KERALA'S 'PROGRESS'-IVE IDIOM:

Moscow Translators and translation of children's literature as socialist intermediary in Kerala

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STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the life and work of K. Gopalakrishnan and Omana, prominent Malayalam translators who were associated with Progress Publishers in Moscow, referred to as "Moscow Translators", from 1966 to 1991. The study views translation as a socialist intermediary that sought to foster socialist education amongst the readers of Kerala. Employed by Progress Publishers and driven by the mission of spreading socialist ideals among the masses in Kerala, a state in southwestern India, the couple translated around 192 books. The thesis delves into the life and times of these socialist intermediaries against the backdrop of the Soviet internationalist era when Kerala, the most literate state in India, embarked on a journey of socialist development.

Examining the translated works of children's writer Arkadi Gaidar and their impact on Malayalam readers, the thesis also seeks to know whether these translations led to a "political pasteurization," as described by Serguei Oushakine in the context of early Soviet children's literature, within Kerala. Contrary to "normalizing" the dynamism of the revolution and the Soviet spirit, this thesis argues that the Malayalam translations kept the revolutionary spirit alive, retaining its vibrancy and emotional impact, through the literary quality of the works under survey and evidenced by their continued resonance in the Kerala society.

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INTRODUCTION

The memoir of my grandmother, Koothattukulam Mary, a firebrand communist of the 1940s and 50s, was first published in 2014, named *Kanaleriyum Kalam* ("An Era of Burning Embers"). While editing the book, I could not help but marvel at the similarities of incidents narrated by Soviet children's writer Arkadi Gaidar in his semi-autobiographical 1930 work, *School*, (*Jeevithavidyalayam* in Malayalam, language of Kerala, India, brought out by Progress Publishers in 1980). The rebel acts at the school, pamphlets and the secret documents, the sheer adventure and daring clandestine work building the communist party on the lines of Bolshevism, all stood out from two absolutely different geographies and cultures. But when I closely read *Jeevithavidyalayam* and other books for my thesis, I could discern more divergences than parallels. As a historian, this time I marvelled at the translation practices employed to make these differences less obvious. To learn that Progress Publishers and its predecessors held seminars for translators and that the Soviet Union devised its own translation theories over several decades of intensive literary translation work transformed the way I looked at the Soviet-era books in my parents' bookshelves.

When I was hardly eight years old, I came across *Puzhayile Deepangal*, Malayalam translation of *Lights on the River*, a Soviet-era novella in Russian. This story depicted children, who were around 10 or 12 years old, engaging in activities like researching watermelon varieties, operating an amateur radio station, and assisting collective farmers in fixing fences. The narrative portrayed a city boy's journey of self-discovery. As I read the book with its refreshing blue hardcover and soft, white pages, I could not help but feel captivated, even though the country that published it, the Soviet Union, was collapsing at that time. I later learned that this particular book was one of the 192 Soviet works translated into Malayalam by K. Gopalakrishnan and Omana, a couple from Kerala (hereafter "Moscow Translators"). They

worked with Progress Publishers in Moscow from 1966 to 1991 and contributed to an international project that aimed to promote socialism through the translation of what the Soviet Union called "world literature". The couple were just part of a large contingent of translators from other Indian states and foreign countries, all working for the massive Progress Publishers, during the Cold War era. It has been argued by scholars that the Soviet Union's World Literature production aimed to create a wide-ranging community of writers and readers, both within the country and on an international scale, with the goal of asserting their ownership of world literary heritage.[1]

Methodology

The Moscow Translators became household names in the 1970s itself in the Left-leaning Kerala and though the later generations hardly know them or their work, those books are an active presence in the collective memory of generations of readers, especially the books of fiction and children's literature. They created an abiding love for the land of Soviet Union and by extension, its ideology. By reconstructing the lives of the Moscow Translators through interviews with their family members and contemporaries, I am trying to understand the primary "site" of the individual where socialism was interpreted and practiced, which opens up possibilities for further exploration into the collective identities that were shaped within the socialist world.[2] The **first chapter** is about the lives of the Moscow Translators in Kerala and the Soviet Union, against a backdrop of Kerala's socio-political realities and its evolution through a path of mass literacy and movement, complemented by publishing and public library endeavours.

[1] Conference theme, "The Soviet Project of World Literature and Its Legacies" (Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Schützenstr. 18, 10117 Berlin, Aufgang B, 3. Etage, Trajekteraum, December 9, 2021).
[2] Charles D. Shaw and Constantin I. Iordachi, "Intermediaries as Change Agents: Translating, Interpreting, and Expanding Socialism," *The Russian Review*, April 27, 2023, 5, https://doi.org/10.1111/russ.12490.

The translations selected for the thesis talk about a Soviet Union that came into being through armed revolution to the children and young adults of an Indian state that saw a communist party coming into power through democratic means. Half-a-century had passed by the time these works reached the book stores and mobile sale vans in Kerala. "Like other aspects of Soviet literary internationalism, there were hits and misses in the selection of translators," says Rossen Djagalov.[3] Malayalam seems to have got mostly hits, thanks to the long years the Moscow Translators spent in Moscow and the continuing resonance of their work in Kerala society. The **second chapter** deals with three works of Soviet children's writer Arkadi Gaidar, all originally published in the 1930s. Their themes, translations styles, and editorial decisions are discussed in this chapter, with special focus on the most popular one, *Chukkum Gekkum*.

A list of the translated Soviet books has been given in the appendix, with the titles either translated or transliterated. The list features the titles, the names of the authors where available, the names of the translator where available, the names of the publisher, and the year of publishing. All the in-text translations and transliterations are by the author of this thesis, unless specified otherwise.

The subsequent sections of this Introduction briefly talk about the history of Indo-Soviet relations and the institutional culture of the Soviet-era agencies in some Indian states that distributed the translated works, to put the topic in a larger context. The long legacy of Russian translations in Kerala is dealt with in detail, arguing that the state was primed to receive the translated materials from the Soviet Union from the late 1960s.

[3] Rossen Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema Between the Second and the Third Worlds* (Montreal Kingston London Chicago: McGill-Queen's university press, 2020), 102.

Publishing and Stalinism

Since this thesis is examining works originally published during the Stalinist Soviet Union of the 1930s, it will be interesting to look at the Soviet scene and Stalin himself. The Progress publishers, although officially established under that name in 1963, traces its origins back to the Stalinist era with its "international mission." In 1981, the publishing house commemorated fifty years since its inception, starting from 1931 when it was established as the Publishing House for Foreign Workers, later renamed Foreign Languages Publishing House in 1938. This publishing house served as a significant tool of cultural diplomacy, aiming to promote Soviet literature and production worldwide. Its primary objective was to translate and publish books, brochures, and manuals originating from the USSR.[4]

It is uncertain whether Stalin had proficiency in foreign languages. While there is some indication of him self-teaching English and French, he predominantly spoke and wrote in Georgian and Russian. However, Stalin regularly received foreign press reports from the Tass news agency and reviews of articles by foreign journalists based in Moscow. This highlights the necessity for the ruling apparatus to stay informed about recent foreign publications, including scientific, literary, and social works. Consequently, this led to the emergence of a specific and confidential function for the Foreign Languages Publishing House. Reports from the International Department (IL) to the propaganda section of the Communist Party of Soviet Union Central Committee confirm that besides translating works for public distribution, the IL was also responsible for publishing a restricted newsletter called *New Books Abroad* and translations intended exclusively for senior party officials. Progress inherited this particular function when it was established in 1963. At its

[4] Lenny Elena Smirnova, “Philosophies Entre La France Et L’urss (1956-1985) Circulations De Textes Et Pratiques De Traduction (The Philosophies between France and the USSR (1956-1985). Circulation of texts and translation practices)” (Paris, France, Université Paris Cité, 2022), 206.

inception, Progress was tasked with translating works from over thirty foreign languages into Russian and vice versa.[5]

'Soviets in India'

The unprecedented and surprising circulation of the Soviet reading materials in India can be understood through the lens of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States. Unnamed individuals who contributed to a confidential CIA dossier, which was partially declassified in 2011, reported with information available as of November 1985 and also with a good measure of paranoia, that the Soviet Information Department (SID) distributed a whopping 25 million propaganda materials in India each year, "including its own books, magazines, and pamphlets." At least five magazines -- *Soviet Land*, *Soviet Review*, *Soviet Panorama*, *Sputnik Junior*, and *Youth Review* -- were being published by the magazine section of SID and a good part of them were being given away without paid subscriptions, the dossier quoted a defector as saying. Along with the SID, *Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga* distributed Soviet-prepared, and sponsored propaganda materials widely, the CIA found.[6]

As Gautam Chakrabarti puts it, if the declassified CIA dossier can be considered as a reliable representation of the official American perspective on Soviet influence within the Indian society and government, it does suggest that the USSR successfully emerged as the victor of the Cultural Cold War in India by the mid-1980s.[7]

Two recent publications, *Another History of the Children's Picture Book: from Soviet Lithuania to India* (2017) and *The East was Read* (2019), address the theme of Soviet translations into Indian languages. The former acknowledges the translations as a "gesture

[5] Lenny Elena Smirnova, 206.
[6] Central Intelligence Agency, "The Soviets in India: Moscow's Major Penetration Program," December 1985.
[7] Gautam Chakrabarti, "From Moscow with Love: Soviet Cultural Politics across India in the Cold War," *Safundi* 20, no. 2 (April 3, 2019): 245, https://doi.org/10.1080/17533171.2019.1579475.

towards a transcendent ideal," while the latter includes analyses by a diverse group of writers. Both these works do not mention Malayalam or the translators from Kerala despite their being a prominent presence in the history of Soviet-era translations.

Along with ideas, tangible material evidence of the Soviet influence too can be found in India. In Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal, which was once a stronghold of the Left, a prominent statue of Lenin receives a "Lal Salaam" (red salute) on his birthdays. Underneath, there still runs India's first Metro system built with the assistance of the Soviets and East Germans. The Russian Cultural Centre, known as Gorky Sadan, houses a Russian café called *Milee Droog* (Dear Friend) and the Eisenstein Cine Club. [8] Kerala's Gorky Bhavan too conducts regular film screenings and Russian language classes like it did before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Realism was accepted as the most modern literary approach and Socialist Realism was specifically adopted by Malayalam writers as a literary theory. Proletariat literature was promoted as the result of a direct influence of Russian literature. All India Progressive Writers Association was formed in 1932 with many eminent Malayalam writers becoming its members. The Union of Soviet Writers was formed two years later. Literature began to be seen as one of the most important tools to fight against social evils. Mulk Raj Anand's Hindi novel *Koolie* (1935), dealing with the problems of the commonest of people, became hugely popular.[9] Maxim Gorky's *Mother* ("Amma" in Malayalam) was widely circulated in India even when it was banned. When Indian revolutionary Bhagat Singh was arrested by the British, he is said to have prepared his court presentation modelled on a speech by Pavel Vlasov in *Mother*.[10]

[8] Rachel Dwyer, "Mise-En-Soviet," *Open The Magazine* (blog), May 6, 2022, https://openthemagazine.com/cinema/mise-en-soviet/.
[9] Isaac Eapen, "Malayala Saahithyathile Russian Yugom (The Russian Age in Malayalam Literature)," *Samakalika Malayalam*, May 2019, 69.
[10] Isaac Eapen, 67.

India was no stranger to Russia or the Soviet Union either. Russian writers like Tolstoy were fascinated by Indian mythology and epics. *Bhagavat Gita, Ramayana, Buddha's life, and Shakunthalam* had already been translated into Russian before the October Revolution. Alexander Pushkin was deeply interested in the Indian epic of *Ramayana*. When Tolstoy, who was eager to learn about the Indian sages Shankaracharya and Vivekananda, passed away in 1910, Indian media widely reported it.[11] In fact, the letters of the Indian Nobel laureate for Literature Rabindranatha Tagore, about his 1930 visit to Russia, were collected in a book called "Letters from Russia." These letters were translated into Russian. However, it is said that Stalin was displeased with the 13th letter, in which Tagore made critical comments about the Soviet regime. Consequently, Tagore's interview with the Russian newspaper *Izvestia*, which was conducted in 1930, was suppressed under Stalin's orders and remained unpublished. It wasn't until 1988, during Gorbachev's regime, that the interview was finally released and made available to the public.[12]

By the 1970s, there was a Rabindra Nath Tagore Club in a Moscow school and a Gorky Club in a Calcutta (present-day Kolkata) school in India. Indian visitors regularly visited the Moscow school club on "evenings of friendship with India" and members of the Gorky club wrote letters to the Tagore club members. Young pioneers of the school helped set up Tagore club branches in other towns. On the 110th anniversary of Tagore, the children staged Russian and Indian dances, recited his verses in Bengali and Russian, and sang songs in Soviet and Indian languages.[13]

[11] Isaac Eapen, 68.
[12] Manash Firaq Bhattacharjee, "Tagore's Prophetic Vision in 'Letters From Russia,'" September 2020, https://thewire.in/history/rabindranath-tagore-letters-from-russia-soviet-union.
[13] D. Chelyshev, *Women on the March*, v. 15-16 (Smt. Mukul Banerjee for the Women's Department, 1971), 35, https://books.google.at/books?id=iwdDAAAAYAAJ.

The Progress machinery

The Progress translations were distributed in different states in India through dedicated publication and distribution establishments, mostly attached to the Communist Party of India. The robust nature of the distribution network can be seen from the workings of the People's Publishing House (PPH), established in 1947 in the Indian capital of New Delhi.

Located in Connaught Place, one of the primary hubs for financial, commercial, and business activities, it specialized in the distribution of books and magazines published in the Soviet Union. It held the exclusive rights to publish and distribute Soviet translated literature in India. Although PPH operated primarily from New Delhi, it had distribution and marketing branches scattered throughout India. The company boasted an exceptional printing press known as the 'New Age Printing Press,' which played a significant role in revolutionizing India's printing industry. PPH was among the early adopters of automatic composing, a departure from the traditional method of hand composition.[14]

PPH focused on translating and publishing educational, philosophical, political, and science books from the USSR and distributing them in India. However, when it came to Soviet history books, PPH collaborated with Soviet publishing houses to translate, publish, and distribute them. As a result, most Soviet books sold in India had joint publishers, with the People's Publishing House often partnering with Progress Publishing House, Moscow, for many publications.

In the state of Karnataka in south India (on the north and northeast of Kerala), they were distributed by Navakarnataka Publications, established in 1960, that sold them through travelling exhibitions that reached every district. People in regions like Madikeri that did not have book stores

[14] Anukriti Gupta, "People's Publishing House, New Delhi," A depository of material-spatial memories, history and narratives of Delhi, *Zikr-e-Dilli* (blog), April 4, 2021.

even into the 1980s flocked to these exhibitions to stock up their bookshelves.[15] Staying true to its Soviet-era legacy, Visalandhra Publishing House in Hyderabad in the present-day state of Telengana operates Visalandhra mobile book store, a bookstore on wheels. [16] In the case of Kerala's neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu that saw the powerful anti-Brahminical political struggles through its Dravidian movement, surpassing the influence of the communist parties, there was New Century Book House of the CPI. Established by five freedom fighters belonging to the party, it acted as a "savant of inspiration and calibre for the intellectual class of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s" as noted by a political analyst.[17]

West Bengal, another 'red' state, had Manisha Granthalay, which was set up in 1964, catering to Bengali readers in the north-east of India, including those that constituted Bangladesh in 1971.[18]

Russian roots in Malayalam

The first translation from the Russian into Malayalam is fascinating on three counts. One, it was done in as early as 1925. Two, it was a work of children's literature. Three, it was done by a woman. Ambadi Ikkavamma carried out a "free translation" of Tolstoy stories for children in three volumes. It was reprinted in 1967, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, by the Indo-Soviet Cultural Association, Ernakulam (a district in Kerala, India), and was priced at Rs.2. In a forword to the book, Ambadi Damodaran,

[15] Vijay Prashad, ed., *The East Was Read: Socialist Culture in the Third World* (New Delhi, India: LeftWord, 2019), 90.
[16] "Visalandhra Mobile Book Store Still Popular," April 9, 2014, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/visalandhra-mobile-book-store-still-popular/article5892055.ece.
[17] "Book Lovers Now Look Back at New Century | Chennai News - Times of India," The Times of India, accessed June 10, 2023, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/book-lovers-now-look-back-at-new-century/articleshow/56385442.cms.
[18] Chandrima S. Bhattacharya, "Lost Glory... and a Lost Childhood," January 1, 2017, https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/lost-glory-and-a-lost-childhood/cid/1517837.

Counsellor (designate), Indian embassy, Moscow, and Ikkavamma's nephew, stated that the Russian translation, originally published in three volumes, brought "a new and refreshing experience to the Malayalam readers whose literary diet had been, until then, consisted of indifferent translations of nineteenth century English fiction." The forword stated that Mahatma Gandhi, who shared a deep bond with Tolstoy, himself had written an appreciative note in the first volume of 'Moral Stories' praising the selection of stories. Several generations of school children before the World War I apparently studied these stories. He summed up that these translations "represent a moment of fugitive contact between Kerala and Russia." Moreover, the profit from the sale was to be donated by the author to the Ernakulam branches of the Theosophical Society of India and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Association.[19]

The 1930s saw the beginning of a transformation in Malayalam literature when new ideas and theories were introduced as a result of a renaissance movement in religion and society. Kerala's high literacy rates, a strong and varied press culture, and public library chains laid the foundation stone for its unique position among other Indian states. Exposure to foreign literature, introduction of democracy and socialism, and the popularity of foreign authors such as Bulgakov, all mark this era.

Russian literature gained much traction in Kerala precisely because of the growth of the communist party in the 1930s. By the 1950s, renowned journalist and social critic Kesari Balakrishna Pillai published translations of Anton Chekhov stories in his *Kesari* magazine. This opened a massive discussion on Russian literature among the Malayali readers who were already familiar with the socio-political proclivities of a Left polity. Kerala's political mind

[19] Leo Tolstoy, *Tolstoy Kathakal ("Tolstoy Stories")*, trans. Ambadi Ikkavamma (Ernakulam, Kerala, India: Indo-Soviet Cultural Associatoion, Ernakulam, 1967), IV.

was fascinated by the proletarian revolution in the 1917 Russia and recognized that it was not a Utopian ideal to fight for the dictatorship of the Proletariat.[20]

Malayalam was the first Indian language in which Karl Marx's biography was published by Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishnapillai (1912). In the *Aathmaposhini* magazine brought out by eminent poet Vallathol Narayana Menon, many articles on socialism were printed. Malayalam literature began to depict the lives of the common people and renowned wrier Kuttipuzha Krishna Pillai described the Soviet Union as 'Heaven on Earth'. It can be argued that the famous poems *Duravashtha* and *Chandalabhikshuki* by Kumaranasan, both dealing with the oppressive caste system in Hinduism, could not have been written without drawing sustenance from the ideals of the Russian Revolution. K. Damodaran's *Paattabaakki*, first performed in 1937 at Ponnani in Malabar, was the first political drama to be staged in Kerala, and was immensely influenced by the Russian Revolution and is considered the first example of socialist realism in Malayalam. K.M. George, in his 1972 work *Western Influence in Malayalam Literature*, calls the period between 1930 and 1947 as the "Soviet era of Malayalam literature".

The Communist Party of India set up Prabhath Book House in 1952 and it soon secured the agency to distribute magazines, books, and other printed materials from the Soviet Union all over Kerala. These materials, sold at very cheap prices, soon found mass following. A recurring memory about the glossy *Soviet Land* magazine in English (the Malayalam version, named *Soviet Nadu*, was also available) in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s are their glossy and colourful pages with pictures of healthy children. A writer who published two huge volumes of Soviet

[20] Amal P.P., "Malayala Bhavukathwathile Soviet Swaadheenathinte Thudakkam (The beginning of Soviet influences in Malayali imaginations)," *Sahithyalokam* 50, no. 5 (October 2021): 49–64.

tales for children remembers first coming across *Soviet Land* in his village library and being attracted by its smell. The librarian told him that it was the 'scent of communism'.[21]

The works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky resonated greatly with the Malayalam reader ever since they were first translated into Malayalam. *Crime and Punishment* was published as *Kuttavum Shikshayum* by Edappally Karunakara Menon in 1935. He later translated *The Idiot*, which got published only in 2013. Among the Malayali admirers of Dostoevsky, N.K. Damodaran stands out as one of the best. He translated six works by the renowned writer, including *The Insulted and Injured* (1861/1957), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880/1960), *The House of the Dead* (1861/1968), *The Village of Stepanchikovo* / *The Friend of the Family* (1859/1979), and *The Possessed* / *The Demons* (1872/1989). Damodaran also attempted a loose translation of *An Unpleasant Predicament / A Nasty Story* (1862/1963).[22] When Perumbadavam Sreedharan wrote *Oru Sankeerthanam Pole* (*Like a Psalm*) in 1993, a biographical novel on Dostoyevsky, it became an instant bestseller, with eighty-plus subsequent editions and copies being sold still. Tolstoy and Maxim Gorky also became household names. Mikhail Sholokhov and Mayakovski too were well received in Malayalam.

In 1937, Malayalam's beloved poet Changampuzha Krishna Pillai translated Anton Chekhov's play *Karadi* ('The Bear') in the Mathrubhumi weekly. He also translated Chekhov's one-act play *A Marriage Proposal* under the name *Vivahaalochana* for Mathrubhumi weekly in 1945. It was published in book form in 1949 by Mangalodayam Press, Thrissur. One more title, *Poonilavil*, was also published around the same time.

[21] K. Sreekumar, *Soviet Naattile Baala Kadhakalum Naadodi Kadhakalum (Children's Stories and Folk Tales from the Soviet Land)*, 2019th ed. (Kozhikode, India: Mathrubhumi Books, 2012), III.
[22] Karthika S.B., "Malayalee's Dostoevsky," *Bloggers Karamazov* (blog), December 6, 2022, https://bloggerskaramazov.com/2022/12/06/malayalees-dostoevsky/.

Comrade and *Capitalist*

Sahodaran Ayyappan, a social and religious reformist, wrote the first Malayalam poem on Russian Revolution in 1918, called *Eezhavodbodhanam*. It was the first known work to use the word *Sakhaavu* ('Comrade'). "Russia was emancipated as a result of the sacrifice of the Russian youth like you; Create history, you too, adopting them as your role models, dear comrades," he wrote. In another poem called *Navavarsham* in 1919*,* he wrote that for those deeply suffering from inequalities, "the wind from the North-West (meaning Russia) brings in happiness and relief.[23]

In 1922, Vallathol wrote the poem *Maappu* in which he translated 'Capitalist' as *Muthalali* for the first time. Juxtaposed against *Thozhilali* or labourer, the term *Muthalali,* generally denoting any kind of owner, assumes aesthetical value. Thus, Malayalam literature was provided with new terms or innovative usages for existing words with the advent of the discourse on the Russian Revolution.

The first book to be written in Malayalam about the Russian Revolution is *Agniyum Sphulingavum* ("Fire and Spark") by P. Kesavadev. Originally conceived as a pamphlet, it was published as a book in 1931. The first part of the book looks at the revolution and the life of Lenin. The second part deals with the life in Russia before and after the revolution and the life of the political theorist and revolutionary Leon Trotsky. Since 1932, translations of Lenin and Marx began to be published in *Mathrubhumi*, a newspaper founded as part of the Independence struggle. These articles attested that the Soviet Union was the realization of a Utopian dream where the proletariat was overseeing agriculture, industry, and people's welfare by themselves.[24]

[23] Amal P.P., "Malayala Bhavukathwathile Soviet Swaadheenathinte Thudakkam (The beginning of Soviet influences in Malayali imaginations)."
[24] Amal P.P., 54.

When the Progress Publishers began publishing Malayalam in the late 1960s, Kerala was fully prepared to receive the books. Moreover, Kerala in the 1960s and 70s saw a vibrant and tumultuous political scene, especially following the split in the communist party along the global fault lines of communism in the Soviet Union and China. Numerous radical Leftist groups, though not strong in memberships, emerged to bring about an armed revolution. The nationwide Emergency declared by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975 (25 June 1975-21 March 1977) triggered explosive reactions among the political Left and the Right alike.

Socialisavum Yuddhavum ["Socialism and War" *(*Approach of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party to War*)*] and *Ithaanu Lenin* ("This is Lenin"), published in 1967, are found to be the first two books printed in the Soviet Union in Malayalam. While the former does not mention the translator's name, the latter has K. Gopalakrishnan as translator. *Moonnu Nethakkanmaar* (Three Leaders - on Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Indira Gandhi), published in 1990, is the last book. A. Parekkunnel is the translator. (See appendix)

This thesis is one of the first attempts to academically approach the Malayalam translations and translators of Progress Publishers. It leaves much room to explore the vast collections of works across genres and the institutional culture of Progress in Moscow that the author aspires to examine at a later stage, with an enhanced proficiency in Russian language suitable for archival research.

CHAPTER 1

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MOSCOW TRANSLATORS OF KERALA

The Cold War was as much a struggle for the human mind as it was a geo-political conflict. Two powerful nations competed with each other to allure the rest of the world into their respective ideologies so as to make it look "significantly more like their own country," as noted by historian Odd Arne Westad[25], although he denotes it as a post-Cold War scenario.

Both of them – The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – promised material progress. Now they wanted to cultivate the right attitude in the people of these countries and to this end, they sought the aid of the written word. The scenario immediately brings to mind the Malayalam (the language of the state of Kerala, India) word for letter: *Aksharam.* The word means "that which is indestructible". *Aksharam* indeed was what the Soviet Union was wielding to entice Kerala: by way of a massive project of translation of Soviet literature into Malayalam. It should be remembered that the communist movement in Kerala and the translation efforts of the USSR complemented each other and had a multiplier effect in politics. Some people could have become communists after reading the imported political literature, or some would have chosen to read this literature precisely because they were communists[26].

The "rhetorical and material commitment" of the Soviet Union to translation has no parallels in world history.[27] The Soviet conceptualization of socialist modernity was

[25] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, First edition (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 619.
[26] Ratheesh C. Nair, Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation and Director of the Russian Centre of Science and Culture, Interview with the author, August 4, 2021.
[27] Brian James Baer, "Introduction to Forum: On Translation and Translators in Soviet Russia," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 60, no. 1 (2016): 5.

assimilated by the left-liberal middle class Malayalis and working-class neighbourhoods through these translations which continue to the present.

This chapter will talk about the two main actors in this translation saga — The Keralite couple K. Gopalakrishnan and Omana, who, from 1966 to 1991, worked for Progress Publishers in Moscow, against a backdrop of the communist Kerala treading a progressive path of education and literacy, compared to the rest of India. The couple lived in Moscow for 25 years, and translated 192 books across genres — from works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin; books on science and mathematics; and classical works and other fiction to fairy tales and fiction for children and young adults — until the collapse of the USSR. Immensely popular and widely sold at low prices, these books contributed to the socialist education of Kerala, the most literate state in India.

As the global Cold War unfolded, Soviet modernity was considered a "state-driven alternative" to capitalism. The Soviet civilization was an "organically whole culture" that rendered differences, including ethnic ones, irrelevant, and the Soviet culture was an aspect that elevated the country's status in the eyes of the developing world.[28] Positioned at the "center of a global contest over the economic future of the Third World" because of early independence, size, and the towering presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, India was of great interest to both the super powers[29]. The formation of All India Progressive Writers' Association in the 1930s looked at culture and literature as invaluable elements of anti-imperialist political

[28] Michael David-Fox, *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 67-68, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt155jp44.
[29] David C. Engerman, *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018).

transformation. Its founding members were attracted by socialist realism and Russian futurism among other western ideas. Its members were inspired by the Russian revolution.[30]

Kerala fully absorbed this air of a post-Independence modernity modelled on socialist ethos. It was a fertile soil for communism even before the state was officially formed in 1956. The Soviet connection of Kerala communism is evident from the fact that K. Damodaran, a founding leader of the communist party in Kerala, first translated and published illegally in Malayalam the official history of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (which was originally published in the end of the thirties) in 1941, and was used as a text book of Marxism for the party cadres.[31]

Damodaran sums up the mood in the state thus:

> *In discussions with independent minded socialists, I defended Stalin vigorously. I think the main reason for this was that we identified ourselves completely with the Soviet Union, which was then under constant attack by British imperialists and by the Congress right wing. Every strike was supposed to have been inspired by Moscow, every street demonstration was supposed to be led by agitators in the pay of Moscow.*[32]

The communist victory in the elections in 1957 to the Kerala Assembly seemed to confirm Nikita Khrushchev's "sanguine prognosis of a peaceful transition to socialism", reiterated at the 20th party Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union in 1956.[33] The post-1950s "reform communism" in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev was led by an intelligentsia rooting for "cultural, ideological, and ultimately political change".[34] This

[30] Jennifer Dubrow, "The Aesthetics of the Fragment: Progressivism and Literary Modernism in the Work of the All-India Progressive Writers' Association," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 55, no. 5 (September 3, 2019): 597, https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2019.1635846.
[31] K. Damodaran, Memoir of an Indian Communist, New Left Review, May 1975, 39, https://newleftreview.org/issues/i93/articles/k-damodaran-memoir-of-an-indian-communist.pdf.
[32] Damodaran, Memoir of an Indian Communist.
[33] N. Krishnaji, "Kerala Milestones: On the Parliamentary Road to Socialism," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 23 (2007): 2170.
[34] David-Fox, *Crossing Borders*, 69.

attitudinal shift resonated deeply with the leaders of a new Kerala eager to advance along the socialist path.

The communist ideology was gaining strength despite the so-called Vimochana Samaram or 'Liberation Struggle' in 1959 that led to the dismissal of the communist government in Kerala. The church opposed the communist government's Education Bill and orchestrated the successful ouster of the government with the help of Nair Service Society, an upper caste organization, which was up in arms against the Land Reforms that provisioned to distribute land to the peasants and the underprivileged. They ignited religious-caste sentiments and mobilized crowds, culminating in violence and police firing.[35]

The Central government intervened, dismissed the state government, and put the state under the President's rule. Nevertheless, the communist party won more vote-share in the subsequent election, proving the public affinity for the reformist ideology of the party.

From Land Reforms to literacy

The first communist government abolished land tenancy completely. This led to ordinary peasants all over the state owning full ownership rights to land – though in small parcels – that was previously under various forms of tenancy. Big holdings of land were partitioned and it resulted in the creation of a class of new land owners. In turn, those belonging to the lowest rungs of caste and economic ladder started getting visibility in the rural social structure. A very large number of former tenants turned land owners with the Left government reforms. Though the law required them to pay full compensation to former owners, they did not have to do that under the new reforms.[36]

[35] E. T. Mathew, "Growth of Literacy in Kerala: State Intervention, Missionary Initiatives and Social Movements," *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 39 (1999): 2811–20.
[36] Krishnaji, "Kerala Milestones: On the Parliamentary Road to Socialism," 2171.

The smaller size of the land holdings was not suitable to carry out large-scale agricultural activities. This meant those with some means of wealth choosing to migrate to urban areas in search of employment and social mobility. The increased importance given to education and employment opportunities in the service sector, especially following the formation of the state of Kerala in 1956, enhanced the aspirations of this new class of people created through the land reforms.[37]

Successive rulers of the princely states followed by elected governments in Kerala encouraged literacy and took concrete steps to ensure free, universal, and compulsory education. Foreign missionaries and homegrown churches in the erstwhile state of Travancore (constituting most of the present-day southern Kerala) were instrumental in spreading the value of universal education in the nineteenth century itself under the British rule.[38] Social movements among the backward and untouchable classes complemented their efforts. Samastha Kerala Sahithya Parishath (All Kerala Literature Forum), a literary organization formed in 1927, endeavoured to establish libraries as part of its activities.[39]

Shortly after the formation of the state, political coalitions, rather than single-party rule, became the norm owing to regional and communal peculiarities. Both the main coalitions were of equal strength and had to adopt policies and implement programs that catered to people across the spectrum in order to stay relevant. It was this 'balancing act' that brought in rapid literacy, along with other reform initiatives, even to the backward districts in northern Kerala.[40]

In time, Kerala also saw a robust public library movement. A Library Act came into being for the first time in India in 1948, in the province of Malabar (roughly the present north

[37] Krishnaji, 2170.
[38] Mathew, "Growth of Literacy in Kerala," 2819.
[39] K S Ranjith, "Rural Libraries of Kerala," *Discussion Paper No. 78*, Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, 2004, 7.
[40] Mathew, "Growth of Literacy in Kerala," 2819.

Kerala). As a result of the law, Malabar local library authorities were formed with district education officers as secretaries.[41] During the period between 1955 and 1975, the number of libraries under Kerala State Library Council increased from 1,747 to 4,280[42]. Most villages featured at least a rudimentary 'reading' room or library. Peasants attended night schools, encouraged by communist party activists. People, especially the working class, was eager to get hold of materials to read and discuss.

It can be seen that a new "linguistic imaginary" owned by the people, something at contrast with print-capitalism as Nissim Mannathukkaren terms it, was already present in Kerala.[43] Political consciousness and linguistic ability were doubtlessly intertwined and revolutionized the sensibilities of the reading public cutting across classes.

Publishing houses, dealing with the literary works of prominent Malayalam writers, came into being In the early decades of the 20th century. With the formation of Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham (SPCS-Literary Workers' Cooperative Society) in 1949, the publishing industry in Kerala was revolutionised. More than 2,000 books came out in the first eighteen years of SPCS. This is considered to have ended the paucity of books in Malayalam. The library movement and SPCS came together to inaugurate a new era of printing, publishing, and sales of Malayalam books. All the main libraries in Kerala till then had more English books than Malayalam ones.[44]

It was to this atmosphere of active reading that that the translated works of Progress Publishers arrived from Moscow. Progress was the vehicle of Soviet literary internationalism, with massive arrangements for printing and transporting printed materials from Soviet printing

[41] Ranjith, "Rural Libraries of Kerala," 10.
[42] Ranjith, 11.
[43] Nissim Mannathukkaren, "The Rise of the National-Popular and Its Limits: Communism and the Cultural in Kerala," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 14, no. 4 (December 2013): 513–14.
[44] Ranjith, "Rural Libraries of Kerala," 10.

presses to across the world, through the agency *Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga* (International Book)[45]. Progress was established, after many changes in envisaged goals and objectives about publication of foreign literature within the Soviet Union, in 1963. The Publishing House of Foreign Languages and Foreign Literature Publishing House were merged to form the Progress, which grew into the key organization that would bring African and Asian literatures to Soviet audiences.[46]

The Publishing Co-operative of Foreign Workers (ITIR), the predecessor of Progress, initially recruited translators and editors from among Soviet citizens who knew foreign languages because of their lived experiences abroad. They also found suitable employees in foreigners arriving in Moscow as political refugees with Comintern links.[47] Later, Progress started to bring in translators from all over the world, providing them with salaried positions and accommodations. After the Stalin era, non-Western languages dominated the publishing scene at Progress. The number of "Eastern" languages increased from 15 to 28 through the 1960s. While English topped the translation languages since the beginning, Indian languages took over by 1980.[48]

[45] Richard Hellie, "Working for the Soviets: Chicago, 1959-61, Mezhkniga, and the Soviet Book Industry," *Russian History* 29, no. 2/4 (2002): 539.
[46] Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism*, 2020, 99.
[47] Djagalov, 98.
[48] Djagalov, 99.

Progress in Malayalam

The working style of the multi-lingual Progress was fascinating. Once a translated manuscript was ready, it would be recopied in big, bold letters by women known as 'copying girls.' The copied pages would then be sent to the printers, and galleys — printer's proof in the form of long single-column strips — would be returned to the translator for correction. [49]

In the case of Malayalam, an editor, usually a Russian with good knowledge of the language, would subject the text to thorough scrutiny and suggest revisions and emendations after checking it against the Russian original. Footnotes and explanations of cultural references were given additional attention. Dashko, an editor with Progress, oversaw the Malayalam translation process. There were two Tanyas who worked as Malayalam copying girls, apart from a young man named Eduard at the time when the Moscow Translators were working with Progress Publishers. [50]

For distributing the Progress translations and other Soviet publications being exported to Kerala, Prabhath Book House had a well-oiled network in the state. Registered in 1952 as Prabhath Printing and Publishing Company in Kozhikode in northern Kerala under the ownership of the Communist Party of India, Prabhath later shifted to the commercial centre of the state, Ernakulam. Later, its head office was opened in Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital. Out of the 14 districts in Kerala, Prabhath reached out to readers in nine districts with an almost equal presence in the northern, central, and southern regions of the state. Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam in southern Kerala; Kottayam, Alappuzha, and Ernakulam in central Kerala; and Palakkad, Thrissur, Kozhikode, and Kannur in northern Kerala were covered by hundreds of agencies of

[49] Giedrė Jankevičiūtė and V. Geetha, *Another History of the Children's Picture Book: From Soviet Lithuania to India* (Chennai: Tara Books, 2017): 18.
[50] K. Soman, geologist and student of applied geology at People's Friendship University (PFU), Moscow, from 1969 to 1974, interview with author, Thiruvananthapuram, August 4, 2021.

Prabhath Book House that is said to have been in charge of distributing 28 Soviet-era publications. Prabhath was the first to introduce book shops on wheels in the state. Big red vans of Prabhath went to city centres and towns, offering books printed on shiny white pages at very cheap prices.

Translators as socialist intermediaries

Brigitte Studer says that the political interests of a heterogeneous and extremely mobile group of revolutionaries converged with the emancipatory and internationalist goals of Communist International (Comintern)[51]. This may apply to the Moscow Translators too.

If the Comintern tried to connect the global to the local, Progress connected the local to the global. In Studer's opinion, revolution meant work; it became a profession, a way of life, for the Comintern activists. In a similar sense, translation as a tool of Soviet internationalism created a unique group of intermediaries for whom the process was no mere work, but a profession, a way of life itself.

K. Gopalakrishnan was born on November 29, 1930, to Kesava Pillai in Aluva, a politically charged industrial town near the big city of Ernakulum in central Kerala. He had five siblings.[52] An ardent activist of the Communist Party of India (CPI) right from his student days, Gopalakrishnan also nurtured his love for reading and literature. He took part in election campaigns enthusiastically and, in due course, became the secretary of the taluk (an administrative subdivision) committee of the party in 1957, the year when the Communist government came to power. Having completed his undergraduate degree from the Union

[51] Brigitte Studer, Lecture (Travelling for the Global Revolution: A New Perspective on the Communist International, Central European University, Vienna, October 11, 2021), Zoom.
[52] Latha Bimal, daughter of K. Gopalakrishnan and Omana, telephone interview with the author, August 3, 2021.

Christian College, Aluva, he took off to Calcutta, West Bengal, for further studies and political work.

Gopalakrishnan was looking for a regular income when his comrade, M.S. Rajendran, who was employed in the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi, informed him of a job opportunity with the *USSR News and Views*. During the nine years he spent in the capital city of India, he rose to the post of deputy editor of *Soviet Review,* published by the Information department of the embassy.[53]

While in Delhi, he got married to Bharathi Amma, a.k.a. Omana. Omana was her pet name.[54] Their marriage was arranged by her two brothers, both of whom were active party members and knew Gopalakrishnan through the students' movement. The couple had two children — Sashi and Latha.

In 1966, Progress Publishers decided to launch its Malayalam publication wing. Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Telugu, and Tamil sections had already started functioning when Gopalakrishnan joined Progress. The CPI had split in 1964 into the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)]. The split was along the fault lines of the global communist movement and was hastened by the India-China war of 1962. The uncertain political situation at home must have catalysed the couple's decision to move to the Soviet Union.

Gopalakrishnan carried two books with him during the journey: an English-Malayalam dictionary and *Sabdathaaraavali* (Malayalam thesaurus) "that he kept close like his own children".[55] It was snowing heavily when the family arrived in Moscow in March, 1966.

[53] Sreekanth Kottakkal, "Athirukal Maayunna Lokam (The World Where Borders Blur)," *Mathrubhumi Weekend*, December 5, 2010.
[54] Latha Bimal, interview.
[55] Sreekanth Kottakkal, "Athirukal Maayunna Lokam (The World Where Borders Blur)."

Progress employees were waiting for them with warm clothes as they walked out of the airport[56]. Latha, the couple's elder child, was five and the younger one, Sashi, was ten months old.

Gopalakrishnan set about translating from the English-language versions of the Russian works. In the beginning, he dealt with children's books. In time, the translator was given works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, etc. Neither he nor the other translators had a role in selecting the original works for translation. But they could select from within a prescribed set of books and take them home to work on. The translators freely used common words and usages, bridging the cultural gap. The following chapter, which engages in a close reading of one of the most famous children's novellas called *Chukkum Gekkum* ('Chuck and Geck'), there is a discussion about Gopalakrishnan extensively employing rhythmic poetry, very much in line with Kerala's oral story-telling ethos.

Maria Pulyakova, an old communist party member, was hired as a Russian tutor and in time, Gopalakrishnan began to translate texts directly from the Russian.[57] At this point, he was working exclusively with political texts, with intermittent forays into Maxim Gorky and such other names. Gopalakrishnan was a reserved and serious person, diligent, and meticulous. The translator would steadfastly work at his desk from morning till noon[58]. Malayali students in Russian universities remember him as someone who would rather listen to others than talk[59].

Born on 26 April 1936 to Anachalil Madhavan Pillai and Madhavi Amma at Ettumanoor in Kottayam district of Kerala, Omana's original name was Bharathi Amma. Both her parents were avid readers and her mother, Madhavi Amma, used to write letters in poetry form. Omana

[56] Latha Bimal, interview.
[57] Sreekanth Kottakkal, "Athirukal Maayunna Lokam (The World Where Borders Blur)."
[58] Sashi Nayar, interview.
[59] K. Soman, interview.

had four siblings and her brothers were activists of the CPI. While completing her undergraduate degree in chemistry at NSS Arts College for Women, Perunthanni in Thiruvananthapuram, Omana was a student leader who organised meetings and did well in public speaking. While her leadership capacity was recognized, girls those days were generally not encouraged to pursue a political career or public life. Omana was never known to be interested in writing. After marriage, she too started to work in the Soviet embassy in New Delhi, along with Gopalakrishnan.[60]

Omana joined Progress Publishers after having worked briefly with Radio Moscow. Her superior there, Tatyana Ivanovna, spoke good Malayalam[61]. When Raduga Publishers was set up in 1982 to exclusively bring out children's literature, Omana became an employee of Raduga. She translated 56 books in total, most of them still-popular titles in fiction and children's literature.

Omana was a vivacious personality[62]. Her style of work was more sporadic and spontaneous, because she was working while managing her home and looking after their two children[63]. The fact that Omana translated only fiction and children's literature, and not political literature, can be seen as an indication of the traditional gender expectations of the times. Her homemaking and childcare responsibilities could have affected the volume of her output, too. The work-from-home situation, in this regard, was not very conducive for the woman.

Malayali presence in Moscow

[60] A.M. Karthyayani Amma, younger sister of Omana, telephone interview with the author, February 25, 2023.
[61] Latha Bimal, interview
[62] K. Soman, interview
[63] Latha Bimal, interview

The Indian diaspora in Moscow of the late 1960s witnessed the presence of Malayalis in important spheres of social life. The translator couple made instant connections with the members of this elite Malayali community. Their integration into a totally foreign topography and culture was made easier by these readily available links.

All major spheres of influence, from diplomacy to journalism, had Malayalis at the helm. This small group of the cultural elite was led by 'Moscow' Chandran of Radio Moscow. Chandran, who hailed from Kottayam district in Kerala, had arrived in Moscow for medical treatment and political refuge in 1952, as he was on the run from the law in Calcutta, West Bengal, where he was imprisoned with Jyothi Basu (one of the founders of the CPI(M) and the Chief Minister of West Bengal from 1977 to 2000) for communist party work. His original name was Thomas Zacharias, which was not widely known until his death in 1983.[64] Moscow Chandran hosted and accompanied many politicians and artists who visited Moscow, which was opening up as part of Soviet premier Khrushchev's relaxation of rigid controls within the country and a markedly less repressive foreign policy. The country welcomed visitors and students in large numbers in the post-Stalin era. Chandran was married to a Russian woman and had established himself as a high-flying social figure when Gopalakrishnan and family arrived in Moscow[65].

A.K. Damodaran, the first consul of the Indian embassy in the USSR, was another prominent personality. A "representative of the Nehruvian vision of foreign policy", he was instrumental in the creation of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in 1971 combining the Indian stance of non-alignment and the Soviet policy of peaceful co-

[64] C.S. Suresh, "Intro | Chandran Moscow Radio," *Memorial Archive* (blog), accessed June 15, 2023, http://chandranmoscowradio.memorialarchive.org/sample-page-2/.
[65] K. Soman, interview

existence[66]. Unnikrishnan, the Moscow reporter of the legendary Leftist newspaper *Patriot* based in New Delhi, along with his wife Thankam, were also an integral part of the Indo-Soviet culturescape.

The PFU (renamed Patrice Lumumba University, 1961-1992) used to house a large number of students from the Third World countries. The university was the main arena of training Third World students in the USSR with scholarships, a central component of Soviet aid that started in the late 1950s and continued throughout the Cold War[67]. Malayalis constituted a major part of the community of Indian students. For making some additional income, some of these students worked part-time as Malayalam news readers at Radio Moscow and also taught Malayalam to the copying girls or boys of Progress twice a week, on a monthly payment of 25 roubles[68].

Gopalakrishnan, Omana, and the two children would visit Kerala every three years for a period of three months, which continued until they left Moscow following the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the childhood of Latha and Sashi, a tutor was recruited to come to their Ettumanoor home to assist them to learn Malayalam better. This was necessitated because the couple were understandably quite busy in translation work, working from home, all through their professional lives. Once back in Moscow after their Kerala trips, Gopalakrishnan and Omana would play, every afternoon, the latest Malayalam film songs they recorded during their vacations on tapes from the All India Radio broadcasts.[69] The couple maintained a Malayali lifestyle in Moscow, in terms of the food they ate and the clothes they wore. Mostly busy with

[66] Sandeep Dikshit, "A.k. Damodaran (1921-2012) - a Principled Diplomat with Formidable Intellect," *The Hindu*, February 1, 2012, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ak-damodaran-19212012-a-principled-diplomat-with-formidable-intellect/article2848432.ece.

[67] Constantin Katsakioris, "Burden or Allies?: Third World Students and Internationalist Duty through Soviet Eyes," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. oi.org/10.1353 (2017): 540, https://d3/kri.2017.0035.

[68] K. Soman, interview.

[69] Latha Bimal, interview.

the massive work they undertook, they still found time to host Malayali communist party leaders visiting Moscow and maintained close personal relationships with Malayali professionals such as 'Moscow' Chandran and Dasan of Radio Moscow.[70] The couple insisted that the children speak Malayalam at home and their daughter Latha wore her hair long, as was the habit of Malayali women at the time. People close to them remember that the children were brought up in the 'traditional Indian manner'[71].

The children, having arrived in Moscow at such young ages, soon assimilated themselves into the Soviet ways of life in the 70s and 80s, complete with vacation pioneer camps and local means of entertainment. Latha went on to study medicine in Moscow and is currently employed in Dubai where she has settled with her husband. Sashi, the couple's son, settled in Moscow and married a Russian national.

The children of Moscow Translators had remained largely unaware of the volume and significance of the work their parents were engaged in and were surprised to find the affection of Malayali readers for the "Omana-Gopalakrishnan couple" at a much later point in time when they happened to spend extensive periods in Kerala after the passing of their parents. Latha regularly follows Russian news channels and speaks fluent Russian with her expat patients in Dubai despite having spent a better part of her adult life outside Moscow following her medical education.[72]

The couple left the Soviet Union in 1991 following its collapse and they led a quiet retired life in the capital city of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram. Omana passed away on 22 April 2003. She was supposed to have completed the translation of Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and handed it over to an editor, a Russian woman, before the disintegration of the country. When

[70] Latha Bimal, interview.
[71] K. Soman, interview.
[72] Latha Bimal, interview.

Gopalakrishnan had a chance to visit Russia in September 2003, he enquired about the *Anna Karenina* manuscript but was informed that it had been burned[73].

Gopalakrishnan continued to draw a pension from the Russian government until his death on 21 February, 2011.[74]

Lessons in longevity

Gopalakrishnan, Omana, and their two children lived in different apartments provided by Progress Publishers over 25 years. While this thesis concentrates on the two main translators who relocated to Moscow and remained there for a quarter century, it has to be noted that a number of other persons too had engaged in the translation work for Progress. They were Abraham Parekkunnel, Subhadra Parameshwaran, Mrs. Unnikrishnan, Veliyam Bhargavan, K.C. George, Cherukulam Parameshwaran, Mavathu Prabhakaran, and M.S. Rajendran. Rajendran lived in Moscow from 1976 to 1980.[75]

Comparing this long stint in Moscow of the Malayalam translators to the term of T. Dharmarajan, a member of the CPI who spent eight years in the Tamil (the language of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu) section[76] and that of Ravindra Rasal, a Marathi[77] (the language of the western Indian state of Maharashtra) translator who worked with Mir Publishers from 1983 until the collapse of the USSR in 1991, reveals the reason behind the number and variety of texts that got translated into Malayalam. Gopalakrishnan translated 62

[73] Sashi Nayar, son of K. Gopalakrishnan and Omana, telephone interview with the author, April 29, 2023.

[74] Tiki Rajwi, "Gopalakrishnan Has Translated 200 Russian Books," *The New Indian Express*, January 19, 2010, https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/thiruvananthapuram/2010/jan/19/gopalakrishnan-has-translated-200-russian-books-161920.html.

[75] Latha Bimal, interview.

[76] Jankevičiūtė and Geetha, *Another History of the Children's Picture Book*.

[77] Divya Sreedharan, "How Soviet Children's Books Became Collectors' Items in India," Atlas Obscura, 00:00 400AD, http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/soviet-childrens-books-in-india.

works by Marx, Engels, and Lenin; 25 political works; four science titles; 19 works in fiction; and 26 children's literature titles. Omana translated 40 children's works and 16 other fiction works.[78]

The large number of translators in the Bengali language is notable. Nani Bhowmik, Nirendranath Roy, Shubhamoy Ghosh, Samar Sen, and Bishnu Mukhopadhyay arrived at Progress in 1963 when the Bengali wing was set up, and, after the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation in 1971, Hayat Mamood, Khaled Chowdhury, and Dwijen Sharma reached Moscow from that country. During this time, Arun Som and Mangalacharan Chattopadhyay came from West Bengal in India to work for Progress Publishers.[79]

This expansive and extended presence of translators from Bengali, along with those from Malayalam, can be directly correlated with the strong roots of the communist party in the states of West Bengal and Kerala. Like 'Moscow' Chandran of Radio Moscow, Gopalakrishnan, too became popular among his comrades and readers alike as 'Moscow' Gopalakrishnan.

Lasting legacy

Hundreds of Soviet titles in translation in thousands of copies found their way to Kerala since the late 1960s. Children's picture books were especially popular for their vivid, imaginative illustrations and exotic tales. Prabhath also organized exhibitions and book fairs where people would come in large numbers to buy books "printed in the Soviet Union". They would often constitute the first books of their home library at a time when children's books

[78] Rajwi, "Gopalakrishnan Has Translated 200 Russian Books."
[79] Koushik Das, "The Charm Still Exists!," Boundless Ocean of Politics, January 17, 2020, https://boundlessoceanofpolitics.co.in/2020/01/17/the-charm-still-exists/.

were a rare commodity and buying books, especially illustrated ones or those with colourful pictures often imported from the West, would be unaffordable for a low-income household.[80]

It has been observed that many passages in the books for children were liberally adapted. Those who read both English and Malayalam translations liked the Malayalam version better "because of the way it communicated the ideas". This is because the translators employed by Progress were creative writers as well.[81] A reader reminisced that she spent a sleepless night — that she terms the most beautiful and meaningful night in her life — in the nineties copying *Jamilia*, a novel by renowned Kyrgyz author and Nobel laureate Chingiz Aitmatov, into a notebook as she was unable to buy a new copy.[82] The book is called *Jameela* in Malayalam.

The books were examples of "adequate" or "realist" translation posited by Rossen Djagalov. The publishing company, over many years of its evolution, conducted numerous seminars on translation and provided chances for improving translation skills of its staff members and ordinary residents of Moscow.[83] The translations proved to be a product of the complex social and cultural dynamics prevalent in a post-colonial India that strongly rejected western models deemed to be rooted in exploitation.

A publishing company based in Kozhikode in north Kerala has brought out some of the children's books in their "original" format. A couple based in the nearby district of Wayanad have opened a library of Soviet-era books from across languages. They have also opened a research centre for those interested in the Soviet-era reading materials. People who were

[80] Titas Bose, "Reading in Translation: The Soviet Picture Book in an Era beyond Its Time," September 19, 2021, https://worldkidlit.wordpress.com/2021/09/19/bengali/.
[81] Sajid A. Latheef, "Idyll and Ideology: An Overview of Soviet Literature for Children in Malayalam," in *Sahapedia*, July 26, 2019, https://www.sahapedia.org/idyll-and-ideology-overview-soviet-literature-children-malayalam.
[82] Jessy Anna Jacob, "Comment on Facebook post," Facebook comment, September 7, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/profile/100007521678531/search/?q=%E0%B4%B8%E0%B5%8B%E0%B4%B5%E0%B4%BF%E0%B4%AF%E0%B4%B1%E0%B5%8D%E0%B4%B1%E0%B5%8D%20.
[83] Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism*, 2020, 100–101.

captivated by the translations run a Facebook forum and a blog to share and preserve scanned copies of the Soviet-era works and they collaborate with similar groups from the rest of India.

In the Malayalam translation *Ithaanu Lenin* ("This is Lenin") — a collection of Lenin obituaries published in 1967, a year after Gopalakrishnan arrived in Moscow — writer and revolutionary Maxim Gorky notes thus of a meeting he had with Lenin in the 1900s: "…I visited him to talk about setting up a new publishing house where perhaps all of our writers could be brought together. I felt that it was necessary to write several books about the history of western and Russian literatures, as well as the history of culture and supply the proletariat with accurate information in plenty for self-education and advocacy[84]." Gorky went on to establish the World of Literature Publishing House in 1918, and "though of very different institutional origins, Progress gradually evolved into the true successor of Gorky's project".[85] With *Ithaanu Lenin*, Gopalakrishnan indeed crafted a unique moment in history where the translator was recapturing the very words that would shape his own impactful career many decades later.

The translator couple did not leave behind autobiographies or ego documents that could be traced. They did not even talk much about their life and work in Moscow in public gatherings either during their stint in the Soviet Union or after their return. They led a private life. Their families back home had never fully realised the nature and scope of the work the couple engaged in. All they knew was that the couple translated directly from the Russian, in the faraway Soviet Union where it was very cold, food was abundant and really cheap, but where luxuries were non-existent.[86]

[84] Trans. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Ithaanu Lenin* (Moscow: Progress, 1967).
[85] Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism*, 2020.
[86] A.M. Karthyayani Amma, interview.

The Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, organized an exhibition of their books in February 2010, which drew many generations of readers in large numbers. They were surprised to find that the man who had mesmerized their childhoods with the fascinating tales from the Soviet Union was settled in their city.[87] Though this level of non-visibility may seem peculiar, for the translators themselves, who were communists with deeply held ideological beliefs, their vocation was a regular part of life and activism. They deemed their job neither extra-ordinary nor exceptional. The translators remained faceless for the books to truly feel original and authentic. They looked at themselves as only playing a small part in the massive project of Progress Publishers that reached out to regions across the world from the gigantic Soviet Union.

The Moscow Translators were evidently part of a power structure and the aims of the Progress Publishers could be conveniently read as a long game in soft power. Soft power, or co-optive power, first proposed by Joseph Nye, occurs "when one country gets other countries to want what it wants."[88] But how the Moscow Translators approached their assignment and the reception accorded to the imported works from the Soviet Union in Kerala cannot be merely demarcated away as one country wooing another with non-military techniques. The Progress translations were not a 'contact zone' as defined by Mary Louise Pratt "where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power".[89] Rather than viewing the scenario as an inferior state acquiescing itself to a bigger, powerful player, what happened in Kerala was an evolving synergy, though very much Utopian, between the two cultures. The political and cultural education of a large number of common people was facilitated by these translations in the particular context of Kerala as we have seen

[87] Rajwi, "Gopalakrishnan Has Translated 200 Russian Books."
[88] Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (1990): 166, https://doi.org/10.2307/1148580.
[89] Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession*, 1991, 34.

already. Arrival of Soviet literature in translation on Kerala's soil was accepted as natural. Instead of making ruptures, the books integrated themselves with the political and literary realms of a state that first viewed communism as a united anti-imperialist front against the British rule.[90]

The translators, their names printed in smaller font size on the copyright page, often along with the name of the illustrator, never stood out metaphorically or figuratively to remind the readers that the content in front of them was foreign. Ironically, this very absence contributed to the attraction of Soviet-era translations as at once a site of exotica and familiarity.

[90] Damodaran, Memoir of an Indian Communist, 38.

CHAPTER 2

ALCHEMY OF TRANSLATION: TURNING STALINIST SOCIALISM INTO LITERARY DELIGHT

(A STUDY OF ARKADI GAIDAR'S BOOKS IN TRANSLATION IN MALAYALAM)

"The Russians brought the first international-class children's books to Kerala... If the Soviets hoped to convert Malayali children to Communism, it was a nice way of doing it. No tanks, no firing squad, no secret police. I know they succeeded in converting at least one person. That was me. I was a hard-core Communist by the time I was 12!" the implications of the translated children's literature imported from the Soviet Union is clearly reflected in these words of renowned Malayalam author Paul Zacharia[91].

This chapter will analyse the scenario where the 1930s Soviet (Stalinist) system was being made familiar to the Kerala context of the 1970s and 1980s, against a backdrop of the translations of Soviet children's writer Arkadi Gaidar's works. In addition, it will look at the ways in which the Moscow Translators approached the texts to bring them closest to the cultural and literary settings of Kerala and Malayalis through his most popular work, *Chukkum Gekkum*. Another work of an evidently political nature, named *Jeevithavidyalayam*, will also be looked at. The books were originally published in 1939 and 1930 respectively. While *Chukkum Gekkum* appeared in Malayalam in 1978, Prabhath Book House started selling *Jeevithavidyalayam* in 1980.

This chapter argues that the Moscow Translators were instrumental in reworking the Soviet realm and completely absorbing its emancipatory themes in a totally foreign territory

[91] Paul Zakaria, "The Malayalam Experience of Children's Literature," *Ravenshaw Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies* 2, no. 1 (July 2012).

and imaginary. What role did these children's books of the 1930s play in communicating socialism in Kerala after a long half-century? How did these books transform the way children's books were approached in general, and how far does the legacy remain? Did the Moscow translations succeed in creating an emancipatory imaginary despite their origins from a totally different geography and culture? These are the questions that are addressed in this chapter.

As discussed earlier, Kerala already stood out as a unique socialist space by the time the translations started arriving in the state. During the 1930s itself, Kerala experienced a notable breakdown in its caste-based social organization, which was unparalleled when compared to other parts of India. Additionally, the matrilineal systems that governed the caste-Hindu relationships underwent a rapid decline, leading to a modern yet deeply patriarchal social order.[92] In the aftermath of unresolved gender and religious reforms, the focus shifted to the pursuit of economic equality and social justice. Communism emerged to fill this ideological void in the 1930s.[93] Notably the same time when Gaidar wrote his most popular works in the Soviet Russia to be translated into Malayalam fifty years later: *School* (1930- *Jeevithavidyalayam* in Malayalam), *Blue Cup* (1936- *Neelakkappu* in Malayalam), and *Chuck and Geck* (1939 -*Chukkum Gekkum* in Malayalam). By this time, the Kerala society had undergone tremendous changes in its socio-political arenas and economic structure. While religion still played a role in shaping the fundamental aspects of Malayali identity, Kerala experienced relatively fewer instances of direct oppression in its public sphere compared to

[92] Robin Jeffrey, "Temple-Entry Movement in Travancore, 1860-1940," *Social Scientist* 4, no. 8 (1976): 3–27, https://doi.org/10.2307/3516377.
[93] S Harikrishnan, "Communicating Communism: Social Spaces and the Creation of a 'Progressive' Public Sphere in Kerala, India," *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* 18, no. 1 (January 13, 2020): 268–85, https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v18i1.1134.

other states.[94] Rising literacy rates, newspapers and book-publishing trends, and changing family patterns all set the Kerala society apart.

In her 2023 working paper on Malayali childhood, J. Devika presents a picture of the social transition: over several decades, beginning in the early 1970s, Kerala experienced substantial migration, predominantly consisting of Malayali men seeking employment in Gulf countries. This influx of migrants led to a significant flow of resources to families, which were often invested in secure avenues such as constructing houses, indulging in prestigious consumption activities like weddings, and prioritizing the education of their children to secure their entry into the global job markets.[95]

It was into this milieu that the translated works entered in large numbers: India had won the Indo-Pakistan war and liberated Bangladesh with the Soviet help; Kerala was sufficiently familiarized with the communist ideology; and the aspirational families wanted their children to read and study well.

Zooming in on the history of children's book publishing in Kerala, one can see a thriving industry and receptive audience. According to O.M. Anujan, the emergence of Malayalam children's books may be attributed to the publication of books that had uncomplicated language and moral subjects. Education and knowledge in Kerala had been reserved for upper-caste men who were taught the classic texts in Sanskrit. Those who did not know the language of the Gods, as Sanskrit was known, were considered illiterates. Malayalam literary works were initially meant for the uneducated and the uninitiated of the society, who were, by default, the women and children. Ironically, "these intellectually backward section of

[94] T.J. Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1982), 33.
[95] Devika J., "The History of Regimes of Childhood in Kerala: A Preliminary Account," *Centre for Development Studies*, Working Paper, no. 513 (March 2023): 33.

society" were the first audience of the poems based on myths and Puranas by one of the most famous poets of Kerala, Kunjan Nambiar, who lived in the eighteenth century.[96] Children's literature in Kerala experienced systematic and progressive development. Following its establishment in the early 19th century, the genre began to flourish, resulting in the production of approximately 300 books within the first three decades. Subsequently, in the following two decades, around 400 books were published, and between 1950 and 1970, nearly 1,000 books emerged. A significant milestone occurred in 1979, designated as the International Year of the Child, when over 300 children's books were released in Kerala alone.[97]

During the first half of the 20th century, Kerala set an impressive record of publishing an unprecedented 500 children's literature titles. Interestingly, one of the earliest travelogues for children in Malayalam was about a trip to the Soviet Union, written by Dr. C.R. Krishna Pillai in the form of letters to his granddaughter.[98] The state stands out for its abundant collection of children's magazines, periodicals, and dedicated sections in mainstream magazines and newspapers. Moreover, it is one of the few Indian states that set up a State Institute for Children's Literature. In 1945, a distinctive writer's cooperative called Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sanghom (Literary Workers' Co-operative Society, SPCS) was established with the purpose of publishing books. SPCS began publishing books with a contemporary sensibility, contributing significantly to the availability of books within the library network. One notable initiative was the introduction of 'Sammanappetti', or a gift box containing children's books.[99]

[96] O.M. Anujan, "Malayalam," in *Children's Literature in Indian Languages*, ed. K.A. Jamuna (Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1982).
[97] Rubin D'Cruz, "Children's Literature in Kerala: Traces and Trajectories," Sahapedia, accessed June 1, 2023, https://www.sahapedia.org/childrens-literature-kerala-traces-and-trajectories.
[98] Anujan, "Malayalam."
[99] D'Cruz, "Children's Literature in Kerala."

Children's literature in translation

Translated literature, ranging from Aesop's Fables to even works as extensive as *War and Peace* have been produced in Kerala for children. The practice of "importing" literature continued with the introduction of Indian classics such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Panchatantra, as well as English classics like Shakespeare's plays, stories by Chaucer, Robinson Crusoe, *Treasure Island*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and many more. Additionally, world classics like Arabian stories, Greek mythology, Andersen's and Grimm's fairy tales, were all made accessible through translations, adaptations, and abridgements. One notable example is the popular Japanese autobiographical book *Toto Chan: The Little Girl at the Window*, published in Malayalam by the National Book Trust in the mid-1990s, which has sold over 100,000 copies.[100]

Books published by the National Book Trust and Nehru Bal Pustakalaya reached a wide distribution across Kerala thanks to the village library network. Stories of Birbal and Thenali Raman, respectively ministers of Mughal emperor Akbar and the king Krishna Deva Rayar of Vijayanagara in south India, were extremely popular. These tales are basically about the wisdom and talent of persons in power.

Amidst all the abundance and choice, Malayalam lacked diversity in terms of gender, class, and caste. *Unnikkuttante Lokam* ("Unnikkuttan's World"), first published in 1973, an extremely popular children's novel by Nanthanar was about the life of a little boy in an upper-caste family. The only lead-girl character in contemporary popular Malayalam literature was Molly, from the comic called *Bobanum Mollyium* ("Boban and Molly") by cartoonist Toms, first published in 1962 in a popular Malayalam weekly.

[100] D'Cruz.

A cross-section of the contemporary Malayalam books for children published over the years, despite featuring vibrant covers and a modern appearance, did not deviate from the common trend, which often included sentimental and cliché-filled storytelling. In writing for children, there seemed to be a requirement for style and language to be standardized and filled with a predominant sense of "purpose." The books lacked clever colloquialisms, the creativity found in everyday language, and the diverse regional variations and dialects. It was as if these elements were intentionally omitted from the books.[101] In other words, writing for children was envisaged in a framework of 'suitable', 'appropriate, or 'child-friendly' methods. They had broadly been imagined as dumbed-down versions of writings for adult or older readers.

The translated reading materials from the Soviet Union effected a shift in sensibilities by expanding the geography of children's literature in Malayalam. Most of the books translated and imported into Kerala under the genre of children's literature did not promote the ideology or even the Soviet state blatantly. The books attracted generations of readers primarily owing to the quality of translation; the variety of their themes; colors (and lack thereof); rich illustrations; different sizes and kinds of fonts; and, most importantly, their availability in abundance.

The decades between 1960s and the 1990s are considered a boom period of the history of Malayalam children's literature precisely because of the "wonderful" translations from the Soviet Union. Many titles were already being brought out by different publishing companies well into the twenty-first century.[102] For instance, in 2013, *Soviet Nattile Balakathakalum Nadodikathakalum*, a collection of children's stories and folk tales from the erstwhile Soviet

[101] Radhika Menon, "Against Borders: Children's Books in Malayalam - Tulika Books," accessed June 1, 2023, https://www.tulikabooks.com/info/against-borders-children-s-books-in-malayalam.
[102] D'Cruz, "Children's Literature in Kerala."

Union, was published in two thick volumes, retold by K. Sreekumar. "The book each Malayali awaited with nostalgia," its tagline read.

The Moscow Translators did more than just translating, they transposed the unique sensibility of the world from which their source literary works emerged. This immediately recalls the difference between a linguist and a translator defined by Eleonory Gilburd: While a linguist studies words, a translator studied "half-words" (a term by Soviet children's writer and translator Samuil Marshak), or cultures they identified with as an "act of love".[103]

The Soviet translations did not always talk about idealized children in idealized surroundings, like the homegrown books in circulation at the time. A case in point is the extremely popular Malayalam poem for children, *Ammuvinte Attinkutty* ("Ammu's Lamb"). This poem eulogizing a "romantic childhood" gained significant popularity among Malayalis after it was published in a collection of the same name by K.S.K. Thalikkulam in 1960. Ammu is depicted as inherently possessing the qualities considered feminine in social reformist discourse, such as altruism, a loving and sacrificing nature for loved ones, patience, the capacity to influence others through tears, pleas, emotions, and gentleness. [104]

It is against these idealized settings that the Soviet-era translation *Achante Balyam* (1979) ("When Daddy was a Little Boy") talks about an incident where little Daddy accidentally consumes vodka.[105] A story like this was radical for the time in a culture where mentioning alcohol was a taboo in children's books.[106]

[103] Eleonory Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 116.
[104] J., "The History of Regimes of Childhood in Kerala: A Preliminary Account," 26.
[105] Alexander Raskin, *Achante Balyam*, trans. Omana (Progress Publishers, 1979), 42–44.
[106] Bose, "Reading in Translation."

Chukkum Gekkum ("Chuck and Geck")

The author of the books under discussion in this chapter, Arkadi Gaidar, was a quintessential Soviet soldier before he became a writer. Born Arkadi Petrovich Golikov in 1904 in the Tsarist Russia, Gaidar joined the Bolsheviks in 1918, at the age of fourteen. That same year, he volunteered for the Red Army, and, at the age of sixteen, commanded a regiment during the Russian Civil War. *School* -- *Jeevithavidyalayalam* in Malayalam -- is considered a semi-autobiographical work of Gaidar where the protagonist, Boris Gorikov, runs away from his school to join the Bolsheviks and later the Red Army. Gaidar was demobilized from the Army after a shell-shock, and, a year later, started writing for children.[107]

During the 1930s, the stories he published had a lasting impact on the memories of every child growing up in the Soviet era.[108] The moral perspective presented in these popular novels is believed to be strongly influenced by Gaidar's first-hand experiences as a young Red Army commander during the Civil War, as argued by Elena Krevsky.[109] Gaidar's writings transformed the concept of Soviet childhood…into a captivating realm that exuded power and agency. This had a profound impact, attracting a large and devoted readership.[110]

Gaidar's works had great traction in the socialist bloc countries. His *Chuck and Geck* (read in the 2nd and 3rd grades) and *Timur and His Squad* (read in the 5th grade of primary school) became fixtures on the mandatory reading lists and found a lasting place in Polish

[107] "Gaidar, A.P. - SovLit.Net - Encyclopedia of Soviet Authors," accessed June 11, 2023, http://www.sovlit.net/bios/gaidar.html.
[108] Evgeny Dobrenko, "'The Entire Real World of Children': The School Tale and 'Our Happy Childhood,'" *The Slavic and East European Journal* 49, no. 2 (July 1, 2005): 226, https://doi.org/10.2307/20058261.
[109] Elena Krevsky, "Arkadii Gaidar, the New Socialist Morality, and Stalinist Identity," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 54, no. 1/2 (2012): 113.
[110] Victoria Buyanovskaya, "Revolution vs. Pedagogy: Arkady Gaidar and the Making of Soviet Children's Literature," NYU Jordan Center, October 4, 2021, https://jordanrussiacenter.org/news/revolution-vs-pedagogy-arkady-gaidar-and-the-making-of-soviet-childrens-literature/.

primary school libraries for years. [111] The story of the courageous Timur holds a prominent place among the most widely read books. Research conducted by Anna Franaszek, analysing school reading lists spanning from 1946 to 1999, reveals that this book maintained its position on the curriculum for an impressive fifty-year period, from 1949 to 1999.[112] In the Kerala of the late 1970s and subsequent decades, it was *Chukkum Gekkum* that gained such immense popularity. Interestingly, *Timur and His Squad* did not feature among the Gaidar works translated into Malayalam.

Chukkum Gekkum is a story for children. But not just a children's story. Its internal structure contains another unique lesson with political commentary and allusions. Rarely any translated Soviet children's books of the time have such explicit praise of the Soviet Union in the beginning and the end:

...They lived with their mother in a great big city far, far away—there was not a finer city in the whole wide world. Day and night red stars sparkled atop the towers of this city. And its name, of course, was Moscow. [113]

The book ends thus:

Each understood the meaning of happiness in his own way. But one and all knew and understood that they must live honourably, work hard, and love and cherish the vast, happy land known as the Soviet Union. [114]

The narrative does have on display the Soviet greatness beyond the beginning and the end. Yet, the characters and the landscapes engrossingly unveil a land so far away yet so familiar because ultimately this is a tale about the universal theme of family reunion.

[111] A. Bednarczyk, "Soviet Literature in Primary Schools in the People's Republic of Poland: Arkady Gaidar's Timur and His Squad as an Example of Political School Readings.," 2014, 1, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Soviet-Literature-in-Primary-Schools-in-the-of-and-Bednarczyk/bb5c90fd4d0cfd063bdd3edb08283fad352397ba.
[112] Bednarczyk, 1.
[113] Arkady Gaidar, "Chuck and Geck," Translated by Leonard Stocklitsky, Progress Publishers, https://www.arvindguptatoys.com, 1973, https://www.arvindguptatoys.com/arvindgupta/13r.pdf.
[114] Gaidar.

Gaidar's works in the 1930s are said to be "imprinted on the minds of every child of the Soviet era" and *Chuck and Geck* is essentially described as "joyful"[115]. The work can be considered the quintessential 'Russian pusthakam' (an epithet in Malayalam for Soviet-era books in general) that Malayalis across generations talk about with great fondness. Apart from the core theme, it has an abundance of relatable life scenarios and descriptions of landscapes that establish the book as a good example from the Soviet children's literary canon suitable for translation.

The book is about Chuck and Geck, two young children and their mother setting out on a journey – which can be termed an adventure of sorts – from the comforts of their Moscow home to the Siberian taiga where their father is working as a geologist. Before they start the trip, in a sibling scuffle, the children lose an unopened telegram from their father asking them to postpone their planned trip to visit him because he must go on an urgent mission. The mother travels with the children for a long way on train and then they go by a horse-drawn sleigh, only to find that the houses belonging to Geological Station No. 3 are long empty. The woman and children decide to wait for the man, the chief of the geological party, with bare minimum food and facilities. The story ends with a happy family reunion and New Year celebrations with the members of the geological party. It is also important to consider that parts of this narrative suggest the military structure of the communist regime in the war-time Soviet Union.

The story deals with the two themes of a long travel and survival in a lonely wooden cabin in the woods. Some of the scenes Chuck and Geck see from their train window are strategically placed wartime sign-posts such as a military sentry-box and an armored train.

Chukkum Gekkum was first translated from Russian into English in 1973 by Leonard Stocklitsky as *Chuck And Geck*. After reaching the Soviet Union from Kerala in 1966 to join

[115] Dobrenko, "The Entire Real World of Children," 226.

Progress Publishers, Gopalakrishnan was initially doing secondary translations, that is, dealing with texts in English translated from the original Russian ones. He is said to have taken a year to start directly translating from the Russian.[116] Therefore, it can be safely assumed that Gopalakrishnan translated this work directly from the Russian. The Malayalam translation of 79 pages came out in 1978.

The book mentions the city of Moscow in seven places and the Soviet armed forces or its guns in six places. And there are clear hints of Soviet military involvement and the Nazi army march in a dream scene of Geck. All the references to Moscow stand as clear signs of the Soviet Union's unique purpose of asserting its unchallenged superiority. The numerous references on Moscow and the army are indicative of the war-time Soviet Union.

The Preoccupied Commander

The preoccupied commander appears thrice in the narrative. The first is when the train stops near the armored vehicle. Jovial Red Army members are ambling about it, laughing, rubbing their hands together and stamping their feet on the snow to fend off the cold. But a man in a leather coat is standing silent and preoccupied. Chuck and Geck decide it is their commander who has been waiting for orders from above.

The preoccupied commander appears next in a dream. After their train journey and while spending in a night in a wooden cabin during an overnight break from their onward trip to the taiga, Geck sees a dream, which is mostly described in verse. It features a man-eating ogre spitting fire. Soldiers carrying the Nazi flag march on the snow, as if emerging from those flames. When Geck grabs Chuk’s tin bugle from his trinket box and whistles loudly, the commander of the armored vehicle, deep in thought, is woken up and waves his hand to start

[116] Latha Bimal, interview.

fire. The commander appears finally in the end, during the New Year celebrations at the geological camp. It is when the merrymakers switch on the radio and listen to the distant bells of the golden clock of the Kremlin ringing in the New Year.

The English (and presumably Russian) version mentions the name of the person the preoccupied commander awaits orders from: "Voroshilov". In 1935, Kliment Yefremovich Voroshilov (1881-1969) was named a Marshal of the Soviet Union, the highest military rank of the country.

Alexei Tikhomirov talks about coming across several files titled "Letters from people who called themselves relatives of Voroshilov".[117] A single mother of two children writes to him in the 1930s for material assistance and receives money and sanatorium tickets. She subsequently calls him "brother" and puts up his picture cut out from a newspaper like an icon on her wall.[118] This kind of popularity enjoyed by Voroshilov must have encouraged Gaidar to include his name in a children's book. The casual tone, not mentioning it in full, indicates that it was a household name of the time. Political leaders could also be depicted as heroic figures accomplishing remarkable feats. In the poems composed by folk bards, Voroshilov was portrayed as a "fantastic knight" riding on his horse.[119]

Tikhomirov attributes the practice of common people writing letters to those in powerful positions to a concept called "Speaking Bolshevik", put forward by Stephen Kotkin.[120] Here, the Soviet past is viewed as a singular historical period of radical

[117] Alexey Tikhomirov, "The State as a Family: Speaking Kinship, Being Soviet and Reinventing Tradition in the USSR," *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift Für Moderne Europäische Geschichte / Revue d'histoire Européenne Contemporaine* 15, no. 3 (2017): 395.
[118] Tikhomirov, 408.
[119] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times; Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 1. issued as paperback (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71–72.
[120] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, Calif: Univ. of California Press, 1995), 198–237.

transformation.[121] The Bolshevik speak needed for "social identification that demanded a certain vocabulary" to thrive in that historical period is irrelevant for a region in a non-Communist nation in 1978 and Voroshilov was omitted from the Malayalam text. This was an editorial choice, a perfect example of "perceived incommensurability between cultures".[122] The editor is choosing to leave the preoccupied commander nameless. For a young reader, the name is unconnected, even a source of incongruity, as to what exactly is his role in the narrative. But those reading the text keeping in mind the war and its ramifications, the famous commander perfectly fits the story of Chuck and Geck whose father, captain of a geological research team, is yet another actor in the Soviet saga.

Another possibility for the omission of Voroshilov could be to do with the original text itself. Voroshilov was leading the Soviet troops in the Winter War (November 1939 to January 1940) in Finland but was replaced following setbacks.[123] Therefore, the author himself could have omitted his name in the subsequent revisions of the original text. The omission of Voroshilov's name clearly displays the challenges and choices made while trying to fit the 1930s Stalinist system into the Kerala of the 1970s and 80s.

At the same time, a few references directly alluding to the Russian Revolution and even the Stalinist repression were retained in the text. For instance, Chuck is seen as collecting "three November 7 badges" in his trinket box and there is no explanation regarding the significance of the day anywhere in the book.

However, there are indications of the military and political environment of that time. As the boys talk at night, there is an extended conversation about fortune tellers and magicians,

[121] Tikhomirov, "The State as a Family," 397.
[122] Shaw and Iordachi, "Intermediaries as Change Agents," 3.
[123] Kimmo Rentola, "Intelligence and Stalin's Two Crucial Decisions in the Winter War, 1939–40," *The International History Review* 35, no. 5 (2013): 1106.

which goes off on a tangent: a lame fortune-teller living in a basement property near their Moscow home is said to be arrested by the militia, since "such people are looking to live an easy life without working". There is enough warning against fortune-tellers who are said to be frauds.

In the most striking part, the mother admonishes the children for losing the telegram of their father and wonders what she should do with them: Should they be beaten or imprisoned? shackled and sent to hard labor? There are no explanations to these kinds of punishments, naturalizing such punishments as part of the reality at the time. These references bring alive the Soviet Union of the Stalinist 1930s, yet in an inconspicuous way.

Not only words, but illustrations too translated the work into the Kerala context. On Page 28, the illustration features a pointer board near where Chuck and Geck are seen waiting for their mother, heavily dressed and huddled together along with their luggage in deep snow. The words on the board are 'choodu vellam' or hot water. Malayalam words embedded on a picture with distinctly foreign settings is a clever tool to transpose meaning, evoking at once in the reader belongingness and exotica.

The black-grey-white illustrations of *Chukkum Gekkum* add much to the attractiveness of the book. An unlikely choice for a children's book, the bleak colors enhance the mystery of the taiga. The pictures are set apart from the text, usually cropped at the bottom, making them feel like photographs. The snow, flames of lanterns casting shadows on interior walls, human forms clothed in heavy, dark clothes, the moonlight and the contrasting coniferous trees all heighten a sense of adventure the boys undertake with their mother. These illustrations represent the "allure of the image" and the diversity of artistic styles, making one "linger awhile on the art".[124]

[124] Jankevičiūtė and Geetha, *Another History of the Children's Picture Book*, 9.

Terms

Translation was… also about creation, entailing the fabrication of equivalencies in new contexts.[125] The terms and phrases used by Gopalakrishnan stand testimony to this statement. Chuck, Geck, and their mother arrive at the geological station and spend a night at the watchman's hut who was out hunting. When he comes back, the watchman remarks that Geck was a 'Thakkidimundan', translation of 'chubby fellow'. Thoroughly colloquial and informal, 'Thakkidimundan' is a word often found in children's tales to endearingly refer to chubby little animals.

This does not mean the translator only employed simple and straightforward words always. Describing the taiga, Gopalakrishnan indulges himself in poetic language and Sanskritized terms to convey the elegant and solemn beauty of the landscape. Words like *swapnadurgam* (fortress of dreams), *pratheethi* (impression), *jijnassu* (keen), *subhaga santhathi* (flawless offspring), and *asambandham* (absurdity) can be found sprinkled along with ordinary ones,[126] without sounding "elitist for their unusual syntax and exotic vocabulary".[127]

Geck's dreams, in verse, are translated with the rhyme and rhythm intact wherever possible. Interestingly, Gopalakrishnan uses 'Tharangini', a Malayalam meter (basic rhythmic structure of a verse or lines in verse) in his translation. This is the meter in which the famous Malayalam satirical poet Kunjan Nambiar crafted his widely popular works accompanying Thullal, a temple dance form he invented rebelling against upper caste rigidities in the eighteenth century. Some of his smaller poems in the same meter were included in Malayalam

[125] Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die*.
[126] Arkady Gaidar, *Chukkum Gekkum*, trans. K. Gopalakrishnan (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 56, 60, 73.
[127] Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die*, 114.

text books and readers for school children since at least since the early 1960s.[128] Therefore, Malayali children are familiar with its rhythm. This brisk and sprightly meter has been used widely in sloganeering too.[129] Parts of a poem is translated in the trochaic meter, common in English nursery rhymes like 'Baa baa black sheep...'' and Malayalam children's songs alike. Accessibility, as reiterated by Eleonory Gilburd, was indeed socialist realism's creed.[130]

School or *Jeevithavidyalayam*

If Chuck and Geck presented the reassuringly beautiful life under communism, even in the difficult taiga, *Jeevithavidyalayam* ('School of Life') or *School* by Gaidar is a much larger and more complex work filled with words or scenarios unlikely to be found in a children's book: death, war, execution, liquor, defector, gunshots, suicide, cemetery, anarchists, prisoners of war, socialist revolutionary, Mensheviks, popular socialist, 'Trudoviks', Bolsheviks, and so on. An autobiographical work set against the World War I and the Russian Civil War, the book "does not hide life's worries and disappointments from its youthful readers" according to an introduction by Lev Kassil. Boris, the 15-year-old protagonist, faces the turbulent times in his school as well as outside of it when he runs away from the authorities with a gun gifted by his father.[131]

The original, *Shkola*, was translated into English in 1973 by Bernard Isaacs under the title *School*. *Jeevithavidyalayam* was published in Malayalam in 1980 -- translated by Omana -- two years after *Chuck and Geck.* The popularity of the latter could have driven the publishing decision of Progress despite *School*'s status as a work loaded with communism, hence

[128] Kerala Government, കേരളപാഠാവലി - മലയാളം - സ്റ്റാൻഡേർഡ് *6 (Kerala Paadavali - Class 6)* (Kerala Government, 1963), 51, http://archive.org/details/1963keralapadava0000kera.
[129] *ഓട്ടൻതുള്ളൽ (Ottanthullal) | Kunchan Nambiar*, Kavyarashmi, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-rGsk0CSvo.
[130] Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die*, 114.
[131] Arkadi Gaidar, *Jeevithavidyalayam*, trans. Omana (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), 121–22.

unabashedly propagandistic. In 2013, the book was translated into Malayalam by K.T. Narayanan Nair into Malayalam under the name *School*. But the Progress translation is preferred for its "language with vintage quality and the physical attributes of the hardbound, large-size book.[132]

Serguei A. Oushakine calls the Soviet children's literature of the 1920s and 1930s a natural part of the early Soviet attempts to do things "scientifically," that is, in a Marxist way. Published in 1930, *School* aligns with the objective Oushakine quotes from *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, a major newspaper of Soviet writers, in 1929: "Children's literature was to be concrete, useful, informative, and realistic, aiming at a reader who was active and independent".[133]

The style of the Malayalam version is exceptionally lucid, a commendable task considering the evidently political text and its size. Omana succeeded in bringing alive the landscapes of the strife-ridden Russian villages and mindscapes of their residents with finesse. Her translation did not "suffer from excessive literalness" as accused by an Indian reader about certain Urdu translators of Progress.[134]

Talking about Soviet internationalist publishing endeavors, such as Progress and its predecessors, Djagalov points to the translation practices evolving over the years. He writes that the translators, in time, settled on "adequate" or "realist" translation of foreign texts.[135] This was largely with reference to translating from other languages into Russian. In the case of books like *Jeevithavidyalayam*, the translator employs literal, rather than free, translation. This was presumably an editorial choice. A kind of power play can be detected in the case of texts

[132] Maria Rose, *Aa Pazhaya Russian Pusthakangal (Those Old Books from Russia)*, February 2018, https://www.facebook.com/393471110750681/posts/pfbid0ViWeCUexWXfqBwzJxU9jauiACTwGPvncCS2iQfGkJYb9EGeSvcD4b5hi84vdzuQKl/?app=fbl.
[133] Serguei Alex. Oushakine, "Translating Communism for Children: Fables and Posters of the Revolution," *Boundary 2* 43, no. 3 (August 1, 2016): 172–73, https://doi.org/10.1215/01903659-3572478.
[134] Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism*, 2020, 101.
[135] Rossen Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema Between the Second and the Third Worlds* (Montreal ; Kingston ; London ; Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), 100.

being translated from the Russian in that the non-Russian translators are seen not allowed to apply free or creative choices. In the words of Bengali translator Arun Som who worked in Progress Publishers from 1974 to 1991, "if a translation fell short of expectations, the editorial team would be fined."[136]

Neelakkappu

Golubaya Chashka, or *Blue Cup* in English, was written by Gaidar in 1936. The last work by the author to be published in Malayalam, it was translated in 1983 by Gopalakrishnan. A seemingly simple tale of a man and his daughter going out on a walk while the woman of the house is sulking at them for apparently breaking a blue cup. While General Voroshilov did not find a mention in *Chukkum Gekkum*, Semyon Budyonny, a military commander during the Russian Civil War and beyond and a close political ally of Stalin, found a place in the translation, as a footnote by the editor: "a well-known commander-in-chief".[137] Moreover, Voroshilov himself finds a mention in this work as the "valiant" comrade who would not abandon those seeking help.[138] Thus, *Neelakkappu* decidedly speaks Bolshevik in Malayalam too. There are extensive descriptions of the Red Army advances with active gunfire being witnessed by the father and the daughter and air raids at night, besides mentions of collective farming, 'Soviets' and 'fascists'.[139] The Russian word 'shidovka', occurs with the editorial explanation: "a derogatory term for a Jewish Woman".[140] The book also sports the word 'Sakhaavu', Malayalam for 'comrade', twice.[141]

[136] Chandrima S. Bhattacharya, "Lost Glory... and a Lost Childhood."
[137] Arkadi Gaidar, *Neelakkappu (The Blue Cup)*, trans. Gopalakrishnan (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983), 24.
[138] Arkadi Gaidar, 37.
[139] Arkadi Gaidar, 20.
[140] Arkadi Gaidar, 12.
[141] Arkadi Gaidar, 28, 37.

Woman in translation

Kerala is often described as a land of paradoxes. Until the 1970s, Kerala was considered as one of the least developed and politically tumultuous regions in India. [142] However, research in the 1970s, primarily by the Centre for Development Studies in Kerala, found out that the state was faring well in terms of development indices, comparable to those of the developed nations, like maternal and child mortality rates, literacy and education, and general health. Kerala has been frequently depicted as an exemplary model in a predominantly patriarchal country like India due to its impressive performance on various conventional indicators of gender development. These indicators include high levels of literacy and education, long life expectancy, low fertility rates, good maternal health, and a favorable sex ratio.[143] However, the female labor force participation rates in Kerala have been among the lowest in India, with a notably narrow understanding of "women's liberation" that revolves around sexual self-control and obligations towards the community and family.[144] This last argument is especially true of the Kerala women of the 1970s and 80s, in the middle classes especially, who were carrying the double responsibilities of productive and reproductive labor.

Reflecting the life in every other sphere of life in Kerala, children's literature in Malayalam was deeply entrenched in patriarchal values. The mythological stories and tales with usually a moral in the end rarely had female protagonists or role models. The Soviet translations were a sharp departure in this regard.

[142] J. Devika, "Egalitarian Developmentalism, Communist Mobilization, and the Question of Caste in Kerala State, India," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69, no. 3 (August 2010): 799, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911810001506.
[143] Holly M. Hapke, "Theorizing Patriarchy: Development Paradoxes and the Geography of Gender in South Asia," *Gender, Technology and Development* 17, no. 1 (January 2013): 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/0971852412472121.
[144] Monica Erwer, *Challenging the Gender Paradox: Women's Collective Agency and the Transformation of Kerala Politics* (Department of Peace and Development Research, Goteborg University, Goteborg, 2003).

In a brief overview of the Soviet socio-political scenario following the consolidation of power post-revolution, it can be seen that the Soviet government not only recognized the significance of women's participation in agricultural production for the advancement of rural development programs but also emphasized, drawing inspiration from Marx and Engels, that women's engagement in paid labor is a crucial prerequisite for enhancing their status in society. This approach not only highlighted the economic benefits for women through paid employment but also predicted a direct correlation between women's entry into the labor force and their involvement in decision-making processes and the equitable distribution of production outcomes.[145]

All of Gaidar's works under review in this chapter do not feature women in productive labor roles. For example, in *Chukkum Gekkum*, the mother is presumably not a working woman. In other words, the writer is not interested in elaborating her productive labor while her reproductive labor or her role as the mother is central to the narrative. Notably, she is the only person in the family with no name. The book is replete with references to her husband Seriogin's work place. As the book begins, he is away in the Siberian taiga for geological research, specifically Geographical Research Station: Number Three. When his family reaches the place, Seriogin is away in Alkarash Gorge for emergency work. The mother, a modern woman living in the comforts of Moscow, is fast adapting to the life in the taiga with minimal resources and negotiates anxiety-inducing scenarios like finding her younger son missing as she comes back home after fetching water. The Mother not only cooks and cleans, but even makes candles out of a big block of wax to decorate the house ahead of New Year, besides innovatively using old magazine pictures and tissue paper from a tobacco box for the same.

[145] Elisabeth J. Croll, "Women in Rural Production and Reproduction in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and Tanzania: Socialist Development Experiences," *Signs* 7, no. 2 (1981): 361–62.

For the Keralite society of the late 1970s, the Mother of Chuck and Geck was a fresh representation of woman. It has been observed by various scholars that due to economic conditions during the mid-twentieth-century Kerala, families were unable to confine women solely to domestic roles. As a result, the public space in Kerala was structured in a manner that allowed women to engage in activities traditionally associated with their domestic responsibilities. Women's employment was justified as it contributed to the economic progress of the family.[146] The Mother in the story was very much relatable to the Kerala audience of the 1970s and 80s against this backdrop, but, the same woman leads the children into an unforgettable adventure and is also depicted as clearly enjoying the prospects.

The Mother in *Jeevithavidyalayam*, is a struggling widow of a deserter who was executed. She does her best to prevent her son Boris from getting involved in politics by hiding the gun his father entrusted with him, carrying which had led to an altercation in his school. The Mother recedes to the background soon as the protagonist joins the Bolsheviks.

Neelakkappu depicts an unusual character of a Mother in Marusya. Strong-willed and difficult to please, she goes away to see off her pilot friend leaving behind her husband and daughter and is seen less forgiving and adamant even on the next day. Only Marusya and Svetlana, the daughter, are given names in the book, narrated in the first person by the man. Adventures of a little girl was also a novelty for Malayalam readers who were mostly familiar with boy-protagonists and their antics.

Affective style

The translation styles of Omana and Gopalakrishnan were deceptively similar. Short sentences, concise usages, and imaginative turn of phrases are present in both. When looked

[146] Hapke, "Theorizing Patriarchy," 16.

through the binary of "foreignizing and domesticating" translations, they followed the "practice and theory of Soviet translation" consolidated in the late 1950s.[147]

Gilburd observes that a translator embodies other people. She finds that in the early 1960s, the experiential aspect of translation acquired a special term, "functional correspondence". Quoting A. Leites, she says that translation can be understood as the act of moving a piece of literature from its original context of readership to a different one. In this process, the translator considers the specific associations, historical and cultural traditions, and aesthetic preferences of the new readers, all while staying true to the essence of the original work.[148] In the words of Punjabi translator Darshan Singh, who worked for Progress Publishers, from 1966, the functional correspondence is palpable:

> *Translating literature, translating Chekhov, Gorky, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, it gives you a feeling of fulfilment, you know, as you are doing some kind of creative work. People still remember all those books which we translated, especially the fine literature. They are being taught even now. Translation is very difficult, I would say. When you are translating, for example, supposing I am translating Dostoevsky or Tolstoy, I have to mark my skills with him! You have to embody the writer. The translation must read like an original, it should never look like a translation. I have not worked anywhere else, in 1950, I started the work and then I left in 1993. This is the only job I did.*

A close analysis of the translations in this chapter reveals that the Moscow Translators resemble the Soviet translator of the 1960s, a prototype of which was consolidated through the many annual meetings and seminars of the Soviet Writers Union. They produced their texts within their own cultural context promoted by the writers congresses in 1955-56, understanding that the translated work should read like a homegrown text.[149] Translators encountered texts and terminology that had no equivalents in the Russian language and material world. With the

[147] Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die*, 134.
[148] Gilburd, 115.
[149] Gilburd, 117.

arrival of new words and concepts, the absence of appropriate vocabulary to convey this new knowledge elevated the translator to the role of an author.[150]

Malayalam translations of the 1970s and 80s had an interesting position. They happened after the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty was signed in 1971 which ensured Soviet assistance in the Indo-Pak war and led to the creation of Bangladesh: the process of translating evidently Stalinist values using translation theories perfected in the Thaw years for an audience in the post-Thaw era.

Translation emerged as a utopian aspiration aiming to overcome not only linguistic barriers but also ideological divisions. It became a crucial aspect of official interactions, serving to filter and refine capitalist influences. During pivotal moments such as the Thaw, translated texts assumed a significant role, filling cultural voids and introducing new languages, role models, and behaviors. Cultural mediation during this period coincided with comprehensive reforms and lively discussions on the challenges faced by Soviet society, making it particularly influential. Translated texts were laden with Soviet political and cultural meanings, carrying significant weight in this context.[151] The publication of Malayalam translations in a post-Thaw period, of works entrenched in the Stalinist era, throws open many themes to think about distinct periods in the Soviet and Kerala history. A question that arises naturally is about the omission of Gaidar's much-loved work, *Timur and his Squad*. Published by the State Children's Publishing House in 1941, this tale by Gaidar takes place during the backdrop of the Soviet-Finnish war. Spanning 70 pages, the story revolves around a group of boys and one girl, all in their early teens, who form a clandestine society. Their objective is to assist the families

[150] Gilburd, 10.
[151] Gilburd, 11.

of men serving at the frontlines and provide aid to any other family in the community that requires assistance.[152]

It also must be considered that, around the time the Gaidar works appeared in Malayalam, the language had witnessed an unusual travelogue by a girl of 13, K.A. Beena. *Beena Kanda Russia* ('The Russia that Beena Saw'), first serialized in 1981 in the popular *Mathrubhumi* literary weekly, vividly narrates her experiences during a visit to the International Children's camp at Artek in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1977. Despite the Kerala society having an unusual familiarity with the pioneer camp lives and other activities of the Soviet children, *Timur and his Squad* did not find a place on the list of Gaidar's translated works.

It has been observed that children's literature acts as an indicator of the prevailing beliefs and values within the Soviet society at any specific time. This aspect lends to the messages conveyed in children's literature being both influential and ordinary at the same time.[153] This stands close to Oushakine's thoughts illustrating how, through the act of cultural reimagining, the energy sparked by the October Revolution gradually became standardized. He argues that the vibrant expressions found in discourse and visual posters transformed into a more controlled form of political adaptation, which did not entirely neuter the revolution but certainly rendered it benign. He terms the phenomenon "political pasteurization".[154] Looking at the texts dealing with the Revolution and the Civil War being rendered, in the second half of the 20th century, into Malayalam, the language of a state that democratically elected communist

[152] Nathan Berman, "The Place of the Child in Present-Day Russia," *Social Forces* 21, no. 4 (1943): 453, https://doi.org/10.2307/2571178.
[153] William B. Husband, "Miraculous Horses: Reading the Russian Revolution through Soviet Children's Literature," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 67, no. 3 (2006): 556, https://doi.org/10.25290/prinunivlibrchro.67.3.0553.
[154] Oushakine, "Translating Communism for Children," 174.

governments in peaceful conditions, reveals that instead of political pasteurization, novel ways of keeping the revolution vibrant were opened when it came to translating Gaidar's works. While this could be owing to the persona of Gaidar because it has been argued that for the soldier-writer, the idea of a "post-revolutionary" Soviet world was untenable because he never fully let go of the paradoxical belief that the revolution was a continuous and incomplete process.[155]

The translations did their part to fully integrate the spirit of Gaidar's revolutionary energy in Malayalam, retaining a local flavour along with the 'Sovietness'. They were instrumental in reworking the Soviet realm and completely absorbing its emancipatory themes in a totally foreign territory and imaginary through a style and diction that resonated greatly with the reading public of Kerala.

[155] Victoria Buyanovskaya, "Revolution vs. Pedagogy."

CONCLUSIONS

Eleonory Gilburd's concept of the experiential aspect of translation is the central feature of the Malayalam works of Progress Publishers.[156] The Moscow Translators carried out their work firmly rooted in the Malayali ethos while not compromising on the 'Sovietness' of the original. The books were also significant as material objects for generations of readers who saw them as representations of a prosperous and progressive nation. It was far away, but their triumphs and accomplishments were deemed as achievable for a country like India and a state like Kerala, perceived as poor and struggling in the post-Independence era and beyond. The hardbound, beautifully illustrated books, their large sizes, and the novel topics like space exploration were of high aspirational value for the reading public who belonged to the middle classes and aspiring members of the lower castes and classes. The visual sense of the books deeply impacted generations of readers. The way the Soviet books depicted children was especially appreciated. They were different, but essentially, they were the same as Indian children.

A poem, *Vaalameen Kalppikkunnu* ("By the Pike's Command") was published in a leading literary magazine in Malayalam against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. Written by Sheeja Vakkom, it reminisces about the old books from the Soviet Union and wishes for the "rivalry between brothers to end".[157] It received a huge response from readers in the form of letters to the editor, reflecting the resonance of these works among the readers across generations. Chuck and Geck are portrayed in this poem as soldiers from Russia and Ukraine, as brothers fighting against each other. The poem concludes thus:

[156] Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die*, 115.
[157] Sheeja Vakkom, "Vaalameen Kalppikkunnu (Poem) ('By the Pike's Command')," *Mathrubhumi Illustrated Weekly*, November 12, 2022, 12.

"The glorious Red Army is fighting with itself,

"Chuk and Geck" wield arms to kill each other.

No longer do I have

that heavenly abode of crimson flowers,

all that remains is a curse of blood splattered on the snow.

'The Pike commands nothing anymore':

bewails that grieving Russian child within.

I desire, so ardently desire…

May the fire in anguished Ukraine be doused

with this humble teardrop of mine…"

The Moscow Translators chose to remain in the background. They did not attend public functions to talk about their work in Moscow even after they retired and settled in Thiruvananthapuram, a city with a vibrant public culture largely managed by the communist parties or Left-leaning organizations. Like Darshan Singh of Punjab, they were engrossed in their work and found fulfilment in engaging themselves with some of the greatest names in communist politics and Soviet literature. In this sense, they were instrumental in promoting the 'World Literature' envisaged by the Soviets.

It is evident that The communist movement in Kerala and the translation endeavors of the USSR worked in tandem, mutually reinforcing each other and exerting a unique effect on politics promoting socialism. Many individuals were drawn towards communism after reading imported political literature. Many may have chosen to engage with such literature precisely because they already identified as communists. This mutual engagement is the backbone of Kerala's continued standing as the sole Indian state with a democratically elected Left government in power.

The books of Arkadi Gaidar and others introduced Malayali children to the world of Soviet imagination since the 1970s. Nevertheless, rather than their propagandistic value, it was their literary standards that revolutionised the imaginations of these children. Numerous present-day Indian writers, illustrators, photographers, and film designers have fondly reminisced about the books that influenced their artistic sensibilities during their formative years, transporting them from mundane schoolrooms into realms of imagination and inspiration.[158] This exactly is the real contribution of Moscow Translators who acted not only as socialist intermediaries but also as promotors of sublime aesthetic sensibilities across generations of children in Kerala.

[158] Jankevičiūtė and Geetha, *Another History of the Children's Picture Book*, 18.

APPENDIX

Available list of Soviet works translated into Malayalam

Serial No.	Name of the Book	Name of the Writer	Translator	Publisher	Year
1	Dubrovsky	Alexander Pushkin	Omana	Raduga	1985
2	Government Inspector	Nikolai Gogol	Omana	Raduga	1988
3	Valameen Kalppikkunnu	Mikhail Bulatov	Omana	Raduga	1988
4	Amphibian Man	Alexander Belyayev	Omana	Raduga	1990
5	Nammude Kaalathe Oru Veerapurushan (A Hero of our Time)	M Lermontov	Omana	Raduga	1988
6	Kadalorathu Oru Balan	Nikolai Dubov	Omana	Raduga	1987
7	Aadyapremam (First Love)	Ivan Turgenev	Omana	Raduga	1987
8	Kaattile Veedukal (Forest Homes)	Vitaly Bianki	Omana	Raduga	1988
9	The Tale of Master Egor	Georgi Yudin	Omana	Raduga	1988
10	Jyothisasthram Chithrangaliloode (A Picture Book of Astronomy)	Boris Levin, Lidia Radlova	Omana	Raduga	1988
11	My First Book in Zoology	Y Charushin	Omana	Raduga	1990
12	Theekkundam Muthal Reactor Vare (From The Bonfire to the Reactor)	Alexei Krylov	Omana	Raduga	1987
13	Knock Knock Knock	Ivan Turgenev	Omana	Raduga	1981
14	The Brave Ant	Tatiana K. Makarova	Omana	Progress	1976
15	Aanakkutty (There Once was an Elephant)	Gennady Tsyferov	Omana	Progress	1974
16	Lorrikal	K Kondarshin	Omana	Progress	1972
17	Stories from M Sholokhov	Sholokhov	Omana	Progress	1973
18	Mashayude Kidakka (Masha's Awful Pillow)	Galina Lebedeva	Omana	Progress	1972
19	Oru Prakruthi Nireekshakante Kadhakal	P Manthefil	Omana	Progress	1972
20	The Three Fat Men	Yury Olesha	Omana	Progress	1974, 1985

21	Kalikkoppukal	A Bertho	Omana	Progress	1972
22	The Tale of the Fire Bird	Gennady Spirin	Omana	Progress	1976
23	Aazhikal		Omana	Progress	1974
24	Russian Nadodikkadhakal		Omana	Progress	1974
25	Balyakalam (My Childhood)	Maxim Gorky	Omana	Progress	1975
26	The Story About A Real Man	Boris Polevoi	Subhadra Parameswaran	Raduga	1986
27	Teryoshechka	Retold by Alexi Tolstoy	Omana	Progress	1976
28	Karadikkutti Thannatthan Pedippichathengane	N. Sladkov		Progress	1976
29	Sovietnattile Nadodikkadhakal		K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1973
30	Stories for Children	Leo Tolstoy	Omana	Progress	1976
31	Thanmaathra Laghu Bhakshanashala	Gennady			1972
32	Pollunna Manju (The Hot Snow)	Yuri Bonderev	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1974
33	Kottaravum Kalthurunkum (Palace and Prison)	Olga Forsh	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1974
34	Foxy Tricks	Olga Forsh		Progress	1972
35	Mousie Goes For Water	Lithuanian Rhymes		Progress	1974
36	Enthaanu Quantum Balathanthram?	Ridnik V I	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1962
37	Enthaanu Arthashasthram?	A Mothilyov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1988
38	Samakaleena Viplavaprakriya	U Krasin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1988
39	Leninte Osyathu: Srothassukalum Sathayum Saakshathkaranavum	Lenin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1990
40	Sahithyattheyum Kalayeyum Patti	Lenin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1984
41	Siberia Olichottam/Kathya	G. Markov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1981
42	Pattiyumayi Nadakkunna Sthree (The Lady with the Dog)	Chekhov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1985
43	Enthanu Thathwashasthram?	Kirilenko		Progress	1988
44	Vargangalum Vargasamaratum Ennalenthu?	Yermakova, Valentine Ratnikova		Progress	1990
45	Communist Manifesto Enna Marxinteyum Engelsinteyum Kruthi	Sasanov Vladimir		Progress	1988

46	Enthaanu Sasthreeya Communism?	Leonid, Vladimir		Progress	1990
47	Karl Marx	Lethyanov Selasyanov		Progress	1983
48	Moonnu Nethakkanmar	Lasynov	A. Parekkunnel	Progress	1990
49	Socialisvum Yuddhavum	Lenin		Progress	1967
50	Desheeya Prashnangalekkurichulla Kurippukal	Lenin		Progress	1968
51	Bahujanangalkkidayile Prashnangal	Lenin		Progress	1969
52	May Day	Lenin		Progress	1968
53	V I Lenin	Obchikkin		Progress	1969
54	Vikswareshiyil Chinayude Nayathanthram	Andrayev M		Progress	1978
55	Charithratthil Vykthikalkkulla Panku	Plehnov G V		Progress	1976
56	Marxineyum Engelsineyum Kurichulla Anusmaranangal		K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1981
57	Plays	Maxim Gorky	K. Gopalakrishnan, Omana	Progress	1973
58	Manushyavamshatthinte Uthpatthi	V P Alexayev	K. Gopalakrishnan, A. Parekkunnel	Progress	1989
59	Enthaanu Aapekshika Siddhantham?	En Landavoo, Y Rumar	A.C. Vasu	Progress	1973
60	Avar Kanda Lenin		K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	
61	Parisheelanam	Maxim Gorky	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1978
62	Ente Sarvakalaashaalakal (My Universities)	Maxim Gorky	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1975
63	Soviet Union Vayanakkaarude Guide			Soviet Land book series	1968
64	Bhauthika kauthukam Bhagam 1	Yakov Peralman	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1977
65	Bhauthika Kauthukam Bhagam 2	Yakov Peralman	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1978
66	Bhoo prashnavum swathanthrya samaravum	Lenin		Progress	1973
67	Communist Manifesto	Marx, Engels		Progress	1976
68	Socialism, Scientific and Imaginative	Engels		Progress	1977
69	Idathupaksha Communism Oru Baalarishtitha			Progress	1972
70	Sampad Vyvastha Socialist Reethiyil Kettippadukkunnathinte Prashnangal	Lenin		Progress	1973

71	Ithaanu Lenin		K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1967
72	Kuttikalum Kalithozharum (Kids and Cubs)	Olga Perovskaya	Omana		1979
73	Jeevithavidyalayam / School	Arkadi Gaidar	Omana	Progress	1980
74	Kuttikkadhakalum Chithrangalum	V Suteyev	Mrs. Unnikrishnan, Mavathu Prabhakaran, Cherukulam Parameshwaran	Progress	
75	St. Petersburg Tales	Nikolai Gogol	Omana	Raduga	
76	Mayalokam	Various Writers		Raduga	1988 1986
77	Rathnamala	Various Writers		Raduga	1971, 1985
78	How a man became a giant	M. Ilyin, Y. Segal	K.C. George, Veliyam Bhargavan	Raduga	1986
79	Vaiki Janicha Kunjanujan (A late-born child)	A Alexin		Progress	1981
80	Chuck and Geck	Arkady Gaidar	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1978, 1989
81	When Daddy Was a Little Boy	Alexander Raskin	Omana	Progress	1979
82	To Spite all Deaths	Vladislav Titov			
83	Kochumannkudil (The Little Clay Hut)	A N Tolstoy		Progress	1982
84	The Sun's Wind	Alexi Leonov	A. Parekkunnel	Progress	1978
85	How People Discovered the Shape of the Earth	Anatoly Tomilin	Omana	Raduga	1986
86	Baalavaadiyilekku	Nadezhda Kalinina	Omana	Raduga	1982
87	Sindoorapushpam (Scarlet Flower)	Sergei Axakov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1982
88	Paadunna Thooval	Vasily Sukhomlinsky	Omana	Raduga	
89	The Cock with the Crimson Comb	Victor Vazhdayev	M.S. Rajendran	Progress	1982
90	Velutha Kalaman	L Kopilava	Omana	Progress	1974
91	Manthrikakkuthira	M Bulathov	A. Parekkunnel	Raduga	1983
92	Onninum Kollaatthavan	Y Akkim	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1981
93	Chennay Pattu paadiyathenyane	Boris Sahodar	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1979
94	Kalavu Poya Suryan (The Stolen Sun)	Korney Chukovsky	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1980
95	Aana (Elephant)	Alexander Kuprin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1981

96	Ivan	Vladimir Bogomolov	Omana	Raduga	1987
97	Nikitayude Balyam (Nikita's Childhood)	Aleksey Nikolayevich	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1985
98	Velutha Rathrikal (White Nights)	Fydor dostoyevsky	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1989
99	Moonnu Varsham (Three Years)	Anton Chekhov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1980
100	Farewell, Gulsary!	Chingiz Aitmatov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	
101	Jamila	Chingiz Aitmatov	Omana, Parekkunnel	Raduga	1981
102	Tales of the Mountains and Steppes	Chingiz Aitmatov	Omana, Parekkunnel	Raduga	1988
103	The Captain's Daughter	Alexander Pushkin	Omana	Raduga	1989
104	Vaiki Vidarnna Poov (Late-Blooming Flowers)	Anton Chekhov		Raduga	1990
105	Oru Manushyante Vidhi (The Fate of a Man)	Mikhail Sholokhov	Omana, K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1982, 1985
106	Pithaakkalum Puthranmaarum (Fathers and Sons)	Ivan Turganev	M.S. Rajendran	Raduga	1984
107	Uyirthezhunnelpu (Ressurection)	Leo Tolstoy	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1982
108	Soviet Short stories			Raduga	1985
109	Amma (Mother)	Maxim Gorky	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1974, 78, 87
110	Vasanthatthinte pathinezhu Nimishangal	Yulian Semyanov	Omana	Raduga	1984
111	Garnet Vala (The Garnet Bracelet)	Aleksandr Kuprin	Omana	Raduga	1989
112	Marx Engels Thiranjeduttha Kruthikal 1 (Selected works)	Marx, Engels		Progress	1987
113	Marx Engels Thiranjeduttha Kruthikal 2	Marx, Engels		Progress	1987
114	Marx Engels Thiranjeduttha Kruthikal 3	Marx, Engels		Progress	1988
115	Marx Engels Thiranjeduttha Kruthikal 4	Marx, Engels		Progress	1988
116	Marx Engels Thiranjeduttha Kruthikal 5	Marx, Engels		Progress	1989
117	Marx Engels Thiranjeduttha Kruthikal 6	Marx, Engels			1989
118	Marx Engels Thiranjeduttha Kruthikal 7	Marx, Engels		Progress	1990

119	Marx Engels Thiranjeduttha Kruthikal 8	Marx Engels		Progress	1990
120	Ten Days that Shook the World (Hardcover)	John Reed		Progress	1987
121	Frederic Engels Laghu Jeevacharithram	Yevgenia Stepthanova		Progress	1979
122	Ernesto Che Guevara	I Lavreski		Progress	1983
123	Charithraparamaaya Bhauthikavadam			Progress	1983
124	Vairudhyadhishttitha Bhauthika Vadam		K. Gopalakrishnan, M.S. Rajendran	Progress	1978
125	Russian Viplavatthiloode	Albert Rees Villiams	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	
126	Soviet Unionil Socialism Kettippadukkunnnathinte Prasnangal	Lenin		Progress	1981
127	Viplava Vaayadittham	Lenin		Progress	1979
128	Marxist Leninist Saundarya Shasthravum Jeevithavum	I Kulikova		Raduga	1984
129	Thozhilali Prasthaanatthinakatthe Dogmaaisatthinum Sectarianisatthinum Ethire	Lenin		Progress	
130	Mathattheppatti	Marx Engels	K. Gopalakrishnan, M.S Rajendran	Progress	1983
131	Videsha Varthalekhakarumaayi Abhimukham	Lenin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1987
132	Enthanu Vairudhyathmaka Bhauthika vadam?	V Kaprivin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1985
133	Enthaanu Muthalalittham?	A Basuyev	A. Parekkunnel	Progress	1987, 1989
134	Amerikkan kutthakakalum vikaswara rajyangalum	V Shethneen	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1988
135	V I Lenin Laghu Jeevacharithram			Progress	1978
136	Arthasasthra Samgraham	L Leyonthyev	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1976
137	Kudumbam enna Engelsinte Kruthi	I Andrayev	A. Parekkunnel	Progress	1986
138	Koolivela enna Marxinte Kruthi	V F Maximova	A. Parekkunnel	Progress	1989
139	Sahakarana Prasthanattheppatti Enna Leninte Kruthi	S Serayev	A. Parekkunnel	Progress	1986
140	Leninte Jeevithatthil Ninnu Chila Edukal			Soviet Land publication	1970
141	Indiayude Sampad Vyavastha	A I Medoyov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1986

142	Thathwashasthratthinte Daaridryam	Marx		Progress	1980
143	Soviet Ambassador Ariyikkunnu	Mihail Chernasauv	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1986
144	Mooladhanatthinte Ulpatthi	Marx		Progress	1974
145	Marxisatthinte Vikrthanukaranavum Samrajyatthwa Sampathika Samaravadavum	Lenin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1982
146	Samarajyathwam Muthalalithathinte Paramakhattam	Lenin		Progress	1976
147	Samoohya Rashtreeya Siddhanthathinte adisthanangal		K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1988
148	Marxist Leninist Siddhanthathinte Adisthana Thatwam	Harris Sabarov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1986
149	Arthasasthrathinte Adisthana Thatwam	Y Popov	A. Parekkunnel	Progress	1984
150	Soviet Unionte samkshiptha charithram	C Alexeyev	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1974
151	Samoohya Shasthram		K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1981
152	Janasamkhya Siddhantham	D A Valentev	M.S. Rajendran	Progress	1982
153	Manja Chekutthante Nagaram	Maxim Gorky	M.S. Rajendran	Raduga	1986
154	Leninekkurichulla Kadhakal	Nikolai Mikhayilov		Soviet Land publication	1969
155	Lenin 97 Janmavarshikam			Soviet Sameeksha	1967
156	Thiranjeduttha Prasangangalum Lekhanangalum			Progress	1984
157	Communist International Laghu Vivaranam	A Sobolov		Progress	1976
158	Socialist Viplavattheppatti	Marx Engels		Progress	
159	Trade Unionukaleppatti	Lenin		Progress	
160	Neelakkappu (Blue Cup)	Arkadi Gaidar	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1983
161	Three Bears	Leo Tolstoy			
162	Kadalukal Thaandunna Kappalukal	Swthaslav Saharnov	Omana	Raduga	1985
163	Aru Engane Jeevikkunnu	E Charooshin			
164	Mazhavilppoo	Valentine Kathayev	Omana	Progress	
165	Onnu Randu Moonnu (One Two Three)	Alexei Mihalyevich Laptyev	K. Gopalakrishnan		

166	Kompulla Attinkutti	Shukkur bek Sheneleeyev	Omana	Progress	
167	Bhavana Sampannar	A Nosov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1982
168	Acchan Makanodu	Sergei Mihalkov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1982
169	The Cossaks	Leo Tolstoy			
170	Adyatthe Indian Swathanthrya Samaram	Marx ,Engels			
171	Arthasasthra Niroopananm	Marx			
172	Kooliyum Vilayum Labhavum	Marx			
173	Kudumbam, Swakaryaswathu, Bharanakoodam Ennivayude uthbhavam	Engels			
174	Bharanakoodavum Viplavavum	Lenin			
175	Lenin Mahathwavum Lalithyavum	L Kuneksthkaya, K. Mashtthakova			
176	Russiayude Hrudayatthil	K Pausthiskoy	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	
177	Valiya Hrudyam	Boris Lavrinov	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1978
178	Kaduvayude Ananthiravan	E Vasilivskaya			
179	The Golden Goblet	Kayum Tangrykuliev	Omana	Raduga	1990
180	Poruthiveenavarude Katthukal		K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	
181	Lenin on Science				
182	Sammanam (The Gift-picture exercise book)	V. Sutyeyev	Omana	Progress	1976
183	Papprassanaaya kuruvi	Konstantin Paustovsky	Omana	Raduga	1985
184	Appooppante Veettil	N Nosov	A. Parekkunnel		
185	Khadikarangale Patti Ningalkkenthariyaam	Yakov Dlugolenski			
186	Cosmonautum Greeshkayum	Anatoly Mityayev	Omana	Raduga	1984
187	Dialectical and Historical Materialism				
188	Chenkunnu (Red Hill)	V Biyanki	A. Parekkunnel	Raduga	1983
189	Silver Hoof	Pavel Bashov			
190	Leninte Punchiri (Lenin's Smile)	Nikolay Bogdanov	Omana	Progress	1978
191	Octoberile Kadhakalum Anusmaranangalum			Progress	1980

192	Sthreekalude Vimochanattheppatti	V I Lenin		Progress	1977, 1979
193	On the Role of the Individual in History	G.V. Plekhanov		Progress	1978
194	Russian Malayalam Nighandu		A. Parekkunnel	Progress	
195	Nattinpuratthe Pavangalodu	V I Lenin		Progress	1975
196	Bharanakoodam	V I Lenin		Progress	1971
197	Circus	S Marshak	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1990
198	Rashtrangalude Swayam Nirnnayavakaasham	V I Lenin		Progress	1969
199	Viplava Sahasikattham	V I Lenin		Progress	1969
200	Janadhipathya Jeevithatthil Social Democraciyude Randu Adavukal	V I Lenin		Progress	1979
201	Nalu Jeevithangal	Nora Adamyan	Pavanan	Progress	1968
202	Mukkuvanum Swarnamatsyavum	Pushkin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1982
203	Saamaanangal	S. Marshak, V. Lebedev	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1973
204	Urumbum Bahiraakaasha Sanchaariyum	A. Mityayev	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1980
205	Kuthiravandiyil ninnu Rocketilekku	Sirgey Mihalkov	Omana	Progress	1975
206	Dheeranaaya Urumbu	Tatyana Makarova	Omana	Progress	1976
207	Kurukkante Soothrangal	Retold by I. Sokolov Mikitov	Omana	Progress	
208	Mergenum Suhruthukkalum-Oru Nanay Nadodikkatha		Omana	Progress	1979, 85 (Raduga)
209	Kadalaassil Oru Mrugashaala	Mayakovsky	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1982
210	Appam Muzhuvan Thayyar, Pakshe Kashtam! Kyiledukkaan Mela	T. Mavrina	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	
211	Manushyan Vaanilekkuyarunnu	Karl Aron	Omana	Raduga	1984
212	Kaattile Kuttikal	Y. Charooshin	Omana	Progress	
213	Thechukuli	Korney Chukovsky	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1975
214	Koottile Kuttikal	S. Marshak	K. Gopalakrishnan	Raduga	1984
215	Kuttikal	Alexei Laptyev	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	
216	Nallathethu Cheethayethu	Mayakovsky	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1979

217	Dhikkaariyaya Karadikkutti	A. Bartho	Omana	Raduga	1988
218	Tappi Enthukondu Pakshikale Pidikunnilla?	Y. Charooshin	Omana	Progress	
219	Thoovalkkuppayakkaran Kochu Poovankozhi	Retold by A.N. Tolstoy	Omana	Progress	
220	Kurukkanum Chundeliyum	V. Bianki	Omana	Progress	
221	Punnaarappoovan	R. Kudasheva	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	
222	Yoosha	Alexander Kuprin	K. Gopalakrishnan	Progress	1981
223	Theeppakshi (Russian folktales)		Omana	Progress	1976
224	Swarnakkappu	Kayoom Tangrikkuleeyev	Omana	Raduga	1990
225	Moonnu Thadiyanmaar	Yuri Olesha	Omana	Raduga	1985
226	Padivaathilkkkal	I.S. Turganev	Omana	Progress	1981

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