



## (Self-)Censorship and Nazification: Literary Translation in Occupied Norway (1940-1945)

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Résumé de l'article

Cet article se penche sur la traduction littéraire sous l'occupation de la Norvège par l'Allemagne nazie (1940-1945). Il vise à ajouter des informations nouvelles au corpus de connaissances issues de recherches récentes axées sur la traduction littéraire en temps de guerre ou pendant l'occupation militaire dans des pays comme la Belgique, l'Allemagne et la France. Se concentrant sur la réglementation en matière de traduction littéraire mise en oeuvre par les autorités nazies pendant l'occupation, il s'attarde dans un premier temps sur le processus de création de cette réglementation et, dans un deuxième temps, sur la manière dont les éditeurs ont interagi avec les autorités nazies, afin de composer avec cette nouvelle législation. Les sources principales du présent article proviennent des archives du ministère de la Culture et de l'Éducation publique (établi par les autorités nazies), notamment de son sous-département des affaires littéraires, le Bureau de la littérature et des bibliothèques. L'objectif de la recherche dans les archives est d'apporter un éclairage nouveau sur les particularités de l'origine du système de censure mise en oeuvre pendant l'occupation de la Norvège et sur ses implications idéologiques, d'une part, et, de l'autre, d'ajouter des données de la Norvège aux études antérieures sur la politique de traduction fondée sur l'idéologie nazie.

# (Self-)Censorship and Nazification: Literary Translation in Occupied Norway (1940-1945)

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## Abstract

This article presents some research on translation during the occupation of Norway by Nazi Germany (1940-1945). It seeks to add new insight to the body of knowledge from recent research that has drawn attention to literary translation during wartime or under military occupation in countries such as Belgium, Germany, and France. Focusing on the regulation of translated literature that was implemented by Nazi authorities during the occupation, the article first describes the process of how this regulation came about and, second, how publishers interacted with Nazi officials in their attempts to navigate the new policy. The main source of data is archival material from the Nazi-installed Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment, notably that of the sub-department for literary affairs, the Literature and Library Office. By investigating this material, the article aims to shed new light both on the particularities of the origin of the censorial system implemented during the occupation of Norway and on its ideological implications, thus adding Norwegian data to previous studies on the politics of translation stemming from Nazi ideology.

**Keywords:** literary translation, translation policy, Nazi ideology, (self-)censorship, occupied Norway

## Résumé

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sur la manière dont les éditeurs ont interagi avec les autorités nazies, afin de composer avec cette nouvelle législation. Les sources principales du présent article proviennent des archives du ministère de la Culture et de l'Éducation publique (établi par les autorités nazies), notamment de son sous-département des affaires littéraires, le Bureau de la littérature et des bibliothèques. L'objectif de la recherche dans les archives est d'apporter un éclairage nouveau sur les particularités de l'origine du système de censure mise en œuvre pendant l'occupation de la Norvège et sur ses implications idéologiques, d'une part, et, de l'autre, d'ajouter des données de la Norvège aux études antérieures sur la politique de traduction fondée sur l'idéologie nazie.

**Mots clés :** traduction littéraire, politiques de traduction, idéologie nazie, (auto-)censure, Norvège occupée

## Introduction

On 29 October 1941, the *Kultur- og Folkeopplysningsdepartementet* [Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment<sup>1</sup>] demanded that Norwegian publishing houses seek permission for each translated book they wanted to publish, a time-consuming and costly process. The ministry was a propaganda department headed by the Norwegian Minister of Culture, Gulbrand Lunde, established by Nazi officials in occupied Norway and operating from 9 April 1940 to 8 May 1945. The archival material left by the ministry is kept in the *Riksarkivet* [Norwegian National Records; RA from hereon]. This material sheds light on how the publication of translated literature came to be controlled during the occupation. It reveals both clear censorship<sup>2</sup> of literature in translation, as well as instances of authorities promoting books: some of the publishing houses highlighted in their applications that they had been asked by the Reich Commissariat (i.e., the local German authorities) to publish certain works in translation.

Christopher Rundle and Kate Sturge state that studying the cultural politics of fascist regimes may “[reveal] much about the ideological framework of fascism, as well as the instrumental tools that were used to manage public perceptions and ideological change,” and they point out that until 2010, translation had been “largely ignored”

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1. All translations into English are the author's. When translations of quotes appear in the text, the original Norwegian is given in footnotes.

2. “Censorship” is here understood as “any regime or context in which the content of what is publically expressed, exhibited, published, broadcast, or otherwise distributed is regulated or in which the circulation of information is controlled (*The Oxford Dictionary of Media*, 2011, n.p.). For a more comprehensive overview of the term's origin and uses, see Moore (2016). Censorship in general in Norway during the German occupation has been further described in Dahl and Bastiansen (2000).

in such studies (2010, p. 3). Responding to this claim, the present article aims to provide insight into the system that institutionalized the regime's cultural policies in occupied Norway, by describing the process leading to a new policy of translated literature that took the form of a regulation issued on 29 October 1941. The description of the regulation and its origin is supplemented with three examples of applications to publish specific texts, thus shedding light on processes that unfolded within the censoring institution and on some of the strategies used by publishers of translated literature, including self-censorship,<sup>3</sup> to avoid economic, social, and judicial sanctions of varying severity. In the light of this examination, the article discusses the ideological implications of the policy and its implementation.

The article examines in particular archival material from the *Litteratur- og bibliotekkontoret* [Literature and Library Office], a sub-department of the Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment, which contains a file on the process of creating a new policy for translated literature, as well as a file with applications to publish literary translations.<sup>4</sup> Although some of the material has been lost, what remains is still highly valuable for this area of research. The analysis, based on close reading and a chronological reconstruction of the course of events, builds on previous descriptive research pointing to a link between Nazi ideology and policies for translated literature in the Third Reich (Gouanvic, 2001; Lombez, 2013, 2016; Rundle and Sturge, 2010; Sturge, 2010).

## 1. Theoretical backdrop

This section outlines a theoretical backdrop, with a view to connecting some of the previous findings on translation under antidemocratic rule to the Norwegian case in point. According to Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro, translation “can be part of the religious, the political as much as the literary field” (2018, p. 183). To this may be

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3. “Self-censorship is self-regulation by an individual author or publisher, or by ‘the industry’” (*The Oxford Dictionary of Media*, 2011, n.p.; italics in original). Danilo Kis has described individual self-censorship from a more subjective point of view: “Self-censorship means reading your own text with the eyes of another person, a situation where you become your own judge” (1986, p. 44). Both serve as useful understandings of the term in the context of this article.

4. RA/S-3415/D/L0076/0001—*Forordninger om oversettelseslitteratur* [Regulations of translated literature]; RA/S-3415/D/L0076/0002—*Oversettelseslitteratur* [Translated literature].

added, as Jean-Marc Gouanvic has demonstrated, that the literary field in times of war and occupation “exists only as an apparatus,” and translated literature is thus at risk of being “subjected to the dictates of the political field” (2001, p. 209). Gouanvic gives the example of a Belgian translation of John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *Grappes d’amertume* (1944), that makes the text “serve the interests of Nazi Germany” by omitting, through a series of shifts, all traces of the workers’ movement, as well as introducing the theme of national identity (*ibid.*, pp. 208-209). Furthermore, Heilbron and Sapiro find that “a general approach to translation can be constructed by focusing on book translations in the field of publishing,” i.e., the production and circulation of symbolic goods, which in fascist countries “[are] highly politicized from the outset” (2018, pp. 184-185). In other words, in wartime and under fascist occupation, the social, cultural, and ideological structures in which translation is embedded are saturated with political meaning, while translating, translations, and the publishing of translations may be understood as transmitting ideological values to a higher degree than in contexts of peace. In such situations, the ideological implications of translating and publishing translations come to the surface and may be observed in the policies that inform these activities.

More specifically, translating and publishing translations become political acts due to the context and the frame of interpretation that they offer. For instance, publishing an anthology of poetry translated into the language of the occupied from the language of the occupier will not be interpreted as a “neutral editorial act,” as Christine Lombez has shown in her study of the *Anthologie de la poésie allemande des origines à nos jours*, published in France in 1943 (2013, p. 208). Rather, such a publication clearly shows the occupiers’ voluntary use of literary translation as a means for propaganda, since it proves “the willingness of the occupying authorities to launch a widespread offensive against French culture and significantly re-orientate its readership towards German literature” (*ibid.*, p. 206). Lombez has further shown that the literary branch of the French Resistance created a “counter-anthology,” which aimed to “rétablir une vérité et de laver l’honneur de la poésie allemande, abusivement compromise à des fins de propagande” (2016, p. 5). The Resistance thus recognized that poetry translation was a weapon being used by the enemy and launched their counterattack.

In their introduction to *Translation under Fascism*, a collection of essays on translation in four (para-)fascist regimes (Germany under Hitler's rule, Italy under Mussolini, Spain under Franco, and Portugal under Salazar), Rundle and Sturge note that translations in these historic contexts "could be perceived as a threat to the integrity of the nation's culture, but they were also often seen as an economic threat" (2010, p. 6). The present article attempts to demonstrate that both these views were expressed in the development of the cultural policies regulating the market of translated literature in occupied Norway as well. Indeed, of the four regimes studied, Nazi Germany stands out in that early on it implemented its "specific censorship policy concerning translation" (*ibid*, p. 7). The policy was based on the regime's "framework of racist assumptions," which created an understanding of translations as a negative "mixing" of cultural orders that "potentially undermin[ed] the supposed organic, ethnically defined unity of 'true literature'" (*ibid*, p. 8). Rundle and Sturge also note that by the late 1930s, the more common view was one in which translations "might be contaminants that threaten to pollute the receiving nation through a kind of cultural miscegenation" (*ibid*, p. 9). Similarly, the debate on translated literature in Italy under Mussolini reflects some of the contradictory ideas that can be found in the discussions on translation policy in occupied Norway. On the one hand, translation was seen as useful for cultural renewal and enrichment, but, on the other hand, it was understood as "a vehicle of cultural pollution that was perceived as a threat to the integrity of the national culture and language" (*ibid*, p. 8).

The role of the state in "regulating translation flows and shaping translation practices" (Heilbron and Sapiro, 2018, p. 184) is relevant to our discussion here, which will now focus on how the authorities brought about a change in policy concerning translated literature during the Nazi occupation of Norway (1940-1945). To this end, the emphasis will be placed on translation into Norwegian, as opposed to from Norwegian into German, which was considered a positive addition to German literature. Based on its ideology of "racial purity," Nazi Germany favoured translations of Norwegian and Swedish literature, considered "culturally related" and therefore "encouraged [...] as a means of strengthening connections within an extended idea of the Germanic *Volk*" (Rundle and Sturge, 2010, p. 9).

## 2. The Historical Context of the Policy for Translated Literature in Occupied Norway

### 2.1 Early Attack on Translated Literature

Controlling the publication of translated literature was in a sense an early priority of the occupiers. One of the first instances of censorship took place only three days after the German invasion of Norway, and it specifically targeted three translated books. On 11 April 1940, German officials carried out a confiscation operation targeting Hermann Rauschning's non-fiction book, *Gespräche mit Hitler* (1940), translated into Norwegian under the title *Hitler har sagt det* [*Hitler Has Said It*] (Ringdal, 1993, p. 171).<sup>5</sup> It had been published by Aschehoug, one of the large Norwegian publishing houses, only a few weeks before the invasion (Formo, 1998, p. 109). The occupiers confiscated all the copies they managed to find in Oslo bookstores, as it was seen as harmful to the occupiers' cause (*ibid.*, p. 110). The book was later smuggled back into Norway from Sweden, where many Norwegians fled during the years of Nazi occupation. It escaped confiscation by being wrapped in the cover of a 1935 cookbook by the Swedish chef Elsa Östberg, entitled *Världens bästa mat* [*The World's Best Food*] (*ibid.*). The second book that was confiscated was Leo Trotsky's memoirs in Norwegian translation, *Mitt liv: Forsøk på en selobiografi* [*My Life: Attempt at an Autobiography*], published in 1935 by the left-wing publisher of political literature Tiden Norsk Forlag. The third book was actor and director Wolfgang Langhoff's autobiographical novel *Die Moorsoldaten. 13 Monate Konzentrationslagerhaft. Ein unpolitischer Tatsachenbericht*, translated into Norwegian and published in 1935 as *Myrsoldater* [*Swamp Soldiers*].<sup>6</sup> It described life in a German concentration camp near Börgermoor (*ibid.*; Ringdal, 1993, p. 171). Immediately after the German invasion of Norway, it became clear that books that inspired critical views on Nazi Germany were not tolerated.

5. The book first appeared in 1939 in French as *Hitler m'a dit*. Two English translations were published in 1940, *Hitler Speaks. A Series of Political Conversations with Adolf Hitler on his Real Aims*, published by Thornton Butterworth in the UK, and *The Voice of Destruction*, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons in the USA.

6. Translated into English in 1935 as *Rubber Truncheon. Being an Account of Thirteen Months Spent in a Concentration Camp*, published by Constable in the UK.

## 2.2 From Discussing Taxation to Implementing Censorial Regulation: A Chronological Account of Events from December 1940 to October 1941

The archival material used in this section is the result of the initiative by the Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment to collect statements on its proposal for a new tax on literary translations. These include a statement from the chairman of the Norwegian Booksellers' Association, Johan Grundt Tanum, speaking also on behalf of Harald Grieg, chairman of the Norwegian Publishers' Association, as well as statements collected from the literary experts who sat on the *Departementets midlertidige konsultative råd i kunstneriske spørsmål* [the ministry's temporary consultative council on matters of the arts]. The experts were the author and translator Kristen Gundelach; the author, translator, and head of Norwegian national theatre Finn Halvorsen; and the poet and translator Herman Wildenvey. This section also relies on the minutes of a meeting between Norwegian and German officials which significantly changed the course of events, ending the discussion about taxation and laying the groundwork for a new regulation on translated literature.

The documents shed light on the climate in which the new regulation originated, which resembled that of pre-war Nazi Germany where “measures to reduce the amount of translation were urgently called for” (Sturge 2010, p. 53). The rhetoric used by those in favour of taxation on foreign works in Norway, particularly by Gundelach, echoes the Nazi rhetoric described by Sturge, according to whom “a ‘flood’ of translations threaten[ed] to swamp domestic culture” (*ibid.*). Sturge further states that “indeed, National Socialism’s official discourse on translation was marked by a suspicion, often portraying translated literature as an insidious channel of dangerous ideas or a failure of patriotism on the part of German readers” (*ibid.*, p. 51).

A similar underlying suspicion can be said to form the backdrop of the events and statements discussed in this section. The change in policy in occupied Norway emerged in a climate of protectionism regarding national literature, which, as the following account shows, was the object of its own “protective” regulation around the same time.

### 2.2.1 Johan Grundt Tanum’s Response: Concern for the Berne Convention

The first sign of regulation in the RA’s file on the matter is a letter sent from the Norwegian Booksellers’ Association, signed by their



chairman, the well-known and well-respected publisher and bookseller Johan Grundt Tanum, to the Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment (RA[...]–0001, 12 December 1940). It began by referring to a telephone call on 6 December from the ministry's Director-General, Sigvat Heggstad, during which Tanum was asked for the association's view on implementing a tax on translated literature. Tanum referred to his own initial reply, namely, that he would need a moment to confer with the chairman of the Norwegian Publishers' Association, Harald Grieg. Although he gave his response in the letter, he pointed out that neither Grieg nor he had had the chance to discuss the topic with the boards of their respective associations, and that the letter thus presented only their preliminary view on the matter.

Tanum expressed his understanding for the reasons for the taxation proposal, describing it as being “naturally motivated by the concern that national, valuable literature will suffocate in a flood of translated literature”<sup>7</sup> (*ibid.*, n.p.). As noted above, this wording echoes the Nazi-German way of describing the issue; it also created the illusion that there was some shared ground between Tanum and his potential readers, intended perhaps to make the ministry think more highly of his opinion. He then introduced his concerns about the possible consequences of the tax, which he believed ought to be carefully considered before the decision was made. Tanum made three key points. First, he pointed to the principle of legal reciprocity, specifically the Berne Convention, which stated that literary works in translation had the right to enter national markets on equal terms with local literature. His concern was that one could not predict the consequences of a breach of the convention.

Second, he pointed to the principle of material reciprocity, stating that if Norway started to tax foreign literature, it was not unlikely that Norwegian literature would be subjected to a similar taxation abroad. He linked this remark to the initial question, since the tax was proposed precisely under the guise of benefitting Norwegian authors. Tanum's point was that the success of Norwegian authors abroad required access to a market that was far larger than the national market alone. His argument that a tax might do more harm than good to Norwegian authors and possibly make them more

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7. “naturlig begrunnet i en engstelse for at nasjonal, verdifull litteratur skal kveles i en flom av oversettelseslitteratur.”

dependent on subsidies was important, because it undermined the official argument the proposal was based on. Tanum elaborated on this, praising the success of some of the most famous Norwegian authors on the international stage such as Henrik Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Knut Hamsun, and Sigrid Undset, as well as a vague group of “newer authors.”<sup>8</sup> He further added that “[i]t is questionable to put forward proposals that might harm a development that presumably benefits the country both ideationally and materially”<sup>9</sup> (*ibid.*). On this note, both Grieg and he “find it likely that Norwegian authors make more abroad in the form of royalties than Norwegian publishers pay foreign authors”<sup>10</sup> (*ibid.*).

Third, Tanum evoked the ideal of the international freedom of books. He remarked that “[i]t has been an international principle that books are not to be charged special taxes,”<sup>11</sup> (*ibid.*) and the book market—again he referred to the Berne Convention—had been strictly regulated internationally precisely in order to secure this principle. One of the effects of the principle was the acceptance of the “cultural responsibility to keep book prices as low as possible, so that as many people as possible may have the opportunity to enjoy the cultural benefits of books”<sup>12</sup> (*ibid.*).

In his statement, Tanum made it clear that investigating the consequences of the tax was his main concern, although his arguments in fact focused mostly on the principles of democracy, equality, and free speech applied to the cultural market. While he introduced his arguments using a phrase resembling Nazi discourse on literature, best seen as a speech act aimed at inducing a sense of community and agreement, what it in effect did was prepare the ground for his counter arguments. His own ideological frame of mind nevertheless emerged in his references to the international principles of the free circulation of literary works.

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8. “de nyere forfattere.”

9. “Det er betenkkelig å fremme forslag som kan skade en utvikling som både ideelt og materielt må antas å være til fordel for landet.”

10. “[vi] mener [...] det er trolig at norske forfattere tjener mer i utlandet i form av honorarer enn norske forleggere utbetaler til utenlandske forfattere.”

11. “Det har vært et internasjonalt prinsipp at bøker ikke skal belastes med særavgifter.”

12. “en kulturoppgave å holde bokens pris så lav som mulig, slik at flest mulig kan få anledning til å nyttiggjøre seg de kulturelle goder som følger boken.”

### 2.2.2 Kristen Gundelach's Response: In Favour of Taxation on Lowbrow Translated Literature

On 21 December 1940, a letter was sent from the Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment to the architect Wilhelm K. Essendrop, chairman of the ministry's temporary consultative council on matters of the arts. Essendrop was asked to collect statements from the group of authors sitting on the council.<sup>13</sup> Attached to the letter was Tanum's statement, as well as a recommendation dating from 1921 by the *Kirke- og utdanningsdepartementet* [Ministry of Church and Education] dismissing the Authors' Association's proposal for a tax on translated literature (RA[...]0001, 12 December 1940; RA[...]0001, 1 October 1921).<sup>14</sup> These three documents were then circulated to the members of the authors group. The first to receive the request from Essendrop was the chairman of the group, Kristen Gundelach, a translator of poetry and author who openly sympathized with the Nazi authorities (RA[...]0001, 21 December 1940; Tønseth, 2017, n.p.). In his statement, Gundelach argued for a differential tax that should apply to commercial publications, which he deemed most translated publications to be, and that a tax waiver should be granted to artistic publications. Gundelach, himself a translator of Dante, gave the following example as an introduction to his argument:

Spørsmålet om avgift på oversettelseslitteratur kan sees under mange forskjellige synsvinkler [...]. Ser man det [som] avgift på en Danteoversettelse, vil enhver reise sig i indignasjon mot tanken. Ser man det derimot [som] avgift på den oversatte anonyme underholdningslitteratur, magasinene [...], til å tilfredsstiller [*sic*] det norske folks leselyst med, vil svært mange være enig med mig i at en avgift er på sin plass. (RA[...]0001, Gundelach, n.d., n.p.)

[The question of taxation of translated literature may be considered from many different points of view [...]. Taxing a translation of Dante would make anyone stand up in indignation at the very thought of it. However, many people would agree with me that a tax on anonymous

13. There is no comprehensive list of council members in these archival files; it is therefore difficult to assess whether there were other members in addition to those mentioned here.

14. Although this recommendation rejected the 1921 Authors' Association's taxation proposal, it shows there had been a similar initiative before the German occupation. It is not unlikely that the recommendation was attached in order to present the taxation proposal as emanating not only from the occupiers or local nazis, but also from pre-war Norwegian politics, thereby increasing the chances for the current proposal to pass.

entertainment literature, magazines [...], written only to satisfy the Norwegian people's love of reading, is due.]

In fact, Gundelach found most so-called literature not to be literature at all, in the “*artistic* sense of the word,”<sup>15</sup> and that non-artistic writing should be taxed because it exhausted the “desire to read”<sup>16</sup> and the financial resources of the Norwegian people at the “expense of more valuable things,”<sup>17</sup> while generating income for publishers (*ibid.*; italics in original). Gundelach further argued that such taxation would “under all circumstances be beneficial to the Norwegian people”<sup>18</sup>: first, it would benefit Norwegian literature (he did not justify this claim); second, it would enable a beneficial “sorting of taxable nonsense from literature that *avoids* taxes due to its high quality—that is a *cultural* gain”<sup>19</sup>; and third, taxation “makes it unprofitable to bring foreign nonsense into the country, so that we become self-reliant also in *that* field”<sup>20</sup> (*ibid.*; italics in original).

From this line of argument, Gundelach moved on to the question of the Norwegian language. He seems to find Norwegian literature better simply because it was written in Norwegian, stating that “[t] hird-rate *Norwegian* literature has the advantage of being thought and written in *Norwegian*,”<sup>21</sup> while in translations “one can see the *most horrible* things: misunderstandings of the original language, lack of proficiency in Norwegian”<sup>22</sup> (*ibid.*). Based on this claim, he found that “both the Norwegian people and these *proper* poets would benefit from a new order and a sorting”<sup>23</sup> (*ibid.*; italics in original)—“proper poets” being poets whose writing Gundelach considers artistic.

Gundelach then attempted to tackle Tanum's argument that Norwegian literature might be subjected to sanctions abroad. He

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15. “i ordets *kunstneriske* betydning.”

16. “leselyst.”

17. “til fortregsel for mer verdifulle ting.”

18. “under alle omstendigheter komme det norske folk til gode.”

19. “en utsortering av avgiftspliktig sprøit til fordel for lesestoff som ved sin høie kvalitet *undgår* avgifter,—altså en *kulturell* vinning.”

20. “gjør det ulønnsomt å bringe utenlandsk sprøit til landet, slik at vi bli selvforsynt også på *det* området.”

21. “Tredjerangs *norsk* litteratur har den fordel at den er tenkt og skrevet på *norsk*.”

22. “man kan se de *forførdeligste* ting: Misforståelser av originalsproget, evneløshet i norsk.”

23. “både det norske folk og disse *virkelige* diktere vilde være tjent med en nyordning og en utsortering.”

claimed that “foreign authors’ associations will hardly—especially in the *new* Europe—be known for making common cause with substandard authors,”<sup>24</sup> and he questioned the ideal of reciprocity by stating that whereas

gode *norske* forfattere [har] alltid nytt den fordel i utlandet å bli *samvittighetsfullt* oversatt av kyndige folk [...]. Men bare rent undtagelsesvis kan man tale om *gjensidighet* fra norsk side. (*ibid.*; italics in original)

[good *Norwegian* authors always [have] benefited abroad from being conscientiously translated by knowledgeable people [...]. Thus, only exceptionally can one speak of *reciprocity* from the Norwegian side.]

In conclusion, Gundelach repeated: “foreign literature that in Norwegian seems *inferior* should be taxed, regardless of whether the bad quality is due to the author or the translator”<sup>25</sup> (*ibid.*), and he recommended that a committee of experts be established to decide on exemptions. His idea of a differential tax based on the literary works’ perceived value and quality was quite different from Tanum’s emphasis on equality and book freedom. It shows how Gundelach’s position was not entirely in line with the ministry’s proposal, although he sided with the Nazi vision ideologically as can be seen from his attitude towards foreign literature in general, his notion of the superiority of the Norwegian language, and his use of the terms “new order” and “new Europe.” One may assume that the fact he himself was a translator of highbrow literature substantially affected his point of view. Indeed, his suggestion appears to be potentially very beneficial to his own work, which would then be perceived as essentially different from lowbrow literary translation and, as a result, his status as a translator would benefit.

### 2.2.3 Finn Halvorsen’s Response: In Favour of Taxation on *All* Translated Literature

Next to give his statement on the proposed tax was Finn Halvorsen, author, critic, translator,<sup>26</sup> and director of the national theatre (1941–

24. “utenlandske forfatterkorporasjoner [vil] neppe—spesielt ikke i det *nye* Europa—være bekjent av å gjøre felles sak med undermåls forfattere.”

25. “utenlandsk litteratur som i norsk sprogdrakt virker *mindreverdige* bør beskattes, uansett om den slette kvaliteten er skyldig forfatteren eller oversetteren.”

26. Among Halvorsen’s translations are *Liljecronas hjem* [Liljecrona’s Home] (1957) by Selma Lagerlöf, translated from the Swedish original *Liljecronas hem* (1911) and *Brødrene Ashkenazi* (1937) by Israel Joshua Singer, translation of *The Brothers*

1945). Also known as “the theater dictator” due to his role as censor of stage performances (Lotherington, 2011, n.p.), Halvorsen made only a short statement, indicating he agreed for the most part with Gundelach that the tax should be implemented (RA[...]–0001, 13 February 1941). He suggested, as a starting point, that all translated literature should be taxed because publishers make good money not only out of badly translated literature, but also from “good” translations. However, Halvorsen met Gundelach halfway, recommending that publishers should be able to apply for a waiver when planning the publication of “a valuable literary work”<sup>27</sup> that would not bring them much income, “such as for instance a translation of Dante’s ‘Divina Comedia,’ to quote Gundelach”<sup>28</sup> (*ibid.*, n.p.). He concluded by pointing out that the ministry should have its legal expert investigate whether the tax is compatible with the Berne Convention. Halvorsen’s letter thus reoriented the view of the authors group so that it became more in line with the initial proposal from the ministry.

#### 2.2.4 Herman Wildenvey’s Response: Against any Taxation on Translated Literature

The last of the authors on the council to make a statement is Herman Wildenvey in a letter to Essendrop (RA[...]–0001, 15 February 1941). A widely popular poet, playwright, and translator,<sup>29</sup> Wildenvey was no Nazi. In his view, the damage taxation might cause for Norwegian authors abroad weighed heavily, and he therefore advised the ministry not to implement it. He then attempted to counter Gundelach’s argument that lowbrow literature exhausted the market for highbrow literature by suggesting that magazines and popular literature could be seen as a steppingstone to other kinds of literature. He noted that people need practice reading, and that readers, if guided “away from the ‘nonsense’ (that Gundelach writes about)”<sup>30</sup> (*ibid.*; n.p.), would find their way to more literary works. Moreover, he “do[es] not think publishers make enormous sums from ‘bad

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*Ashkenazi* (1936).

27. “et verdifullt litterært verk.”

28. “som f.eks. en oversettelse av Dantes: «Divina Comedia», for å citere Gundelach.”

29. Among Wildenvey’s most famous translations are his version of *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare, *As you like it, eller Livet i skogen* (1912), and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) by Ernest Hemmingway, published as *Farvel til våpnene* (1939).

30. “bort fra ‘sprøitet’ (som Gundelach skriver om).”

translations”<sup>31</sup> (*ibid.*) and argued that the types of stories printed in magazines would not be of higher quality if written by Norwegians. On the contrary, he claimed Norwegian authors fared badly when attempting to copy certain popular genres, and he subtly poked fun at Gundelach’s apparent identification with Dante, commenting: “those who trustingly read these kinds of translations will surely never read a sonnet by Gundelach—or a terza rima by Dante”<sup>32</sup> (*ibid.*).

The conclusion of Wildenvey’s letter was that if one were to tax translated literature, all translations should be taxed equally. But the best thing, Wildenvey stated, would be to not bring in the tax at all. Indeed, Wildenvey’s view on writing, translating, and literature reflected an entirely different ideology from the one advocated by Halvorsen and Gundelach. His belief that Norwegian literature was not of higher value simply for having been written in Norwegian makes this abundantly clear.

### 2.2.5 New Turns of Events: Another Regulation and a Significant Meeting

While taxation of translated literature was being discussed, a different regulation of the Norwegian book market, called *Forordning om vern av den norske bokheimen* [Regulation for the Protection of Norwegian National Literature] was adopted. Brought in by the Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment and implemented on 17 February 1941, this regulation stipulated that books that were immoral or would “harm national and social progress” could be subject to confiscation (Formo, 1998, p. 112). The Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment also presented lists of “undesirable” literature. There were three lists in all, comprising in particular literature written by Jews, communists, or English and US American writers—in other words mainly translations (*ibid.*, p. 111).

A couple of months later, on 7 April 1941, a significant event took place that ended the discussion on taxation of translated literature and laid the groundwork for a regulation aimed at censoring all translated publications. A meeting was held between the chairman of the Literature and Library Office, the devoted Nazi party member Asbjørn Bjaanes, and the German counselor of cultural affairs at the Reich Commissariat, Dr. Heinz Finke. The minutes, which were sent

31. “Jeg tror ikke forlagene tjener enorme summer på «slette» oversettesler.”

32. “de som fortrøstig leser den oversatte sådante vil sikkert aldri lese en sonette av Gundelach—eller en tersin av Dante.”

to Minister Gulbrand Lunde on the same day, relate the key points regarding “cooperation on literary matters”<sup>33</sup> (RA[...]0001, 7 April 1941, n.p.). An important point was Bjaanes’ and Finke’s agreement over the indexes of forbidden books. They agreed that all books listed must “in principle disappear”<sup>34</sup> (*ibid.*) from all libraries, bookstores, and publishing houses, with very few exceptions, such as for academic use. Furthermore, and highly relevant to the case in point, the minutes state that both parties agreed that “the Ministry of Culture was to prepare a regulation that obliged Norwegian publishers to register all translated literature and obtain translation permission”<sup>35</sup> (*ibid.*). Clearly, this meeting was a turning point for translation conditions in occupied Norway. As a result, the policy ended up entailing far more than taxation and instead resembled the legislation governing translated literature in Nazi Germany.

### 3. The “Regulation of Translated Literature, etc.”

The *Forordning om oversettelseslitteratur m.v.* [Regulation of Translated Literature, etc.] was signed and published on 29 October 1941 and, in accordance with the minutes of the meeting between Bjaanes and Finke, it required that anyone wanting to publish a translated book would have to go through a series of steps (see RA[...]0001, 29 October 1941). First, the publisher had to apply for preliminary permission. According to the regulation, the application had to include the name of the author, the title of the book, the name and address of the translator, the number of copies they wanted to print, a sales budget (on the basis of which the Literature and Library Office would calculate fees), and finally, a copy of the translation rights obtained from the publisher of the source text. Some applicants also attached the source text, or a summary of it. This initial application could either be denied or approved. In some cases, the Office would refer the application to consultants who would read and evaluate the work’s suitability for translation and publication before responding. This first step demanded payment in the form of an administrative fee equivalent to the book’s retail price times twenty, and no less

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33. “die Zusammenarbeit in Schrifttumsfragen.”

34. “grundsätzlich verschwinden müssen.”

35. “von Seiten des Kulturdepartements eine Verordnung vorbereitet wird, die die norwegischen Verleger verpflichtet, sämtliche Übersetzungsliteratur anzumelden und die Übersetzungsgenehmigung einzuholen.”



than 10 Norwegian kroner (NOK),<sup>36</sup> which the publisher had to pay regardless of the outcome (Formo, 1998, p. 114).

If the publisher obtained preliminary permission, the book then had to be translated and prepared for publication, since the application for final approval required the full, ready-to-print manuscript to be attached. The Office could respond to the second application in one of four ways: they could reject it, demand changes at the level of content,<sup>37</sup> or accept it. As in the first step, the second step required the payment of a fee,<sup>38</sup> which was also the case if the publisher was obliged to make changes and apply for approval again. Each new application, even for the same work, would entail a new fee. The regulation also controlled reprints of previously published translations, which could be thought of as a source of cheaper publications. However, the new spelling norm of 1941 was made obligatory for all printed works, and thus older translations usually had to be corrected. Changes to spelling also meant updating type setting, giving rise to yet more expenses.

There are two features of the regulation that are especially important to note: the economic aspect and censorial control. Producing translations in this way involved many new expenses for the publishers, insofar as the translation had to be completed even before the book could be accepted for publication—or rejected. It is not unlikely that the regulation made publishing (or trying to publish) translations more expensive than it would have been with a regular tax. The economic barrier thus played into the complexities of the censorial aspect, as it forced publishers to try to please their censors in order not to waste money on applications that would inevitably be rejected.

The censorial aspect of this regulation is different from that of the regulation of national literature in that it entailed pre-publication censorship, whereas literature originally written in Norwegian risked being confiscated only after publication. In a similar vein, Sturge

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36. This minimum amount equals ca. 300 NOK today (ca. 30 EUR, 35 USD, 45 CAD).

37. A new spelling norm was ordered by the Quisling government in 1941, with the intention of weeding out English loan words and words with Anglo-Saxon roots, while uniting the two pre-existing written norms. The new norm was developed by Sigvat Heggstad and a committee later described as lacking any kind of expertise (Formo, 1998, p. 115).

38. No reference to the amount was found in the archival material.

describes the policy for translations in Nazi Germany as significantly different from that of the rest of the publishing field. Whereas “censorship of the book trade proceeded [...] via the constant threat of confiscation of existing books” (2010, p. 51), translated literature was subject to a rigorous pre-publication permission procedure, governed by the Propaganda Ministry through two of its branches: its literary policy department, Section VIII, and the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*<sup>39</sup> [Reich Chamber of Writers] (see *ibid.*, pp. 54, 56 and 60-61). However, the pre-publication permission procedure implemented in occupied Norway differed from the Nazi-German procedure on certain points, as described by Sturge:

Before translation rights could be purchased, the proposed translation was to be submitted for approval by the [*Reichsschrifttumskammer*], with a summary, a sample of the translation, and details of the author’s racial background and the translation’s contribution to German understanding of the foreign nation. (*ibid.*, p. 61)<sup>40</sup>

The file with the material looked at above also contains a document that elaborates on the ideology behind the regulation (RA[...]–0001, “*Utgreiing om Forordning om oversettelseslitteratur av 29. oktober 1941*” [Statement on ‘Regulation of translated literature’ of 29 October 1941], n.d.). It is possible that the author of this statement was the Minister of Culture, Gulbrand Lunde, or somebody else equally high in rank, since it is written from the point of view and with the tone and ethos of a decision-maker. The Nazi rhetoric is easily recognizable. The document begins by stating that the new regulation of translated literature should be understood as a continuation and expansion of the *Forordning om vern av den norske bokheimen* [Regulation for the Protection of Norwegian National Literature], given that they were both means to the same end: “the new regulation [takes] the necessary steps to keep the steadily increasing flood of un-Norwegian, lesser valuable literature away from the country”<sup>41</sup> (*ibid.*, n.p.), evoking the image of the *flood of the foreign* intrinsic to Nazi ideology. After noting that about 50% of

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39. The *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (RSK) was a constituent chamber of the *Reichskulturkammer* (RKK) [Reich Chamber of Culture].

40. The RA contain only one application mentioning “race”: “Anne de Vries is born in Drente in 1904 and is pure Aryan” (RA[...]–0001, 2 October 1942, letter from Nasjonalforlaget to Literature and Library Office for the publication of a Norwegian translation of *Hilde* by Anne de Vries).

41. “den nye forordninga [tek] dei steg som er naudsynte for å halda den stendig aukande flaumen av unorsk, mindre verdifull litteratur borte frå landet.”

the books on the market are translations, it continues by noting that “[e]ach and every one has noticed the effect American and British ‘best-sellers’ have had on the Norwegian spirit”<sup>42</sup> (*ibid.*). The author of the document is especially against the translated stories printed in magazines—possibly inspired by Gundelach’s view:

[D]ei har fostra tusentals drøymarar i folket vårt. Dei har drege store lutar av folket vekk frå god lesnad, vekk frå boksamlingane, vekk frå arbeidsglede og arbeidshugen og til ei verd der jødestjerna i Hollywood har vorte høgste målet. (*ibid.*)

[[T]hey have fostered thousands of dreamers in our people. They have drawn large parts of the people away from good reads, away from the book collections, away from the joy of work and love of work and towards a world where the star of David in Hollywood has become the highest goal.]

The anti-Semitic ideology that underlies not only this statement, but the regulation and its function on the whole, is made clearly visible here by the reference to the Nazi narrative of a Jewish conspiracy.

Further on, the document declares that the effect of the regulation should be “that no book, writings or drawings of foreign origin can be printed in this country without the permission of the authorities. There are no exceptions”<sup>43</sup> (*ibid.*). The wording “of foreign origin” illustrates the point made by Sturge that the literary policy was in fact molded on the Nazi ideology of so-called “racial purity” (2010, p. 51). However, according to the author of the statement, the borders should not be completely closed, for first Norwegian literature must “find itself again”<sup>44</sup> (RA[...]–0001, “*Utgreiing om Forordning om oversettelseslitteratur*’ av 29. oktober 1941,” n.d., n.p.), and then a Germanic brotherhood should be built:

Med-di norske forfattarar i stort mun er omsett til tysk og vert lesne av det tyske broderfolket, so er det berre dei jødiske forfattarane frå forfallstida i Tyskland som er omsett og trudd på her til lands. Frå no av vil dei tyske forfattarane få høve til å syne seg for det norske folket. Det same gjeld dei andre milliomeuropeiske landa og det unge Italia. (*ibid.*)

42. “Kvar og ein har merkt den innverknaden alle dei amerikanske og engelske «best-sellers» har hatt på norsk ånd.”

43. “at ikkje noko bok, skrift eller teikningar av utanlandsk opphav kan verta prenta her i riket utan styresmaktene vil ha det. Unntak finst ikkje.”

44. “finna att oss sjølv.”

[While Norwegian authors are translated into German in high numbers and are being read by their German brethren, it is only the Jewish authors from the era of decay in Germany that are translated and believed in this country. From now on, German authors will have the opportunity to show themselves to the Norwegian people. The same goes for the other Central European countries and the young Italy.]

This statement is in line with what Sturge has demonstrated in relation to the Nazi-German context, where the ideology behind the strict regulation of translated literature was intended to benefit not only national literature, but literature from the axis powers as well (2010, p. 71).

#### 4. Three Applications

In order to illustrate different aspects of the communication between publishers and the Literature and Library Office, this section presents three examples of applications: one that was approved, one that was denied, and one stemming from an initiative of the Reich Commissariat. Unlike most applications saved in the archive, which do not give any more information than what was required by the regulation, these examples of more elaborate applications yield insights into how the latter functioned.

##### 4.1 *Kabloona* by Gontran de Poncins: Accepted for Publication

The first example is an application for preliminary permission which turned out to be successful. It was sent from the well-established, large-scale publishing house Aschehoug, on 30 April 1943. The publisher applied to have an American book translated, and it is obvious that he was aware that the book's "Americanness" might count against it:

Vi tillater oss herved å ansøke om tillatelse til å utgi I norsk oversettelse *Gontran de Poncins «Kabloona»*.

For å undgå at boken blir avvist som amerikansk bok, utkommet 1941, vil vi gjøre oppmerksom på at forfatteren er franskmann, at boken utelukkende handler om eskimoenes liv, og at forfatteren først da han kom tilbake etter over et års fravær i arktiske egne, fikk vite at krigen var brutt ut. Vi mener at boken skulde ha en spesiell interesse for det norske publikum i og med at forfatteren vandrer i norske pionerers spor. (RA[...]-0002, 30 April 1943, n.p.)

[We hereby apply for the permission to publish in Norwegian translation *Gontran de Poncins' "Kabloona."*

In order to avoid the book being rejected as an American book, published in 1941, we wish to make you aware that the author is French, that the book is only about the life of Eskimos, and that the author learned that the war had broken out only when he came back after more than a year's absence in Arctic areas. We think the book should have a special interest for the Norwegian audience since the author follows in the footsteps of Norwegian pioneers.]

The applicant goes on to present the work more specifically, making sure to name places, ships, the Norwegian explorers who, in the letter, are portrayed as something to be proud of, as well as the Norwegian professor and rector of the University of Oslo during the occupation, Adolf Hoel, who would vouch for the claim that this book is “ethnographically speaking very valuable”<sup>45</sup> (*ibid.*). It is clear that the publisher tried to refer to and highlight the traits of the book that he believed fit the ideals and ideology of the so-called “new order,” namely, the Nazi regime, as well as to explain and justify those aspects that he thought might put the decision-makers off. Furthermore, *Kabloona's* epigraph gives us an additional suggestion as to why it was accepted for translation. It is a quote from the Danish-Greenlandic author and explorer Knud Rasmussen, who states that these Indigenous people are “pure”; they have not been in contact with other cultures and people and are thus “untouched by foreign influence”<sup>46</sup> (de Poncins, 1943, p. 5), a feature that was highly appreciated by those adhering to Nazi ideology. The reply from the Literature and Library Office has not been preserved, but there are notes made directly on the application letter, stating: “Approved 5,000 copies. Conditions: new spelling,”<sup>47</sup> which was a standard reply for preliminary permission (RA[...]–0002, 30 April 1943, n.p.).

#### 4.2 *Spirende Vaar* by Johanne Korch: Rejected by the Censor

In our second example, the applicant is the publisher of the well-established publishing house Cappelen, who applied for a preliminary permit to translate a book released in 1941 by the Danish author Johanne Korch under the title *Spirende Vaar* [Budding Spring]. The letter says, among other things:

45. “etnografisk sett meget værdifuld.”

46. “uberørt av fremmed innflytelse.”

47. “Godkjent 5000 eksempl. Vilkår: ny rettskrivning.”

Boken hører kanskje ikke til de mest “litterære,” men det er et spørsmål om ikke en bok som denne—som med en “god moral” og hvor det gode i livet får sin belønning—har sin misjon [*sic*] nettopp i en tid som vor, hvor det også gjelder å “tenke på noe annet” enn verdens ondskap. (RA[...] -0002, 17 July 1942)

[The book might not be among the most “literary,” but since it deals with “good morals” and the good things in life [...], its mission, in such a time as ours, is a question of encouraging people to “think about something else” rather than the world’s evil.]

Cappelen did not obtain permission to translate *Spirende Vaar*, and there is nothing in the rejection letter that tells us why (RA[...] -0002, 7 September 1942). However, Cappelen’s application contains one or two clues. It is unlikely that to “think about something else” was the Nazi authorities’ idea of “good morals.” A better ideal in their eyes would probably be to participate actively in, or just be satisfied with, the “new order.” Another reason for the rejection might have been simply the title, insofar as spring, at the time, was a common metaphor for peace and liberation, the occupation being depicted as a long winter. In most cases, the Literature and Library Office did not explain why it refused the applications, although sometimes it would give material reasons and blame the paper shortage.<sup>48</sup> If there were consultants involved, the Office would have been given reasons for denying or allowing publications, but these reasons were not necessarily forwarded to the applicants.

### 4.3 *Amaryll* by Otto Voigtel: Recommended for Publication by the Reich Commissariat

Whereas the two examples above present an accepted application and a rejected application respectively, this last example presents an application prepared in response to the Reich Commissariat’s wish to have a given book published. Although there were publishers who specialized in collaborating with the Nazi authorities, more “neutral” publishers were also encouraged by the Reich Commissariat to publish certain literary works (for more on the Reich Commissariat’s involvement in publications of translated works, see Solberg, 2020). One of these publishing houses was the medium-sized

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48. See for instance RA[...] -0002, 23 October 1942, letter from Asbjørn Bjaanes to Nasjonalforlaget; see also RA[...] -0002, 3 August 1932, letter from Finke to Bjaanes, where Bjaanes is instructed to use paper shortage as an excuse not to publish an unwanted book.

Nasjonalforlaget, which sent an application to the Literature and Library Office stating:

Vi ansøker herved om tillatelse til å oversette til norsk og utgi i bokform vedlagte bok av Ototo Voigtel: «Amaryll» som vi har fått oversendt gjennom Reichkommissariatets [sic] litteraturkontor. (RA[...] -0002, 3 March 1942, n.p.)

[We hereby apply for permission to translate into Norwegian and publish as a book the attached book by Otto Voigtel: “Amaryll” that we have been sent through the Reich Commissariat’s Literature Office.]

The circumstances prompted the publisher to ask for an exemption from having to pay the administration fee:

Da vi har intrykk [sic] av at Reichskommissariatet gjerne vil ha denne bok utgitt, tillater vi oss herved å søke om dispensasjon [sic] fra departementets-konsulentgebyr [sic], idet dette da vil komme utsalgsprisen tilgode [sic]. (*ibid.*)

[Since we are under the impression that the Reich Commissariat would like to have the book published, we hereby allow ourselves to apply for a dispensation from the ministry’s consultation fee, since that will benefit the selling price.]

This may be interpreted in several ways: first, as a way for publishers to distance themselves from the publication, underlining that they did not want to pay the same fee as they would for a book they themselves wanted to publish; second, as a strategy aimed at limiting the authorities’ intervention by making their policy less profitable; third, simply as a way to profit from fulfilling the occupiers’ request. A receipt dated 4 May 1942 shows that Nasjonalforlaget did in fact pay a fee, but it was apparently reduced. The administration fee for *Amaryll*, with a print run of 3000 copies, was 60 NOK,<sup>49</sup> while *Kabloona*, with a print run of 5000 copies, in comparison, cost Aschehoug 270 NOK.<sup>50</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

The archival material presented in this article shows that during the Nazi-German occupation of Norway, all translations came quickly under the control of the new authorities—both German and Norwegian. The chairman of the Literature and Library Office, Asbjørn Bjaanes, in particular, through his collaboration with Dr.

49. Ca. 1.500 NOK today (ca. 155 EUR, 180 USD, 225 CAD).

50. Ca. 6.500 NOK today (ca. 670 EUR, 780 USD, 965 CAD).

Heinz Finke and Minister Gulbrand Lunde, rose to a very powerful position where he functioned as a near omnipotent censor. Any publication of a translation that was not applied for and accepted by Bjaanes' office had consequences for the publisher, most notably having to pay a fine, but also being forced to withdraw the book from the market and, ultimately, according to the regulation, losing the right to publish. Furthermore, although not openly stated in the regulation, there was the impending threat of social and judicial repercussions, such as imprisonment or deportation for those agents in the literary field who expressed their disagreement with the authorities or disobeyed the rules.<sup>51</sup> In other words, by applying for permission to publish the “wrong” book, one risked severe punishment. At the same time, the principles behind the process of handling the applications, and what criteria translated works needed to meet, were hard to grasp. These factors, along with the economic aspect discussed above, necessarily resulted in a culture of self-censorship.

The application process implemented via the new regulation could thus also be a way for the authorities to identify dissidents. The regulation appears, however, to have had primarily a two-fold function: to allow the Literature and Library Office to carry out censorship, while encouraging self-censorship among publishers seeking to avoid unnecessary expenses as well as repercussions of varying severity. Quite likely, this effect of inducing self-censorship was desirable—and for that reason intentional. With reference to Nazi Germany, Sturge quotes the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* [Reich Chamber of Writers] handbook for the German book trade from 1938, showing the ideological basis for this effect:

We do not want censorship and nor, therefore, do we want dependent publishers who do not know what they have to do [...] we want publishers who are loyal helpers in our shared task, and who are genuinely capable of fulfilling their service to German literature on their own responsibility. (Sturge 2010, p. 62)

Sturge also points out that German publishers faced threats: “the potential damage was not only financial but political. Those who were not seen to be acting as loyal helpers were liable to lose their

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51. The most well-known case in Norway is the Norwegian publisher Arne Damm, arrested on 24 June 1942. He spent three years as a POW in Norway and Germany (Ringdal, 1995, p. 126).



livelihood, freedom or even life” (*ibid.*), much like the agents of the Norwegian literary field, as described above.

Although the initial proposal for a new policy started as a reaction to the economic situation (or at least was presented as such, with reference to pre-occupation debate about taxation of foreign literature), the resulting regulation clearly related to the situation of war and aimed to win the hearts and minds of the people by attempting to control what was translated (and consequently read by the public), as well as by inciting self-censorship among publishers. It is indeed unknown whether taxation was ever the actual goal, or if the debate around it was merely a mock process, inevitably leading up to pre-publication censorship.

The Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment was an institution for nazifying Norwegian society, and it did so in the literary field through the power exercised by the Literature and Library Office. Furthermore, the Reich Commissariat exercised its power in the field by instigating publishers to translate and publish specific works (see Solberg, 2020). Although further studies of this archival material are needed in order to give a complete picture, it is clear that the German and Norwegian authorities’ combined intervention in the publishing field—the (self-)censorship on the one hand and the promotion of specific books on the other—provides an insight into the ideological attitudes towards the act of translation and publication of translated literature. It shows that key figures like Gundelach, Bjaanes, Lunde, and Finke recognized the potential political and ideological power that lies in literature, and that they went to great lengths to control it. In this respect, these findings unravel a situation not unlike the one described by Lombez (2013), where translated literature’s potential as an ideological vector was recognized by both sides in occupied France.

Rundle and Sturge rightfully claim that “translated works are magnets for censorship, since they make manipulation possible at several stages, from the selection for publication to the precise wording of the translated text” (2010, p. 7). Bjaanes and the Literature and Library Office achieved precisely that type of control and could thus carry out censorship on all levels: selection, editing, spelling, and publishing. For those navigating this regulation enacted by antidemocratic authorities, there were obvious ethical challenges. The present article provides only a few examples: one publisher who succeeds in convincing the censors by playing by their rules, one whose

request is rejected, and finally, one following up on an invitation by the Reich Commissariat and, possibly, also profiting from it, as we argued in the ambiguous case of Nasjonalforlaget.

By controlling all publications of translated literature, the authorities also achieved their aim to implement racist Nazi ideology through cultural policies, an ideology hostile to all things foreign and especially anything representing a *mélange* of cultures such as translation. The flow of foreign literature (or lack thereof) in a country occupied by antidemocratic forces does not only indicate the attitudes towards, and conditions for, translation under a given regime. It also yields insight into how this power was able to use censorship and the withholding of translated literature, on the one hand, and the promotion of certain kinds of translated literature, on the other, as a weapon in the fight to win the war of ideology.

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