, established by the state for decades, to restrict freedom of creativity. The legislature did not care to revise laws contrary to the provisions of the constitution that was adopted in 2014, which guarantees freedom of creativity. Perhaps remarkable was the scale of the attack on Hamo Beka, the well-known mahraganat singer, so why did the attack focus on Beka specifically? And what content do his songs carry?

Hence, the paper attempts to review the formal positions of the parties concerned, whether the Department of Censorship of Artistic Works or the Syndicate of Musical Professions. There is an attempt to condemn the content of Beka’s songs, considering that it is not art at all and hence not worthy of spreading. The Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE) believes that there is a pressing need for solidarity with the art condemned by the state and its supporters. In previous moments, groups of artists and intellectuals voiced their condemnation of exclusion with claims of preserving morality, religion or patriotism, which had a profound impact on the defense of freedom of creativity.
Preface: Creativity between the provisions of the constitution and state practices

The constitution is considered the supreme basic law, which defines the basic rules, with respect to the form of the state, government and system of governance. The constitution also regulates public authorities in terms of composition, jurisdiction, relations between authorities, and the fundamental duties and rights of individuals.

A set of legislations emerges from the constitution, which should abide by its provisions. However, in the case of the current Egyptian constitution, some of its provisions have no reflection in the legislations governing reality.

The Egyptian constitution guarantees a package of rights and liberties, including freedom of expression and artistic creation, which are guaranteed in accordance with article 67, which states:

“Freedom of artistic and literary creativity is guaranteed. The State shall encourage arts and literature, sponsor creative artists and writers and protect their productions, and provide the means necessary for achieving this end. No lawsuit may be initiated or filed to stop or confiscate any artistic, literary, or intellectual works, or against their creators except by the Public Prosecutor. No freedom restricting sanction may be inflicted for crimes committed because of the publicity of artistic, literary or intellectual product”.

Although freedom of creativity is guaranteed through this article, state institutions do not adhere to it in many of their practices, based on the interpretation of the articles of the constitution in a way that deprives the right of its content. When the current authority confiscates a creative work, it always claims that the work subject to punishment is not creativity, as if there is a vague definition of creativity that only the current authority knows.

Likewise, legislation has brought about a set of limitations, whereby creative works are subject to the whim of power, rather than the imagination of the creator. The legislature also ignores compliance with the constitution, allowing for laws restricting the freedom of creativity to continue, and this is what the executive authority uses to implement systematic anti-creative policies.

This paper examines some of the examples that illustrate the gap between the rights and liberties guaranteed by the constitution and the legal and executive obstacles faced by citizens in terms of freedom of creativity. This is done by focusing on the mahraganat songs in Egypt.
First: Stages of producing mahraganat songs in Egypt

The process of producing mahraganat songs is characterized by the fact that they are created and spread in isolation of the traditional production system. Mahraganat ignores the legal frameworks governing the production of songs. On the other hand, the mahraganat songs appeared away of the control of production companies that own large capital. This feature does not deny the subsequent transformation in the way some mahraganat songs are produced bringing them into the traditional production sphere.

Since they are not subject to constraints of the law and the traditional production, mahraganat have spread and acquired a wide audience of Egyptians. Most likely this was achieved due to the large margin of freedom, since mahraganat are not subject to state restrictions. In addition, mahraganat songs benefited from the changes brought about by the January 2011 revolution, namely the increased reliance on digital means in consuming arts.

Mahraganat songs, like any other audio work, should go through several stages. First, through the Musicians’ Syndicate; as according to the law the artist must be enrolled in the syndicate or have a one-time work permit, which is renewable. The law also requires getting a permit from the Department of Censorship of Artistic Works; the only entity legally responsible for the content (song lyrics in this case). It is worth mentioning here that we are not going to go into the details of the legal procedures that are required in the production of songs, but we are mainly concerned in explaining the obstacles facing the art of mahraganat, which affect its having a legal status that protects its pioneers from abuse and prosecution.

Article 178 of the Egyptian Penal Code No. 58 of 1937 states:

“A penalty of imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years and a fine of not less than five thousand pounds and not exceeding ten thousand pounds, or either of these two penalties is imposed on whoever publishes, manufactures or possesses - for the purpose of trading, distribution, rent, posting or displaying publications-manuscripts, drawings, advertisements, engraved images, hand or photographic drawings, symbolic signs, or other objects or images in general, if they outrage public decency”.

This text allows the Egyptian authorities to prosecute creators on charges of outraging public decency, despite this text’s violation of article (67) of the constitution. Here, there is gap ignored by the legislator after the adoption of the constitution in 2014, as the articles of laws that contradict the constitution have not been amended or abolished.
If you are composing or playing music¹, writing lyrics, or singing, you will not be able to publish those songs and clips, you cannot copy them, hire another artist to work on them, or even perform them directly or broadcast them in a public place without dealing with the Censorship of Artistic Works Authority first, Musicians’ Syndicate second, otherwise, you would be subject to imprisonment for 3 months, according to Law No. 35 of 1978 regulating Artistic Syndicates. In addition, another threat is imprisonment for two years, in accordance with Law No. 430 of 1995 on the regulation of censorship, due to the practice of audiovisual work, without the permission of the Ministry of Culture, represented by the Department of Censorship of Artistic Works.

Obtaining a permit from the Censorship Authority for Artistic Works requires proof of ownership of the composed music, a number of copies to be licensed, as well as an amount of money to pay for the examination and licensing of the work. The Censorship Authority for Artistic Works is the only body legally authorized to control the works of art, with the aim of ensuring that the product presented does not violate public morals, public order, and the interests of the state, does not contain calls for atheism or obscene expressions or encourage the use of drugs, or what constitutes outrage of modesty, before granting the license.

Next comes the role of the Syndicate of Musical Professions in accordance with Law No. 35 of 1978 regulating artistic syndicates, which criminalizes the practice of any music-related work without membership or permission from the Syndicate, otherwise the person would be subject to imprisonment for up to 3 months and a fine of up to twenty thousand pounds according to Article 5 of the governing Law.

Requiring registration in the syndicate or obtaining permits to practice the profession are very restrictive for the practice of creativity, especially when it comes to mahraganat songs. The application process requires a formal application from the creator, accompanied by his original education certificate or a copy certified by one of the specialized music colleges or institutes, criminal status record, as well as proficiency in reading and writing, and passing the evaluation committee test.

The process of public display requires, in addition the above-mentioned, the issuance of permits from the cultural production sector, the Ministry of Tourism, security authorities, in addition to a permit from the neighborhood in which the event will take place. However, adherence to this bureaucratic process does not guarantee that the work will be published or its owner will be protected from imprisonment or fine, as the state keeps its security, sovereign and religious institutions as a last line of defense to monitor and scrutinize everything that comes out to the public.

The state, through its restrictions on creators, is trying to ensure full control over the artistic product, but the production model that the mahraganat art adopted at some stages of its development broke the constraints of this system and rebelled against it. In order to strengthen its presence it tried to look for other alternatives for production, spread and presence, which made the state fiercer in confronting it.

The Music Professions Syndicate, headed by Hani Shaker, has made a series of criticisms against mahraganat singer Hamo Beka. The syndicate began a campaign against him, in early November 2018, in cooperation with the Central Authority for the Control of Artistic Works, the Ministry of Interior, and the Syndicate of Acting Professions. Within a month, the Syndicate of Musical Professions was able to prevent six concerts of Beka in different governorates, as well as filing legal records against him for allegedly corrupting the taste and violating the laws as he did not obtain the different permits, whether those related to holding a concert, or those proving that he is a “singer” by being enrolled in the Musicians Syndicate. The Syndicate of Musical Professions was also able to issue a decree banning Beka from singing permanently, and rejected his application for membership of the Musicians Syndicate.

In early November 2018, the Legal Affairs and Labor Committee of the Alexandria Syndicate of Music Professions filled a legal report, with the no. 13812 of 2018 (El-Dekhela) against Hamo Beka, accusing him of singing without licenses, and damaging public taste. The head of the musical professions syndicate, Hany Shaker, ordered all committees in Cairo and the governorates not to grant work permits to the mahraganat singers, Hamo Beka and Magdy Shata. Shaker also thanked the security authorities in Alexandria for their quick of response, and forbanning Hamo Beka’s concert, which was scheduled to be held on 8 November 2018 in Agami. The official page of the Egyptian police published a video on Facebook, in which it mentioned that it had imposed control over the Agami area in Alexandria, with the aim of canceling Beka’s concert after the spread of harassment and irregularities.

The head of the musicians’ syndicate, Hani Shaker, announced his dissatisfaction with the deterioration of the state of art and the of public taste, explaining that protecting art from negative
“phenomena” is necessary, especially after the emergence of mahraganat singers as Hamo Beka, Magdy Shata and “the likes of them” through social media. He added that they are impersonating singers without a license or permit from the syndicate. Shaker issued orders to prevent the issuance of any licenses to these “imposters”. He also issued a decision to pursue them legally to protect art and society from these “negative phenomena,” as he put it.

In his statements, Hamo Beka refused to acknowledge that the security authorities in cooperation with the Syndicate of Musical Professions had canceled his concert. Beka announced that the concert was not prevented, and that he decided, based on his personal desire, to cancel it for fear of his audience because of the crowd and the presence of a large number of attendees.

Beka also ignored talking of the legal complaint filed against him and the decision to ban him from singing. He announced on his personal account on “Facebook” that another concert will be organized to compensate his fans, and also that he will hold a free concert for his audience to celebrate the millions of views of his mahraganat songs on YouTube.

Three days after the cancellation of the Agami concert, a campaign from the General Directorate of Artistic Works headed to Porto Cairo in Cairo, based on information confirming that Hamo Beka will hold a concert without the permission of the syndicate or a license from the Censorship of Artistic Works. The campaign was coordinated by Hani Shaker, head of the Syndicate of Musical Professions, and Dr. Khaled Abdel Geel, head of the Department of Censorship of Artistic Works. On November 11, 2018, the concert was banned and a legal record was filed against both Hamo Beka and the person in charge of the venue.

Later, another Beka concert planned to take place at Bitash Beach in Alexandria was canceled, and then another concert for Beka in Damietta was canceled. According to press reports, residents of Beila in Kafr el-Sheikh governorate prevented Hamo Beka from holding a concert in March 2019. There is no information on whether the police intervened in the prohibition. According to Al Dostour newspaper, some of the people of the city felt that the music genre presented by Hamo Beka “corrupts the public taste, and generates corrupt and reckless generations.”

In April 2019, the Musical Professions Syndicate filled another legal record against Beka for holding a concert in the town of El Mahalla Al Kubra in Gharbia governorate without a permit.

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According to the report, the director of Gharbya security directorate received a notification from El Mahalla Al Kubra police station warden saying that while passing with the accompanying force, they noticed the preparations for holding a concert in the mentioned place, and a few crowds flocked to attend the concert that was to be held. In coordination with the organizers of the concert, it was canceled and the attendees departed.

Hama Beka's crisis reached the Egyptian parliament, where requests for briefing from MPs were referred to the Culture and Media Committee of the House of Representatives on “the phenomenon of corrupting public taste, cynicism and vulgarity in popular songs and the impact of that on society,” according to press reports. A lawyer also filed a legal warning against Hani Shaker in his personal capacity and as the head of the musical professions syndicate asking him not to grant music permits to Hamo Beka and Magdy Shata, the mahraganat singers. In warning No. 20811 of 2018, it was stated that if Shaker granted such permits, it will constitute breach of his duties and will lead to corrupting public taste.

In spite of the claim by the Musicians’ Syndicate that Beka did not obtain permits to hold the concert, Sout Al Ummah newspaper published scans of cash payment receipts signed by Beka in favor of the Music Professions Syndicate worth of EGP 1500 and EGP 3000 for holding two concerts in November 2018, one of which was to be held in Alexandria's Bitash Beach, the same concert that was the reason for filing a legal complaint against Beka.

Musician Mounir El Wesimi, former head of the musicians’ syndicate, criticized the performance of the syndicate, saying that the syndicate is not performing its roles properly, which contributed to the emergence of “these models”, adding, “when I was the head of the syndicate, no one could do this. None of the likes of those people was singing.”

The attack against Hamo Beka and what he represents for the state was not limited to banning him from singing and prosecuting him after the announcement of any concert, but the acting professions syndicate headed by Ashraf Zaki intervened to stop Al Sobki Production Company from contracting Beka. As soon as the company announced through its Facebook account that it had signed a contract with Beka to play a role in its new film, the Syndicate of Acting Professions

sent a strongly worded letter to the company\textsuperscript{12}, warning it not to cooperate with mahraganat singer Hamo Beka, and said it would not allow Beka to exist in the world of acting.

The Acting Professions Syndicate also threatened to suspend the film if the company contracted Beka. In case producer Ahmed Al Sobky insisted that Beka acts in his new film, the company will be completely suspended. Ashraf Zaki, head of the acting professions syndicate, said in press statements that he would not allow intruders on the arts scene such as Beka, and would not allow anyone to distort the image of Egyptian art or its workers.

\textbf{“Beka and the likes of him will not enter the field of acting, and we will not allow the decline of public taste. This will not happen. Does it make sense that after Abdel Halim Hafez, Umm Kulthum, Youssef Wahba, and Omar Sharif represented art, that art is degraded and represented by BeKa and others like him?”}\textsuperscript{13}, Says Ashraf Zaki, head of the acting professions syndicate.

Producer Ahmed El Sobky quickly denied that he contracted Hama Beka or that he is participating in any of his upcoming cinematic works. A statement, published on Al Sobky Company's Facebook page\textsuperscript{14}, added that the meeting between Beka and Karim Al Sobki, intended to arrange the appearance of Beka in one scene in a film, and the company announced the cancellation of this scene.

This attack and the accompanying statements against Beka came after the interest of the media and social media in the details of the clash between Beka and his rival in mahraganat singing Magdy Shata that took place through social media. This incident shows how the censors work in Egypt; although the Censorship on Artistic Works is manifold and deeply rooted, in practice it does not have the capacity to pursue everything that goes out to the public, or according to the words of Khaled Abdel Geleel, head of the Censorship on Artistic Works, “the inspection campaigns are powerless”.

Abdel Geleel said in press statements that\textsuperscript{15} “there are only six inspectors in the censorship, they are required to cover 27 governorates at the level of the Republic, which is difficult to implement”. This explains why the Ministry of Culture resorted, earlier, to expand the censorship office...
cover seven governorates in Egypt\textsuperscript{16}, as well as stimulating a public discourse that gives community members the illusion that they are powerful and able to change things if they reported incidents of “spoiling public taste.” It seems that this limited capacity of the censorship in Egypt has enabled Beka, Shata and others to produce artworks and to have a wide audience, before censorship notices their presence.

There is a very dangerous shift in the role of arts’ syndicates in Egypt, as the security sense is rampant inside them, and instead of working in favor of supporting freedom of creativity, developing the creators who join the syndicates voluntarily, try to get their rights, and to stand as a buffer zone between the creator and the policies that hinder the process of creativity, these syndicates practice extensive violations of freedom of creativity through coordination with the security and regulatory authorities in Egypt to chase the creators, and to prevent them and their work from reaching the public.

This philosophy adopted by the Syndicate of Musical Professions monopolizes the whole process of creativity, and sets controls and conditions to ensure that no creative product comes out, without the involvement of the syndicate in the production process. The head of the musicians’ syndicate, Hany Shaker, confirmed more than once that it is necessary to bring back the judicial police, which had been obtained by the syndicate previously and canceled by the Constitutional Court ruling\textsuperscript{17}. Shaker explained that judicial police was the only tool that “enabled the syndicate from standing in the face of those, as it granted the syndicate the right to prevent holding these concerts, but with canceling the judicial police, the syndicate unfortunately stands helpless”, he said.

\textit{“Hamo Beka doesn't need a syndicate, he needs the police to arrest him.”}\textsuperscript{18}, says Musician Helmy Bakr.

All these practices against mahraganat singer Hamo Beka raise many questions of the apprehension of the authorities of what he presents, and this cannot be understood without looking to the content of these songs and the way they come out to the public. This is what the paper discusses in the next point.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Sara Ramadan, Between the censors' hands.. On the decision of the minister of culture to establish censorship offices in 7 governorates, AFTE, Published on June 28th, 2018, Accessed on April 15th, 2019, Link: http://bit.ly/2J60raq
\item \textsuperscript{17} Yara Ahmed, Hany Shaker to “Al Fagr Al Fany”: Sherif Mouneer saved me from Hamo Beka and Shata. Al Fagr Al Fany, Published on November 19th, 2018, Accessed on April 15th, 2019, Link:http://bit.ly/2Du1jC2
\item \textsuperscript{18} Amr El Lithy, An interview with Helmy Bakr and Magdy Shata, Al Nahar Channel (YouTube), Published on February 19th, 2019, Accessed on April 15th, 2019, Link:http://bit.ly/2DAqran
\end{itemize}
Third: Why does the state fear what Hamo Beka represents?

Due to the legal procedures taken by the Syndicate of Musical Professions and the censorship and security campaigns against Hamo Beka, he cannot hold any concerts in Egypt because he did not obtain an active or affiliated permit from the syndicate. Any venue hosting Beka to sing will be held accountable.

This pushed Beka to try to enter the production system, abiding by the terms, rules and legal frameworks formulated by the state, in order to be able to organize concerts. But he was prevented from producing new mahraganat songs. Beka used tools more open to the public and less subject to state control. After this attack, he continued to post one or two mahraganat songs on weekly basis on his own page on YouTube.

Beka was subjected to the syndicate’s examination, in February 2019, but the members of the examination committee refused unanimously to grant Beka permission to practice singing or grant him membership of the syndicate, thereby preventing him from holding public concerts or singing in weddings. This came in confirmation of its previous decision, issued in November 2018, which we discussed earlier.

Tarek Mortada, spokesman of the Musicians Syndicate, said in a press statement that the members of the examination committee, including musician Helmy Bakr, Dr. Reda Ragab, Maestro Hamada Abu El Yazid and Dr. Mohamed Abdel Sattar, unanimously rejected approving Beka as a singer. Mortada pointed out that the decision to prevent Beka from singing had been made some time ago, stressing that the Musicians’ Syndicate supports the preservation of public taste, in the face of popular mahraganat songs that are the reason for the deterioration of popular singing. He added that “the syndicate is legally entitled to stop any singer who does not have its permission in the event he goes on stage, but it does not have this authority on social media and the internet that were behind the spread of mahraganat songs, to the extent that a singer like Beka has 11 million fans through his accounts on social media”.

Thus, it is clear that the Syndicate of Musical Professions sets moral and conservative standards for dealing with creators other than the declared legal standards contained in the regulations and laws governing the work of the profession. The syndicate looks down at the mahraganat art and those performing it. In its discourse it works to demonize it on the pretext of destroying public taste, morality, society and youth. Musician Helmy Bakr’s remarks represented strongly this perspective.

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20. Ibid
He said after the rejection of Beka's request to join the syndicate that the reason is “the words he sings,” stressing that his voice is good, saying: “Those who applied were not rejected because their voices are bad, their voices are good, but the words they sing are bad.”

This exclusionary view of creativity prevents it from being received as an artistic product that tries to express what is on the mind of its creator. This trend tends to dismantle the work of art into words it sees as carrying implicit messages. Therefore, the state feels the need to confront these messages, position itself as the ruler of public taste, and treat recipients as minors that must be directed toward the messages, which it accepts politically and morally.

In a televised interview between musician Helmi Bakr and mahraganat singer Magdy Shata (Beka's most famous rival), Bakr classified what Beka and Shata present as a kind of randomness. He added that such voices appear and disappear quickly and will not find a place except within “lower classes’ weddings”, explaining that their singing is random and reflects low taste.

The lyrics of mahraganat songs are one of the most important problems Helmi Bakr and others have with this kind of singing. According to Bakr, “This vocabulary is not ours, but was invented by slums”. Hamo Beka and Magdy Shata, then, according to Helmi Bakr, are presenting a vocabulary created by a random category, which may be reluctantly allowed to appear in “lower classes’ weddings” within this narrow space that produced this culture, but not to be adopted by the musicians’ syndicate or to go out to wider spaces.

It is not permissible to give the creators of this vocabulary a voice or to allocate a space for them, they are just an incomprehensible “phenomenon” that indicates the decline of society and its values. Therefore, state discourse must distinguish between this vocabulary, and the art that the state and the syndicate adopt and accept. Musicians supporting the current authority point to the duality of Abd al-Halim and Umm Kulthum's era versus Beka and Shata's era, and the duality of purposeful art versus low art or fine art versus low taste art.

Thus, dealing with Hama Beka took other dimensions. The model presented by Beka differs from that of the artist Mohammed Ramadan, who was able to somehow reconcile his situation, get his audience to defend him, and sought to identify with the current authority, to the extent that he produced a song in 2018 tribute to the armed forces during the celebrations of the October Victory entitled “Our Army is tough”.

By contrast, Hamo BeKa seemed to be completely unmanageable, clearly declaring his hostility to the security system, and there is hardly a single mahragan he sings that does not contain at least one sentence condemning the police's performance, and its attempt to establish a culture of "informants" in popular areas. By "informants" we mean civilians working with the police stations to give them information related to citizens in their areas of residence. Beka said in one TV program that he will not stop singing and that the audience is the decisive factor in that.

Despite this traditional view by the state's official channels and those expressing its rhetoric, the market in its profitable logic was unable to ignore mahraganat for long. They were soon incorporated into advertisements, and mahraganat songs were employed in films and serials' intros.

Thus, the state can negotiate some problematic areas, and may allow the appearance of Mohammed Ramadan after a mild conflict with him, in which Ramadan, protected by his popularity, offers guarantees that he will not get out of the system. Ramadan settled his disputes with the Musicians Syndicate, produced a song for the armed forces, built a fan base, acted in dramas that praise the police, and appeared in an advertisement fora Telecommunications Company singing a folk song. Therefore, the state implicitly agreed to Mohammed Ramadan’s request to enter the production system, in the form of a talented reckless young man from Upper Egypt who succeeded and made a fortune that enabled him to produce art works that emulate the style of Hollywood, in terms of form and size of production. The state may also enter into a truce with Oka and Ortega, after they became part of the legal production system, and entered the traditional production system, so they appeared strongly in the field of advertising, and reached a wide audience locally and internationally, which enabled them to hold concerts abroad. Oka and Ortega's lyrics are no longer rambunctious to the extent that they anger the state.

By contrast, Beka didn’t yet reach Ramadan’s model or that of Oka and Ortega, and in turn has not been accepted by the traditional production system protected by law. Beka presents himself with no equivocation or apology as belonging to a destitute class, in a slum area, with its culture, and he also cannot read or write. Beka appears more “vulgar” than the state and the musicians' syndicate can tolerate, to the extent that it is unacceptable to integrate him into the ranks of fine art, to which the state is satisfied. Perhaps this is the renewed problem related to art that comes from the margin, and the more this margin is officially ignored, the more the state is willing to exclude it. This is discussed in the fourth and final section of the paper.

Marginal art remains confined to its narrow space until it can get out of it and reach wider spaces, hence it begins to impose itself on the prevailing culture and is increasingly accepted in society. At the moment of political and social transformation in Egypt during the January 2011 revolution, the margin had the opportunity to emerge strongly and later dominate the prevailing forms of culture.

“It is well known that the present society looks with disgust at every new creation in art and literature, as long as it threatens the cultural systems that reinforce society, whether in terms of thinking or in terms of the meaning. This disgust is evident in autocratic countries, especially in Germany, where horrible aggression against the free art that these stupid people call (degenerate art) is embodied”.

From a statement by the “Art and Freedom” group, December 1938

In 1938, the group “Art and Freedom” crystallized in its famous statement “Long live degenerate art!” a clear stance against strongly rising fascism, conservative bourgeois values and artistic traditions, which were represented by the Afandia class. The statement represented a victory for the values of innovation in art and literature. However, the current situation is so severe that the cultural community at the forefront of the scene is largely subject to the current authority and its anti-creative attitudes.

In a situation that has been fully nationalized, it is difficult for us today to find a group trying to develop a clear stand against restrictions on art in particular or against the deterioration of the current political situation in general. Hence, until a group of intellectuals with liberal values manages to get together and develop a clear collective position against the control of the art scene, what Beka tried to do and before him Cairokee band, was resorting to the most free and independent means of production as a form of resisting the monopoly of the state of the art production process and its attempt to frame it by anti-creativity laws.

Beka and Cairokee band presented two very important models in creating alternatives to mainstream production and publishing, through YouTube. As mentioned earlier, Beka continued to produce mahraganat songs abundantly through his official channel on YouTube, and achieved widespread presence. He also received the silver and gold YouTube awards, because the number of followers of his official channel on the site reached 2 million followers. After the security constraints, Cairokee band resorted to publishing their entire albums on YouTube and the songs website Spotify.
Conclusion

Guards of ethics and traditions do not realize that despite the increasing constraints, they will not be able to maintain moral guardianship over art, nor will they be able to keep it away from the audience for long, as such audience want to access it. Despite desperate attempts to control digital spaces with practices such as blocking websites, the changes produced by the social transformation phase in January 2011 are still too huge to control, and artistic production is not necessarily linked to traditional, legally framed production channels.

Through the issuance of this paper, AFTE aims to shed some light on the ongoing violations and exclusion of margin artists are subjected to. AFTE calls on artists and intellectuals to stand with the mahraganat singers and defend their right to freedom of creativity, especially with the repeated imprisonment sentences against them, the latest of which was the sentence against Hamo Beka.