



# “Invisible presence”

Regulations of Censorship within the National Center for Translation

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Regulations of Censorship within the National Center for Translation

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## Methodology

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This paper is based upon information obtained through 11 interviews conducted by the Association's researchers, including 9 interviews with translators who currently work with the National Center for Translation, or who have worked in varying periods ranging from the end of the 1990s to 2021, and two interviews with the center's employees. Pseudonyms were used, as per the preferences of the participants in this research.

The paper also relies on statements made by the center's officials, whether they were published through recorded television interviews or through newspapers, in addition to some articles regarding the translation process in general and the censorship regulations that were announced in August 2020.

## Introduction

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In August 2020, the National Center for Translation announced a new mechanism for submitting requests of books translation to the center's technical office,<sup>1</sup> as part of a performance development plan announced by Dr. Ola Adel, the former director of the center, who managed the center in February 2020.

The announcement raised concerns about the status of freedom of creativity and expression in Egypt,<sup>2</sup> especially after the regulations included censorship conditions that were clearly declared for the first time through the official platforms of the center, and relating to books not being at odds with religions, social values, morals and norms. The decision also included a condition requiring that the translated book be newly published, within only five years of its publication. According to the center's statement, the regulations came after proposals for translations of books with contents that insulted religious symbols and institutions, as well as promoting "homosexuality, perversion and atheism." This is inconsistent with the right to expression and artistic creativity guaranteed by the text of Article

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1. Mustafa Maher, "National Center for Translation" adopts a new mechanism for submitting requests for translation of books to the Technical Office, Al-Ahram, published on August 15, 2020, last visit March 2021  
<https://bit.ly/2QO58vj>

2. Mohamed Abdel-Rahman, translators criticizing the national center's contracting mechanisms for translation: extremist ideas that do not serve the translator, AlYoum ALSabea, published in August 2020, last visit April 2021.  
<https://bit.ly/3xoEnOD>

76 of the Egyptian Constitution. It is also inconsistent with the objectives of the Translation Center, as it undermines the philosophy of translation in itself as it being a presentation of the other and interpretation of difference.

The National Center for Translation's existence extends to over a quarter of a century. Although it was established as a center by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 381/2006, it started as an extension of a governmental cultural project, the National Project for Translation, which was formed in 1996 as one of the committees of the Supreme Council of Culture and was chaired by Gaber Asfour at the time, who also headed the Ministry of Culture twice later, in 2011, and 2014-2015.

The Translation Center enjoys a stature among the elites of the Egyptian and Arab intellectuals. Also, the project itself, since its inception, has been of great importance among readers, youth and intellectuals, as its establishment was linked to the promotion of translation studies in the seventies. In its beginning, the project pursued major goals related to culture, knowledge and countering the European Hegemony, since its inception in the mid-1990s as a project, it has produced nearly 4,000 books in translation to date.

Therefore, the center's announcement of censorship regulations while taking into account the systematic restriction of freedom of creativity and the conservative general context raised concern about the sizable changes that may result from the implementation of this regulation, which is quite ambiguous. Despite the rapid confirmation of the center on continuing its role in enlightenment, it did not decide whether it would continue to work according to the announced regulations or not, nor did it mention or clarify the context of their issuance. Questions arise here about the censoring practices of the center before these regulations were issued.

In this context, this paper attempts to monitor and track the censorship practices that the center may have practiced with regards to book translations, and the process that the book goes through since its proposal, through to the issuance of approvals until the completion of the printing process, it reveals how bureaucracy and censorship are entwined and how they reinforce practices that impede freedom of creativity. Also, the paper tries to identify the context of issuing this regulation that would codify practices of censorship and strengthen them further inside the center, in addition to identifying the forms and methods through which the center may exercise censorship over translations.

Although the paper concludes that the center exercises censorship in some cases, specifically against books with problematic titles, which are often linked to the famous Taboos "Religion, Politics, and Gender", this does not negate the Center's efforts as well to publish problematic and bold titles in many cases, and to wage battles, whether announced or unannounced in defense of its publications. This can be described as random and indefinite censorship, as it allows and prohibits depending on the political and social context, and according to the vision of the administrators in the center and their

orientations, and their ability to wage battles in defense of what the center proposes, which is evident in allowing some titles in a certain era, ones which their reprinting has stopped in a later and more authoritative era.

## First: Who runs the National Center for Translation?

The National Center for Translation was established<sup>3</sup> by Presidential Decree No. 381/2006, it was inaugurated in 2007, it is a continuation of the national project for translation, which was proposed by Gaber Asfour during his tenure as Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Culture at the time. The project was established in 1996, as one of the committees of the Supreme Council, during the struggles the state was waging against the rise of political Islam in the 1990s, and the subsequent assassination campaigns that targeted politicians and intellectuals<sup>4</sup>. The center played an “enlightening” role, while following a set of principles, including that of extending its translations beyond European centralism and the dominance of English and French languages, balancing between human knowledge in the scientific, intellectual, artistic and creative fields, and being biased towards everything that establishes ideas of progress, science, permeating and encouraging rational thought.

The National Center for Translation consists of a number of councils, bodies and departments. The Board of Trustees, which consists of at least 15 members, is the dominant authority running the affairs of the center, it formulates the general policy for its departments, the general strategy and the approval of the work plans drawn up by the commission. The council includes 6 ministers, among them the Minister of Culture, who in turn nominates the remaining members of the council from among the intellectuals and specialists in the field of translation; the President of the Republic approves after that appointment by a decision issued in the Official Gazette, according to the decree establishing it.

It appears here that setting up new translation mechanisms, which is an essential part of the center’s general policy, must be approved and passed by agreement and approval of the Board of Trustees, otherwise it is considered contrary to the decree of its establishment, it should be noted here as well, that the Board of Trustees is concerned with approving the plan for producing translated books, Which are set by the advisory body of the center. The advisory body, which consists of a group of experts and specialists, develops its plan after receiving proposals from the translators to the technical office of the center, which is in charge of receiving the proposals of readers and translators.

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3. Presidential Decree regarding the establishment of the National Center for Translation, Presidential Decree No. 381 of 2006  
<https://bit.ly/31yAIzd>

4. Ahmed Abd al-Latif, Censorship: How to Translate Books Saying We Are Right, Issue No. 19, Al-Maraya Magazine, dated January 2021, pp. 66-68

Samah, who has been working in one of the center's sectors since the 1990s, explains that the employees were surprised by the statute published in the newspapers, and that the Board of Trustees did not convene for its approval<sup>5</sup>, which made it easier for the Board to evade press statements regarding the regulations and standards included in the new statute.

Confusion and lack of clarity prevailed in the statements of the center's officials, although the center adopted a defensive stance at the beginning of the regulation's crisis<sup>6</sup> and explained in its statements the importance of the existence of these regulations, and the context of their issuance. After Dr. Ola Adel left her managing post of the center, coinciding with the crisis that occurred on account of the regulatory statute that was announced in August 2020, Dr. Karma Sami took over the management of the center and also denied that the center exercises censorship over the topics selected for translation<sup>7</sup>, without clarifying the position on the statute or canceling it.

It should be noted here that the center's officials refrained during this period and afterwards from making any press statements regarding the new regulations, until Dr. Karma conducted an interview with Akhbar ElAdab, 3 months after assuming the management of the center, in which she touched upon the crisis, but without a detailed explanation, she only denied that the center holds any role of censorship.

While newspapers reported that Ola Adel's outposting as head of the center was suspended as a result of announcing the new regulations statute, Ahmed, one of the translators close to the center, confirmed that she was preparing to leave a few months before that, after applying to join a position as a cultural attaché in Vienna, and that she put forth the statute with the aim of announcing what was actually being practiced inside the center, which was later confirmed by Dr. Ola's statements in this regard.

However, the regulations and standards addressed by this statute, especially with regard to topics of contempt for religions and homosexuality, have already been applied in the translation center. Samah explains that this is a common practice, but in an undeclared or direct manner, as it is subject to self-standard, according to each employee, his authority and his intellectual convictions.

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5. Interview conducted by the researcher with one of the heads of the sector at the center, who has been working there since its inception as a project. The interview was conducted by phone, in April 2021.

6. Sumaya Ahmed, head of the National for Translation: There are books that slip poison into honey and promote unacceptable values, Al-Bawaba News, published in August 2020, last visit April 2021  
<https://bit.ly/2RpiwGp>

7. Aisha Al-Maraghi, Dr. Karma Sami: My biggest project is reverse translation from Arabic into other languages, Akhbar Al-Adab Issue 1441 dated March 7, 2021, pp. 5-7 Aisha Al-Maraghi's dialogue with Karma Sami.

## Second: Does the center practice censorship?

When the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces assumed power in 2011, the National Center recommended<sup>8</sup> cutting out two chapters from Philosopher Daoud Raphael's book "The Sphinx and the Phoenix," on grounds that our Arab culture was not prepared for the two chapters entitled; "What is God?" And "Thoughts Toward Criticism of Religion," as a philosophy professor had issued a report to the center after reviewing the book recommending cutting out those two chapters before publishing it. Afterwards, the translation remained stalled, awaiting a decision from the center to publish it in full, since September 2011, after Daoud rejected a proposal he had accepted and retracted to publishing the book without the two chapters.

During this period, the cultural elites of society had concerns relating to censorship, freedom of expression and creativity, especially after political Islam took the lead, and in light of talk about presidential elections in which the Salafist movement, Islamic groups, and the Freedom and Justice Party, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood - intend to run for it.

Dr. Faisal Yunus was heading the National Center at the time. Samah, one of the centre's employees, says that the lack of approval for books for reasons related to religion, politics and gender began during the tenure of Dr. Faisal Yunus, who was the first chairman to head the national center following Gaber Asfour, founder of the project, from 2011 to 2012, which was when the center's employees went on strike for the first time.

The Center also refused at this time publishing a translation by Rabie Wahba of a book entitled "Sexual Masks .. Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson", written by Camille Ballia. The book was published after that in 2015 during the management of Dr. Anwar Mogheeth, who chaired the center twice, first in 2014 and the second time in 2015, which extended to the beginning of 2020, but the center rejected the book again, and its printing was stopped during Dr. Ola's outposting. That was days before the translation regulations statute was issued, according to Wahba, who was interviewed by AFTE. Wahba is one of the translators who have dealt with the center since its inception as a national project in the 1990s. After the edition ran out of the market, Dr. Ola agreed to reprint it after a request was made in this regard, but she withdrew her agreement without giving reasons.

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8. Part of an unpublished testimony with philosopher Daoud Khashaba, conducted by a researcher for the Asfari Institute in 2019, which the Foundation has transcribed, the testimony concerns working and influential individuals in the Egyptian cultural milieu regarding culture as resistance in the countries of the Arab Spring..

Samah, who followed the crisis of publishing the first book during Dr. Faisal's management of the center, says that when she asked him why the book was not published after the editions ran out, he responded by saying that he would not publish "Porno" books with government money, the same argument<sup>9</sup> was used

during the crisis of cutting out two chapters from "The Sphinx and the Phoenix According to a testimony obtained by AFTE from the author of the book, and also used by Dr. Shokri Mujahid<sup>10</sup> during the crisis of the book "Egypt of Tahrir" in 2015, as he said during a telephone conversation with Ahmed Moussa, in his defense of the center, that the center does not publish anything that offends the army with government funds, saying "In the coming years, we will not allow such talk and other things that may affect our security, safety, and our basic notions."

In 2015, Minister of Culture Abdel Wahid Al-Nabawi decided to stop selling the book "Egypt of Tahrir .. The Birth of the Revolution", to withdraw copies from the market, and to investigate the translator and employees at the National Center for publishing the book. Ahmed Moussa, one of the talk show hosts, attacked the book because of a summary of the book written by Alaa Al Aswany. This and its writer, as well as the book's theme, have encouraged the rising of pro-regime voices in saying that the book condemns the Egyptian army, which is considered a threat to the Egyptian national security, according to them.

The book was written by French journalists, Claude Gibal and Tanji Salone, and translated by Asem Abd Rabbo Hussein, the center had contracted him to translate it in 2012, a few months following the breakout of the revolution, among many books issued in the aftermath of the January revolution. Its translation was published in 2014, afterwards its editions were withdrawn from the market following the pro-regime criticism it instigated. The foreword to the book addressed the army's clash with protestors in February 2011, the time in which the Military Council issued Statement No. 22, under the title: "An Apology... we have credit with you."

Tasnim,<sup>11</sup> who headed one of the center's departments in the early 2000s, says that the sharp criticisms directed at the center at the time caused the overthrow of its president, Shokry Mujahid, in addition to internal disturbances, she explained that the crisis of the book "Egypt's Tahiri", created a state of panic

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9. Mohamed Saad, National Center for Translation denies omitting two chapters from a book critical of religions due to religious currents, Al-Ahram Gate, published in February 2012, last visited April 2021.  
<https://bit.ly/2POPAra>

10. Ahmed Moussa: The head of the National Center for Translation "reveals the truth of the book issued by Al-Thaqafa that accuses the army of killing protesters", YouTube, published in July 2015, last visited on April 2021  
<https://bit.ly/3tbzRkn>

11. Interview conducted by the researcher with one of the heads of the sector at the center, who has been working in it since its inception as a project in the early 2000s, the interview was conducted in April by phone.

among the center's employees, as they realized that the publicity of the problematic book, could have them be referred for investigation, and make them lose their jobs. The crisis was that the far-reach of the book and the controversy it raised in public spaces was random and unpredictable. Samah adds that this event is pivotal in the censorship practiced by the National for Translation, as it warranted the anxiety of employees, becoming an event that summoned and revived the internal watchdog of all the center's employees and those in charge of the process of publishing, editing and selection.

Despite the fact that most of the testimonies gathered by AFTE, whether by employees or translators, confirmed that Gaber Asfour's tenure was the best in terms of openness to topics that might seem problematic, followed by that the time of Anwar Mogheeth's administration, which is the second of the center's head for the longest period after Asfour, during which "Sexual Masks" was published, which has been suspended for years. The center exercised censorship early in its inception, and even before that when it was a project belonging to the Supreme Council of Culture, which was announced at the time in some cases clearly in the introductions to some book or the introductions written by the translator.

In 2010, the translator, Ali Al-Menoufi, had finished translating Julio Cortázar's novel "Game of Hopscotch / Raiola" for the center, yet its printing was halted as an employee objected to the translation of an explicit sexual scene in the novel. Ali's wife was following up on the publishing arrangements with the center the time due to his being outside Egypt, encountered the following situation as told by his daughter through a post on her Facebook page "Once we arrived at the center, everyone looked at us with great amazement, as they seemed to know of the background of not publishing the book ... We met one of them, I do not prefer to mention her name, she stood in the middle of the room in her short white hair, addressing my mother: "The text that Dr. Ali translated is not acceptable! unbelievable! My face turned red!"

It should be noted that, according to Dr. Ali's daughter, Samar,<sup>12</sup> that the center also refused to publish two books translated by her father that were authored by the Spanish philosopher Adela Cortina, claiming political reasons, since one of them was about the civil state and the theory of citizenship, and the other tackled the democratic transformation in the transitional period after Franco's rule came to an end.

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12. A personal post by Samar on her Facebook account, about banning books authored by her father, Dr. Ali Al-Menoufi  
<https://bit.ly/3g5Rnmn>

### Third: Censorship from book proposal until Publication

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The process of issuing books for the center is supposed to take place collectively, through committees, after examination and scrutiny of the feasibility and importance of translating a certain book, but the long and bureaucratic process which sometimes extends to 7 years and more in some cases, that the book goes through from its proposal until being published in the market. The publishing process is disrupted, and questions about the importance and economic feasibility are asked after a long time has passed, and the process of censorship also increases the complexity of the book issuing process, as it is subject to more than one committee and employee during the production process, and in different political and social contexts, so that sometimes ends up being obstructed by a censorship decision taken individually by one of the administrators at the center.

The National Center for Translation has been following two methods of production since its inception, one of them is based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and titles of books, which are directed to translators that the center deals with on a semi-regular basis, and the second one is through translators presenting a proposal to translate a certain book after withdrawing a form from the center and submitting a translation sample, an overview of the book, its importance and basic publishing information, then the advisory committee works to revise the submitted suggestions, as well as those submitted by the technical office committees, then it filters them according to the center's budget, to be approved by the Board of Trustees as a final step.

The reasons for refusing proposals may be stated informally and verbally, and although most of them may also be unclear reasons relating to the center's interests, some of them are explicitly related to not accepting problematic titles, a practice that increased, especially after Anwar Mogheeth left office in early 2020.

The center then seeks to obtain intellectual property rights for the titles of the books that it has agreed to issue during the year, through a special rights committee. After translation, the book passes through special committees for both proofreading and editing, and in some cases, especially in contracts with new translators, there are reviewing committees, Samah says that employees and even the proofreader may play a role, through their personal likings, in the censorship process, and that sometimes the proofreaders report their concerns to the editor because the latter was not informed that the book contained sexual or political references, or that it was critical of state institutions.

Samah adds that the proofreader here can suspend the publishing process until the matter is decided upon, while sometimes he may go to the director of the center to raise concern for publishing such books that are problematic. Samah continues that this practice was followed by employees. Many during the rule of Mohamed Morsi, head of the Freedom and Justice Party, during which Shukry Mujahid took over the management of the center.

After approval of the translation and passing through the various committees, a decision is issued for printing. Translations remain in printing presses sometimes for years, and although it is not certain that the center's books have stopped being printed because of the printing press employees, this practice was usual during the eighties and nineties, and it extends until now.<sup>13</sup> It relates, among other reasons, to their fear of losing their source of income, as employees fear being questioned and held responsible if they did not report problematic titles. The consequences of these historical practices for employees can be visualized, especially in light of the current context in which a conservative ethical discourse of "the values of the Egyptian family" arises, these practices remain difficult to monitor in the current context.

An important point here lies in the issue of censorship and its evasiveness, as issuing the decision to print and publish a book by the center does not mean the cessation of censorship concerns regarding it, unlike other factors, including societal and institutional control over the publishing process, the issue of randomness and elasticity in censorship, which is related to a change in management or a difference in the attitude and vision of these same people affect the center's continued publication of a book once again, putting it to a test, especially after its edition has run out of market. The crisis of the "Sexual Masks" book sets a good example, after the first battle it fought to be published during the tenure of Faisal Yunus, to only be published during the tenure of Anwar Moghith, while Ola Adel suspended printing the book while she was in office, after obtaining the renewal of the rights from the publisher and the book being at the stage of print. Rabei Wahba, the translator of the book, believes that the new statute may be behind the stopping of printing the book again despite its importance, especially in light of the momentum of its discussions on; the body, sex and gender.

It should be noted here that the center's policies are affected by the ongoing public debate, as it usually has implications on the selection process. AFTE believes that it is positive for the center to be open in its choice of translating relevant books to engage with the ongoing discussion in the public sphere regarding different subjects, such as the center's interest in publishing books about movements for social and political change right after the January 25 revolution, but this practice also calls for concern in light of restrictions on conditions for freedom of expression and artistic creativity, considering that

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13. "The Printing Press" is a watchdog on the "creativity" scene, Shouf, published in April 2016, last visited April 2021  
<https://bit.ly/3dgXLFx>

this practice may also be used to impose censorship on the translation of certain topics so as not to provoke the public or cause controversy. This can be inferred through statements made by the center's officials on how publishing some books may cause of anger within the public, also at some point, the public was dominated by polarized debate of the people's position towards the military establishment, a crisis arose in the center related to the double restriction on dealing with the military institution, especially after the crisis of "Egypt's Tahrir" in 2015. A matter that was confirmed by Hussam, one of the translators who have worked with the center since the early 2000s. An analogy can be made here on what the renowned author, Naguib Mahfouz, who worked as a censor of artistic works, said regarding "street censorship", "The general climate now (1989) is much worse, (1989) was when the "Children of Geblawi" was first published, Al-Azhar these days represents tolerance towards other groups, but street pressures are worse than official censorship because you can understand the latter, but how do you communicate with people widespread from Alexandria to Aswan."

In this context in which censorship appears to be hinged in the center as a governmental body, one can imagine the extent of the censorship exercised with regards to the three famous taboos of censorship: religion, politics and gender, which are expressed in the previous cases mentioned in the report. During the long crisis of the "The Sphinx and the Phoenix" book, more than 6 different managements took over the center after Gaber Asfour, one of them ordered to send the book to the printing press, after learning of the crisis, but nothing happened, according to the testimony that AFTE obtained from the author of the book. Omar, a translator who has been working with the center since the early 2000s, says in an interview with the AFTE that sensitivities arise within the center from translating books that deal with gender in certain forms or deal with queer theory, as such issues are sensitive to cultural specificity. Officials at the center stated in televised interviews that some book translations were suspended at some stages of their process after contracting so as not to "harm society" through political or religious problems.

## Fourth: The Predicament of Translation from Hebrew

The issue of normalization is peculiar within the Egyptian and Arab context, especially among the intellectuals that made up the core of the center during its establishment, as the center declares its position of rejecting normalization with Israel, like other governmental and private cultural institutions, and this rejection of normalization extends to censorship.

Laila, one of the translators who have translated for the center since before its official establishment, said in an interview with AFTE that she had submitted a proposal to translate the book “Egyptian Jews Diaspora” by Joel Benin but the national project at the time rejected the proposal, and stated verbally that the refusal is related to “Arabic nationalism and Nasserism”, and that the book conjures the sensitivity of the issue of Jews in Egypt due to its background and intersections of the conflict with Israel, Dar Al-Shorouk published the translation of the book after that in 2007. In a similar context, Hisham,<sup>14</sup> , translator, explained in his testimony to AFTE, that he tried to communicate with the Center in 2011 regarding translation of a Hebrew book, and that the center rejected the proposal at the time, but their reason was lack of interest.

During 2009,<sup>15</sup> a crisis arose regarding the center beginning to work on a project of translating books from Hebrew, bringing to the surface a controversy over the relationship between this step and the nomination of Farouk Hosni, minister of culture, for the position of UNESCO Director-General at the time. Asfour clarified that the project had published five Israeli books translated from English in 2000 before it turned into a national center for translation in its current legal form, he also emphasized that the matter should be dealt with in a manner that does not contradict the Center’s position of not dealing with any Israeli institution. The Center has worked on translations of some of these books after being published online through piracy, without needing to communicate with the Israeli publisher. Egypt’s signature on the intellectual property rights agreement in 2001, and the subsequent ratification of Egyptian Law 82/2002 on the protection of Intellectual property has affected the center’s ability to translate pirated works from Hebrew, for fear of legal problems.

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14. Anonymized testimony that the researcher conducted with one of the translators who tried to work with the center in 2011, the interview was conducted in April 2021 by phone

15. The translation of Hebrew books ... stories of normalization and the presidency of “UNESCO” and knowing the enemy, Al-Masry Al-Youm, published in June 2009, last visit April 2021  
<https://bit.ly/2RzYk4R>

The National Center clarifies in the forewords of some of its publications<sup>16</sup> that there may be some changes or omissions from the original in its translation into Arabic, a practice of censorship still, but it is known and not hidden from the recipients compared to omission without informing the recipient. Nevertheless, Nada, one of the translators who worked with the center, says that this practice, in addition to undermining the honesty of the translation profession, has become a legal threat to the center, especially after the intellectual property laws that Egypt has signed.

*After I first read this book in its English edition during my stay at the United States' University of California, Berkeley, I felt the value of transferring it to the Arabic language, as the book holds a scientific treatment of the relationship between the Zionist project and the historical Arab presence in Palestine in addition to the development of this relationship in Hebrew literature since the inception of the Zionist project up until the eighties of the twentieth century, all which is addressed in an original and comprehensive manner of Hebrew literary works that dealt with Arabs, which makes it a comprehensive text that included several stages of Hebrew literature in dealing with the Arab presence in Palestine, despite the fact that the treatment in the book is characterized by a prejudiced Western outlook in understanding the historical context of the conflict, which is what it necessitated a pause from us in this Foreword to review and scrutinize the conclusions reached by the American author and to add what he had overlooked*

*Hence, I suggested to our colleague Dr. Nadia Suleiman - Professor of English Literature at Ain Shams University - to translate it into the Arabic language, to enrich the Arab Library and to enable Hebrew intellectuals to see the analytical character that needs correction on our part. Dr. Ihab Salah Medri, English literature at Cairo University, has participated in the translation, while I reviewed it to edit terminology of Zionist character used in the book, and place them within an Arabic context that fits with our understanding of the nature of the conflict and its circumstances throughout the book, and I recommended omitting one paragraph from the cultural background of the first chapter, which has adopted in a crude way the Zionist vision for the emergence of the conflict. This is in addition to the numerous margins written by the translators to correct the historic distortions that marred the treatment, which is very common in the west.*

Some statements regarding this matter indicate a lack of vision and clarity, as well as censorship practices related to refraining from and refusing to translate what challenges the official narrative

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16. Al-Arabi in Israeli Literature, The National Project for Translation 2001, written by Gila Ramraz, Reich, translated by Nadia Soliman and Ihab Salah, Foreword by Ibrahim Al-Bahrawi.

about Egyptian-Israeli relations in general. Ibrahim Al-Bahrawi, a professor of Hebrew studies at the Faculty of Arts at Ain Shams University, and one of the most important translators working with the center, warns of the dangers of what he called a random translation that would “destabilize the notions of the Arab citizen,” and “expose him to being infiltrated by Zionist ideology,” as an alternative to choosing topics that achieve national objectives and benefits the reader. In an interview, Al-Bahrawi condemned the publication of the translation of the book “The Angel .. The Egyptian Spy Who Saved Israel,” and considered it a Zionist intellectual infiltration, adding: “This is not the type of books that we translate from Hebrew, no one should allow the Israelis to defame the October War by slandering the Egyptian presidency. “It should be noted that the Military Court of Cassation upheld a ruling in 2019 to imprison Khaled Lotfy, the founder of “Tanmia” publishing house, on charges of divulging military secrets on account of publishing the Arabic version of the 2016 book.

This vision neglects the reality of huge knowledge flowing around the world and enabling individuals to learn about different cultures and receive diverse knowledge from all parts of the world, including Israel, in addition to the high viewership of prepaid platforms, such as Netflix, Israeli dramas and films.

## Conclusion

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The National Translation Center issued the new regulations for translation in August 2020 that weakened and restricts the role of the Cultural Center, and that is not limited to Egypt only, but extends to the Arab world, at a time when there is an increasing need for the concerned state institutions to play their roles in expanding culture.

Considering the above mentioned facts and according to the interviews conducted by the Association, there is selective censorship inside the National Center, and it can be said that it started with the project from its early beginnings, as a governmental cultural body, subject to the state's policies, but the censorship exercised by the center during its inception was very limited and, often it was announced in the foreword of the book, while this regulation is an attempt to legalize such practices, in addition to the center not making clear position until this moment on this regulation. Such practices threaten the center's ability to fulfill its roles.

Therefore, those in charge of the center must review and revise translation regulations and controls in a way that eliminates the control standards that restrict freedom of thought and expression, and limit the topics that the center translates, so that the center continues to perform its roles, develop them, and not retreat from them.